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# **Metropolis and Province**

## **Configurations of Identity in Contemporary Austrian Literature**

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**2006**

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## Abstract

This thesis uses an investigation of the contemporary development of the *Anti-Heimatroman* to explore the relationship between national identity and literature in present-day Austria. The traditional *Anti-Heimatroman* dominated the Austrian canon during the 1960s and 1970s and has been cited by critics as fulfilling the criteria for a so-called *Nationalliteratur*. The genre Second Republic identity paradigms through its biting aggressive presentation of a provincial milieu whose dynamics were overwhelmingly negative, and which was intended to function as a metonym for the state at large. Critical consensus, however, suggests that the *Anti-Heimatroman* became obsolete at the beginning of the 1980s. This thesis interrogates both of these points of view, arguing not only that the *Anti-Heimatroman* continues to exist in the contemporary context, but also that the genre continues to function as 'national literature.'

The introduction uses empirical data to present an overview of the factors which contribute to the dominant conceptualisation of contemporary Austrian national identity, considering especially some of its more problematic aspects. These include the first victim thesis and the repercussions of the Waldheim affair. The second part of the introduction constitutes an historical overview of the development of the *Anti-Heimat* genre until the early 1980s.

The case-studies that follow attempt to determine the extent to which conventions of the *Anti-Heimatroman*, as identified by critics including Mecklenburg, Zeyringer and Rossbacher, can be applied to four contemporary Austrian novels representing both aspects of the metropolis/province binary. The first study, an investigation of Josef Winkler's *Der Ackermann aus Kärnten* shows that the novel perpetuates these conventions through its presentation of protagonist constantly subjugated by a patriarchal system founded upon enforced submission to the institutions of authoritarian family and Church. An analysis of Gstrein's *Das Register* investigates the dynamics of a provincial Austrian tourist-trap whose inhabitants lives revolve around a capitalist imperative of economic and social success. The second part of the thesis shifts the reader's attention to the metropolis. A reading of *Wiener Passion* shows Faschinger's literary Vienna to be dominated by a purely provincial mentality built upon nostalgia for Austria's imperial past, a nostalgia revealed to be utterly fallacious in view of the experiences of the novel's main protagonist, Rosa Hawelka. Finally, an examination of Rabinovici's *Suche nach M.* applies the border imagery intrinsic in the traditional *Anti-Heimatroman* to explore expose the rigidity of the victim/perpetrator binary which Rabinovici presents as continuing to govern relations between Jewish and non-Jewish Austrians.

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# Introduction

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## The myth of Austrian national literature

The relationship between literature and national identity in Austria has long been the subject of debate within the critical arena. Particularly at issue is the question of the extent to which it is possible in Austria to speak of the existence of a 'national literature.' As Robert Menasse states, it is seldom that literature produced by Austrian authors is perceived in these terms, the critical establishment preferring to characterise *Österreichische Nationalliteratur* as 'ein Mythos, eine Chimära, [die] in Wahrheit aber nicht existiere.'<sup>1</sup> The closing chapters of Menasse's essay *Land ohne Eigenschaften* deny the validity of this claim, citing the *Anti-Heimat* genre, particularly prevalent in Austria during the 1970s, as fulfilling the criteria for *Nationalliteratur*, whose 'inhaltliche und ästhetische Besonderheiten' should allow 'Rückschlüsse auf die Besonderheiten der gesellschaftlichen Organisationsform, der Gewordenheit und der aktuellen Verfaßtheit [einer Nation]' thus functioning as a 'Leitbild der Identität.'<sup>2</sup> The dominant perception of *Anti-Heimatliteratur* within Austrian literary criticism, however, suggests that it had already begun to lose significance by the end of the 1970s, with Jürgen Koppensteiner maintaining that the genre had blown itself out by 1982.<sup>3</sup> The aim of this thesis is to interrogate each of these points of view. Using sociological data, the first part of the introduction will provide an insight into the nature of Austrian identity, and will discuss its problematic aspects, including the Second Republic's response to the Second World War and the nation's continued attachment to the German *Kulturnation*. It will then proceed to discuss the origins and formal dynamics of the *Anti-Heimat* genre. The subsequent examinations of the configurations of national identity prevalent within the text corpus, which consists of Josef Winkler's *Der Ackermann aus Kärnten* (1980), Norbert Gstrein's *Das Register* (1992), Lilian Faschinger's *Wiener Passion* (1999) and Doron Rabinovici's

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<sup>1</sup> Robert Menasse, *Das war Österreich*, ed. by Eva Schorkenhuber (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 2005), p. 116

<sup>2</sup> Menasse, p. 116

<sup>3</sup> Jürgen Koppensteiner, 'Antiheimatliteratur in Österreich', *Modern Austrian Literature*, 11 (1982), 1-11 (p. 9)

*Suche nach M.* (1997), will be governed by an attempt to determine the extent of each novel's conformity to the conventions of the *Anti-Heimat* genre. The conclusion will refer back to the sociological data set out in the course of the introduction in order to assess the applicability of Menasse's conventions of *Nationalliteratur* to each of the novels in question.

## **Austrian identity from a sociological perspective.**

### **Haller's 'Ebenen der Nation.'**

In the course of his comments regarding research in the field of nation building and national identity, sociologist Max Haller insists upon the distinction between two different levels of nation, which can be seen simultaneously as two loci of sociological and political data regarding the dynamics of a nation's identity. On the one hand, Haller maintains that the configuration of a nation is most evident from the structure of the state apparatus, manifest in the organisation of various legislative and judicial bodies, and the dynamics of the decision-making process at state level. Significantly, this 'level' of nation also encompasses official documents such as the constitution, which represents a literal inscription of a particular nation's identity. The second locus of national identity is the perceptions of individual citizens regarding their nation, their reactions to the decisions made at state level, and the level of loyalty they display to their nation.<sup>4</sup> The first half of this introductory chapter will take advantage of this distinction: Using Haller's findings as a basis, an attempt will be made, through the examination of Austria's political structure and legislation, to determine the typology of national identity to which the Austrian state purports to conform. An analysis of empirical findings will interrogate the validity of this state-based narrative of nationhood through the examination of findings gleaned at Haller's 'second level,' namely the opinions and perceptions of the Austrian community regarding their nation.

### **Typologies of national identity.**

Max Haller, as well as Bruckmüller and Thaler whose findings will also be of use in the course of this investigation, utilises three sociological typologies to inform his study of Austrian national identity, namely the *Staatsnation*, the *Kulturnation* and the *Ethnonation*. Before examining his findings in more detail, therefore, it

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<sup>4</sup> Max Haller, 'Nationale Identität in modernen Gesellschaften' in *Identität und Nationalstolz der Österreicher*, ed. by Max Haller (Vienna: Böhlau, 1996), pp. 9-61 (pp.34-35)

is necessary to provide a definition of each model. The distinction between *Staatsnation* and *Kulturnation* is possibly the best-known Germanophone contribution to the theory of nation building: The *Staatsnation* is widely agreed to correspond to the national ideal shared by Western democracies, and is defined by Thaler as constituting a community which is:

[...] constructed around the citizenry of a politically organised territory, in other words a state, regardless of the ethnic and cultural composition of this citizenry and of the possible ethnocultural continuities beyond the existing political borders [...] it demarcates the nation by the reach of a liberal constitution; this reach will normally correspond to the political frontiers of a state.<sup>5</sup>

Haller and Gruber add:

[Unter Staatsnation] [...] ist eine bewußt bejahte, politische Einheit gemeint, der man beitreten oder aus der man austreten kann, die man positiv, kritisch aber auch negativ beurteilen kann.<sup>6</sup>

The counterpart of the *Staatsnation*, the *Kulturnation*, is Germanic in origin, developing in the area encompassed by the Holy Roman Empire, as a direct result of the lack of 'political nations' with which to identify. 'National' identity in terms of the *Staatsnation* was non-existent in this area, since communities were ultimately governed by a confederation whose power stretched across the area including the Germany, Austria and Balkans of today. Since national identity could not be created on the basis of identification with smaller political units, it was necessary for it to be predicated on commonality of language, culture and shared history and myths, as Thaler suggests:

The *Kulturnation* is a community of people who share cultural attributes, the most prominent of which is a common language. These cultural and linguistic criteria can be supplemented with images of a common ancestry or of shared historical experiences. The cultural concept of nationhood stresses non-institutional criteria – political frontiers do not universally create or join nations.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Peter Thaler, *The Ambivalence of Identity* (Purdue: Purdue University Press, 2001), p. 7

<sup>6</sup> Max Haller and Stefan Gruber, 'Die Österreicher und ihre Nation' in *Identität und Nationalstolz der Österreicher*, ed. by Max Haller (Vienna: Böhlau, 1996), pp. 61-149 (p. 64)

<sup>7</sup> Thaler, p. 6



Anthony D. Smith states that each of these concepts is contrasted exclusively with normative Western paradigms, and contrasts them with his own concept, termed by other sociologists as an *Ethnonation*:

[The ethnonation emphasises] a community of birth and native culture. Whereas the Western concept laid down that an individual had to belong to some nation but could choose to which he or she belonged, the non-Western or ethnic concept did not allow so much latitude. Whether you stayed in your community or emigrated to another, you remained ineluctably, organically, a member of the community of your birth and were forever stamped by it. A nation, in other words, was first and foremost a community of common descent.<sup>8</sup>

### **Austria as 'unvollendete Staatsnation'**

Even a cursory examination of Austria's political structure reveals it to be consistent with the normative Western typology of the *Staatsnation*, in which 'die Rechte eines Mitglieds [...] politisch definiert, universell, und für alle offen [sind].'<sup>9</sup> As Haller suggests, this categorisation is ostensibly borne out by the wording of Austria's constitution, the first article of which constitutes the clearest evidence of Austria's self-perception as a paradigmatic *Staatsnation*.<sup>10</sup> The validity of this categorisation is confirmed by further legislation which not only grants ethnic minorities living in Carinthia, Burgenland and the Steiermark the same rights as other citizens, but also guarantees the provision of an education in their native language. Significantly, Austria's claim to *Staatsnation* status is further endorsed by responses to surveys cited by Haller, Bruckmüller and Menasse, which suggest the country's conformity to the second *Staatsnation* criterion, namely the conscious affirmation of the nation by its citizens. 85% of those questioned confirmed that they viewed Austria as a nation, and 90% considered themselves to be Austrian, a figure which, as Bruckmüller states, is particularly high when compared with similar surveys undertaken internationally.<sup>11</sup> Further, of those who describe themselves as Austrian, 93% identify either strongly or very strongly with their nation, suggesting the existence of what Haller refers to as a 'positive' national consciousness. On this

<sup>8</sup> Anthony D. Smith, *National Identity* (London: Penguin, 1991), p. 11

<sup>9</sup> Haller, p. 31

<sup>10</sup> Haller, p. 34

<sup>11</sup> Ernst Bruckmüller, *Österreichbewußtsein im Wandel* (Vienna: Signum, 1994), p.26

basis, then, it is seemingly legitimate to conclude that Austria constitutes a paradigmatic *Staatsnation*, as confirmed by examination of findings gleaned from both 'levels' of the nation, and thus that the dynamics of Austrian national identity are relatively uncomplicated. On closer examination, however, the constitution reveals that, although the state primarily perceives itself as a *Staatsnation*, certain legal provisions gainsay this premise. As Haller suggests, the stipulation of German as the only official *Staatssprache* tends to conform to *Kulturnation* paradigms, whereas the requirement that applicants for Austrian nationality should have been resident in the country for ten years is characteristic of the *Ethnonation* typology.<sup>12</sup> The following sections of this chapter will determine the extent to which this disparity is reflected in the results of empirical research.

### **Austria as *Kulturnation***

Haller and Gruber state that the two indicators of Austria's conformity to the *Kulturnation* model are the citizens' attitudes to language and religion.<sup>13</sup> Their findings indicate that 92% of Austrians rank the ability to speak German as an important or very important constituent of Austrian identity.<sup>14</sup> The attitude displayed towards the Church and whether Austrian identity intrinsically involved allegiance to Catholicism, however, is somewhat more complicated, and is bound up, as Haller suggests, with the role of the Church in Austrian history. Haller attributes the visible reduction in religiosity to the status of the Catholic Religion in Austria as a so-called 'Herrschaftskirche,' whose historical role in society was characterised by 'Intoleranz, die lange Unterdrückung freiheitlich-fortschrittlicher Bewegungen und [...] Diskriminierung von Minderheiten.'<sup>15</sup> Hence, only 19% of respondents agree that the Church has a role to play in political issues, whereas 65% of respondents see the Church as an important source of moral and ethical guidance.<sup>16</sup>

### **Austria and the *deutsche Kulturnation***

A more thorough examination of sociological observations regarding the concept of nation, however, adds a further layer of complexity to Austrian

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<sup>12</sup> Haller, p. 35

<sup>13</sup> Haller and Gruber, p. 68

<sup>14</sup> Haller and Gruber, p. 69

<sup>15</sup> Haller and Gruber, p. 86

<sup>16</sup> Haller and Gruber, p. 86

identity, rendering invalid the suggestion that Austria corresponds exclusively to the *Staatsnation* typology. Consensus exists regarding the importance of 'horizontal comradeship' between citizens to a 'feeling of belonging' to a nation.<sup>17</sup> In addition, both Haller and Seaton-Watson point out that this 'horizontal comradeship' can transcend state boundaries in a manner indicative of the *Kulturnation* typology, which, as we have seen, renders political borders between nations irrelevant.<sup>18</sup> Combined, these assertions explode the idea that Austrian identity is confined to the borders of the Austrian state, suggesting far more complex and interesting alternatives, one of which would be a 'multinational' identification with the peoples of the former Austro-Hungarian Empire. This would correspond to Kann's suggestion that a certain nostalgia for the Habsburg dynasty continues to permeate the Second Republic, as well as being consistent with Anderson's definition of the national as a successor of the dynastic: It is logical to assume that a successor state will inevitably be at least partly characterised by both reference to and nostalgia for, the dynastic past.<sup>19</sup> Sociological data, however, suggests that this dynastic element is now lacking within Austrian consciousness: In the course of a survey carried out in 1993 only 33% of respondents chose a former member of the Austro-Hungarian Empire when questioned as to the country with which they felt the strongest relationship ('Innere Verwandtschaft').<sup>20</sup> Furthermore, Haller and Gruber maintain that only 8% of Austrians lament the Empire's collapse.<sup>21</sup>

Significantly, the nation with which Austrians feel the most profound connection is Germany, with 61% of respondents claiming the highest degree of identification with their neighbours.<sup>22</sup> Although a 'tiefe innere Verwandtschaft' does not amount to the horizontal comradeship referred to by Anderson, nor suggest a 'supra-state' consciousness in the vernacular of Seaton-Watson, the existence of such a connection becomes more significant in light of the fact that Austria can easily be categorised as part of the *Deutsche Kulturnation*, based most

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<sup>17</sup> Haller, p. 25, Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, rev. edn. (London: Verso, 1990), p. 7 and Bruckmüller, p. 80

<sup>18</sup> Haller, p. 25-26 and Hugh Seaton-Watson, *Nations and States* (London: Methuen, 1977), p. 2

<sup>19</sup> Cf. Robert A. Kann, 'The Case of Austria', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 15 (1980), 37-52, and Anderson, p. 86

<sup>20</sup> Bruckmüller, p. 150

<sup>21</sup> Haller, p. 83

<sup>22</sup> Bruckmüller, p. 150

obviously on a common language, and secondly on common historical experiences.<sup>23</sup> As Fritz Fellner suggests:

[Der Begriff deutsche Nation könnte] als jene Überordnung kultureller Gemeinsamkeit von all jenen anerkannt werden, die zur Wahrung der Eigenständigkeit ihrer kulturellen, gesellschaftlichen und politischen Selbstverwirklichung sich vom Nationalismus der deutschen Einheit abgewandt haben. Von einer solchen Überlegung aus ließe sich die Existenz von deutschen Staaten verschiedener gesellschaftlicher und ideologischer Systeme innerhalb einer „deutschen Nation“ anerkennen und in einer solchen Interpretation läßt sich auch die Geschichte Österreichs in allen Phasen ihrer Vergangenheit bis in ihre Gegenwart unter den Begriff einer deutschen Geschichte subsumieren.<sup>24</sup>

Fellner's characterisation of Austria as a constituent of the German *Kulturnation* is borne out by closer examination of the survey cited on page 6 above, in which respondents were questioned as to their nationality. Similar surveys have been undertaken periodically since the inception of the Second Republic, and it is only within the past decade that the number of respondents confirming their Austrian nationality has begun to exceed fifty percent.<sup>25</sup> Indeed, in 1955, an overwhelming majority of respondents characterised themselves as Germans, simultaneously denying Austria's status as a nation.<sup>26</sup> Despite the steadily increasing number of positive responses, there is also evidence to suggest that the connection with the German *Kulturnation* still exists. Menasse cites a survey in which 35% of respondents agreed with the statement 'Der Anschluss brachte endlich wieder die natürliche Verbindung mit dem deutschen Volk' and maintains that 45% of the respondents were not prepared to rule out a new *Anschluß* at some point in the future.<sup>27</sup>

The most significant aspect of the Austrian public's continued allegiance to the German *Kulturnation* in the wake of Austria's experience of National Socialism lies in the fact that it constitutes a shift in the dominant narrative of the post-war relationship between the two nations, which was characterised by

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<sup>23</sup> Cf. Thaler, p. 6

<sup>24</sup> Fritz Fellner, 'Die Historiographie zur österreichisch-deutschen Problematik als Spiegel der nationalpolitischen Diskussion' in *Österreich und die deutsche Frage*, ed. by H. Lutz and H. Ramper (Vienna: Verlag für Geschichte und Politik, 1982) pp. 33-59 (p.58)

<sup>25</sup> Haller and Gruber, p. 67

<sup>26</sup> Bruckmüller, p. 80

<sup>27</sup> Menasse, p.95

constant attempts to distance Austria from Germany, vociferously denying the former's membership of the German *Kulturnation* and insisting on its independent status. At the end of the war, Austria adopted the label of 'first victim of Hitlerite aggression' which had first been accorded to them in the Moscow Declaration drawn up by the Allies in 1943. The victim thesis was attached to a caveat which maintained that the level of Austria's culpability in the events of the Second World War would be determined according to the extent that the country had attempted to free itself from National Socialist control. Austria's perpetuation of the victim thesis led to the production of a master-narrative of its role during the war years, which is summarised by Heidemarie Uhl:

In March 1938 Austria was occupied and annexed by Germany against its will. The years between 1938 and 1945 were characterised as a a period of foreign rule and, as far as Austria's role and participation in the war was concerned, these were portrayed as a period of resistance and persecution, of the nation's fight for its freedom.<sup>28</sup>

This 'master-narrative' of Austria's experience of National Socialism and the part it played in the war explicitly denies the country's membership of the German *Kulturnation* during this period, the *Anschluß* presented as the occupation of a state by a foreign power, rather than the desired integration of Austria into the supra-national Pan-German community. In order that this master-narrative might be effectively upheld, it was necessary that post-war Austrian culture and politics be 'de-Germanised,' to make way for the promotion of a specifically Austrian cultural identity over and against the pan-German allegiances promulgated by the National Socialists. This latter process became the remit of the Austrian education system, as the following statement made by the Second Republic's first education minister, Ernst Fischer, suggests:

We are a people with a unique history and culture [...] We are proud of Haydn and Mozart, Schubert and Bruckner, Grillparzer, Raimund and Nestoy. We are proud of our great architects [...] We are proud of our

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<sup>28</sup> Heidemarie Uhl, 'The Politics of Memory' in *Austrian Historical Memory and National Identity*, ed. by Günter Bischof and Anton Pelinka (New Brunswick: Transaction, 1997), pp. 64-94 (p.66)

present leaders. We are proud of our Viennese battles and achievements of the Austrian working class.<sup>29</sup>

Despite early successes, the associated process of denazification of politics was open to manipulation by the various political parties, who had managed to hamper its progress, as early as 1946, attaching clauses to registration forms which exonerated those who had never abused their positions and had proved through their behaviour that they viewed the establishment of an independent Republic positively, leading 90% of Austrian National Socialists to plead mitigating circumstances.<sup>30</sup> In 1948 a similar proportion were labelled 'less incriminated' and were thus restored to their former positions and awarded compensation for their losses.<sup>31</sup> Denazification was abandoned as early as 1949, when former Nazis had those rights restored to them that had been stripped as a result of their involvement with National Socialism. Thereafter, a policy of reintegration was initiated which aimed to reintroduce political stability to the country, indicating, as Uhl notes, that the Austrian denazification process had failed. This policy of leniency seems once more to have been politically motivated, with the major parties attempting to win the votes of the former Nazis by officially exonerating National Socialist sympathisers.<sup>32</sup>

The so-called victim thesis as an element of Austria's response to the Second World War received slight modification during the negotiations for the State Treaty of 1955, when Austrian negotiators promulgated what Uhl refers to as the 'Austrians but no Austria' argument, according to which 'because no Austrian state and no Austrian government existed at the time, Austria could not be held responsible for the crimes committed by the National Socialist regime.<sup>33</sup> This argument was appropriated time and again by the Austrian state during the war years, exploited as justification for the rejection of claims for compensation lodged by victims of the Holocaust, its dubious validity continuing well into the 1980s, as Menasse's assessment of a statement made by Chancellor Vranitzky regarding Austrian culpability during the war years explicitly demonstrates:

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<sup>29</sup> William T. Bluhm, *Building an Austrian Nation* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1973), p. 131

<sup>30</sup> Uhl, p. 71-72

<sup>31</sup> Uhl, p. 72

<sup>32</sup> Uhl, p. 72

<sup>33</sup> Uhl, p. 69

Die „österreichische Mitschuld“ wurde [...] zugegeben aber nur von Seiten einzelner Österreicher, jedoch nicht vonseiten Österreichs. Mit anderen Worten [...] Österreich war ein Opfer [...] da es ja den Staat nicht mehr gab, sondern die Einzelnen, die da lebten in dieser Gegend, in diesem Raum, wo erst später, als der Nazi-Spuk vorbei war, wieder ein Staat gegründet wurde, der daher als Staat als unschuldig zu gelten habe.<sup>34</sup>

More recently, however, there have been calls for this official response to Nazism and World War Two to be re-evaluated. These were precipitated by the Waldheim Affair of the mid 1980s, during which Presidential candidate Dr. Kurt Waldheim was exposed by the American press as having been a former member of the SA-Cavalry Corps, as well as maintaining connections with Nazi authorities during the pre-War period. Waldheim's subsequent suggestion that he had, like thousands of other Austrians, only performed his duty as a member of the *Wehrmacht* caused an international stir, but its effect was most profoundly felt at home, where it triggered the most significant identity crisis in Austrian history: Waldheim, neither a vociferous Nazi, nor a freedom fighter, was emblematic of the paradigmatic Austrian *Mitläufer*, content to conform to National Socialism.<sup>35</sup> Thus, international criticism levelled against Waldheim was seen as applicable to the Austrian nation as a whole, with Austrians being forced to reassess their own interaction with the Nazi regime in the light of the role Waldheim had played. The fact that the Waldheim affair, which occurred in 1986 was shortly followed by the fiftieth anniversary of the *Anschluß* in 1988 also led to a more focused engagement with the past in the area of academic history. The focus was now on 'the role of Austria in the creation and functioning of National Socialism.'<sup>36</sup> This paradigm shift within historical representation of Austria's role in the Second World War was largely the responsibility of an 'upcoming generation of historians,' namely the Second post-war generation, who 'aims to make sure that an acknowledgement of Austrian responsibility will be a central point of the [national] discussion.'<sup>37</sup> The alteration in the master narrative of Austria's involvement in the war is also reflected in the public

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<sup>34</sup> Menasse, p.35

<sup>35</sup> Uhl, p. 80-81

<sup>36</sup> Uhl, p. 81

<sup>37</sup> Uhl, p. 82

sphere, and on state level, where, as Uhl suggests, 'a much more differentiated perception of the past has taken hold.'<sup>38</sup> The most recent manifestation of this change was the state-sponsored exhibition *Neues Österreich* held at the Belvedere in Vienna, which displayed a combination of twentieth-century art and artefacts originating from the various 'incarnations' of twentieth-century Austria. The organisers of the conference also commissioned the production of a volume in which contemporary historians offered their view point on Austrian involvement in the Second World War and National Socialism, as well as Austria's development in the half century since its liberation from allied occupation, with a view to increasing understanding of the contemporary nation. Both the exhibition and the volume associated with it displayed a more differentiated view of Austria's past, rejecting the perpetuation of the first victim thesis in favour of exhibits and articles referring to the manner in which the Holocaust was implemented in Vienna, as well as admitting Austrian culpability.<sup>39</sup>

#### **Austria as ethnonation.**

The final variant of nationhood to be examined in this section is that of the ethnonation. Haller and Gruber analyse the applicability of the ethnonation model within Austria by way of a survey regarding the general attitude to immigration. On the basis of the results, which are too complex to allow their detailed discussion in the context of this introduction, the authors reach the following conclusion:

Man muß [...]sagen, daß hier eine Haltung dominiert, die die ethnisch-kulturelle Homogenität [...] Österreich[s] in den Vordergrund stellt und Zuwanderung nur dann toleriert, [...] wenn es um Menschen geht, die bereits eine Identität quasi mitbringen, wie sie die Österreicher selber besitzen oder zumindest bereit sind, sich in die österreichische Gesellschaft und Kultur zu integrieren.<sup>40</sup>

On the basis of the above observations, then, we can conclude that Austria's identity, according to evidence gathered from each of Haller's national 'levels,' is extremely disparate, and does not conform completely to any of the models applied by Haller. Although the majority of Austria's constitutional

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<sup>38</sup> Uhl, p. 83

<sup>39</sup> Günter Dürigl (ed.), *Das neue Österreich* (Vienna: Österreichische Galerie Belvedere, 2005)

<sup>40</sup> Haller, p.79



provisions point to its self-perception as a paradigmatic *Staatsnation*, this image is contradicted by legal provisions relating to language and citizenship. This disparity is perpetuated in the results of surveys undertaken regarding the attitudes of the population to their nation, which by turns confirm Austria's status as a *Staatsnation*, but reveal attitudes to immigrants and the wider German *Kulturnation* which suggest conformity to the paradigms of *Ethnonation* and *Kulturnation* respectively.

### **Literary considerations.**

Of greatest significance for the discussion of national identity in this thesis, however, is its presentation in literature, more particularly in the *Anti-Heimat* genre. Before discussing the formal aspects of the genre's presentation of national identity, however, it would be advantageous to sketch its history, and to pay brief attention to the concepts germane to its development, the most important of which is the term *Heimat*. Since this thesis deals with the term exclusively from a literary perspective, a cursory illustration of the term's general usage will suffice. Critical perceptions of *Heimat* tend to emphasise the difficulties involved in an accurate definition engendered as Boa and Palfreyman suggest, by the multiplicity of its applications in German culture.<sup>41</sup> Their solution is to determine the commonalities between the various usages of the term, by which means they are able to define *Heimat* as follows:

Heimat is a physical place, a social space or bounded medium of some kind which provides a sense of security and belonging. As a surrounding medium, Heimat protects the self by stimulating identification whether with family, locality, nation, folk or race, native dialect or tongue, or whatever else may fill the empty signifier to fuel a process of definition or of buttressing which feeds and sustains a sense of identity.<sup>42</sup>

The term *Heimat* possibly played its most significant role in Germanophone culture at the end of the nineteenth century, when modernity and the associated processes of urbanisation and industrialisation took hold. These phenomena produced a movement, the so-called *Heimatbewegung*, which attempted by various means to promote the rural, country-based lifestyle

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<sup>41</sup> Elizabeth Boa and Rachel Palfreyman, *Heimat, A German Dream* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 9

<sup>42</sup> Boa and Palfreyman, p. 23

predominant in both Germany and Austria before the onset of modernity. The *Heimatabewegung* propagated its own *Heimatliteratur*, aptly named *Provinzliteratur* in Austria, which constituted a conglomerate of a number of antecedent genres, most significantly the *Bauern-* and *Schäferdichtung* of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and the *Idylle*, whose main representatives include Voss and Goethe, and which was predominant during the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>43</sup> Boa and Palfreyman define *Heimatliteratur* as based upon a set of binaries, namely 'town against country, metropolis against province, tradition against modernity, nature against artificiality, organic culture against civilisation.'<sup>44</sup> As Sengle suggests, however the most important of these binaries, which formed the core of the *Heimat* genre was the good country/bad town dialectic.<sup>45</sup> In essence, *Heimatliteratur* provided an idyllic view of provincial life, to which a stable identity sited in the attachment to family and local community were central, and in which the 'inner satisfaction' was achieved through the work required to transform a 'fremdes Stück Erde' into *Heimat*.<sup>46</sup> This was then set against the town as the epicenter of modernity, in which the dominant mentality revolved around commercialism, money, and the depersonalisation inherent in industrial division of labour.<sup>47</sup> As Thurnher suggests, the predication of the good country/bad town dialectic remained central to the *Heimatroman* well into the 1930s, at which point, as we will see later, the format was hijacked by the National Socialists as a site for the perpetuation of their *Blut und Boden* philosophy.<sup>48</sup> Thurnher further implicitly contends that the good country/bad town dialectic outlived the other indicators of the *Heimatabewegung's* influence which had, he suggests, begun to fade by the mid-1930s.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> These observations summarise those in Friedrich Sengle 'Wünschbild Land und Schreckbild Stadt,' in *Europäische Bukolik und Geogik*, ed. by Klaus Garber (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1976), pp.137-159 . Cf. also Norbert Mecklenburg, *Ezählte Provinz* (Königstein/Ts.: Ludicium, 1982), pp. 51-56

<sup>44</sup> Boa and Palfreyman, p. 2

<sup>45</sup> Sengle, p. 145

<sup>46</sup> Eugen Thurnher, 'Plädoyer für den Heimatroman' in *Wesen und Wandel der Heimatliteratur*, ed. by Karl Konrad Polheim (Bern: Lang, 1989, pp. 25-37, (p. 27)

<sup>47</sup> Roszbacher discusses these contrasting phenomena in his essay 'Die Literatur der Heimatabewegung um 1900' in *Topoi der Heimat und Identität*, ed. by Peter Plenar and Peter Zalen (Budapest: Druckerei der Loránd-Eötvös-Universität, 1997) <[http://magyar-irodalom.elte.hu/palimpszeszt/09\\_szam/10.htm](http://magyar-irodalom.elte.hu/palimpszeszt/09_szam/10.htm)> [Accessed 28th August 2006]

<sup>48</sup> Thurnher, p. 31

<sup>49</sup> Thurnher, p. 31

Critics of the *Heimatroman* have been virulent in their attack upon the naivety inherent in the genre, whose dependence on the 'good country/bad town' dialectic 'an die Realität vorbeigehe. Daraus ergebe sich zwangsläufig, daß die soziale Problematik völlig übersehen werde, da eine falsche Harmonisierung der Gemeinschaft die tiefen menschlichen Gegensätze einfach zudecke.'<sup>50</sup> These criticisms are borne out by Mecklenburg, who suggests that, human conflict was completely expelled from the idyllised province.<sup>51</sup> This naivety was thrown into sharp relief thanks to the steadily increasing prominence of National Socialism. As Mecklenburg suggests, the 'agrarkonservatives Bild' perpetuated by the *Heimatroman*, which prioritised the relationship between the human being and nature, the farmer and the 'Stück Erde' he called *Heimat*, made the genre an easy target for National Socialist *Gleichschaltung*, the 'bruchlose[r] Übergang von der Heimatkunst zur Blut-und-Boden-Dichtung' achieved through the replacement of this agricultural conservatism with a 'völkisch nationalistische[s] Weltbild.'<sup>52</sup> In addition, the emphasis upon the relationship between man and nature, with its connotations of the elemental, the primitivist and the biological, could easily be manipulated to correspond to National Socialist racial policy, according to which the superiority or inferiority of a particular race was determined solely by biological factors. In addition, the *Heimatroman's* glorification of the provincial lifestyle, particularly that of the farmer corresponded to National Socialist cultural policy, which viewed the *Bauer* as a corner-stone of society.<sup>53</sup>

As a result of its appropriation by National Socialism, it would be logical to expect that *Heimat* and the literature associated with it would become taboo after the war. In Austria, however, the opposite was true. Joseph McVeigh maintains that attempts to rebuild Austrian national identity after the war took as their basis the population's deep-seated identification with their regions. As a result, the *Heimatroman*, and more specifically those examples of the genre which had represented the corner-stones of 'National Socialist literature' were exploited to serve the formation of a 'uniquely Austrian culture,' and thus

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<sup>50</sup> Thurnher, p. 31

<sup>51</sup> Mecklenburg, p. 50

<sup>52</sup> Mecklenburg, p. 100

<sup>53</sup> Wilhelm Reich, *Die Massenpsychologie des Faschismus*, 6th edn (Cologne: Kiepenheuer and Witsch, 2003), p.62

reached the status of a 'national literature' in post-war Austria.<sup>54</sup> The elevation of the *Heimatroman* to national literature after the war reveals a level of hypocrisy (or naivety) which fits exactly into the wider context of post-war Austrian cultural memory, corresponding to the discourse of cultural continuity which attempted to leapfrog the Austrian experience of National Socialism by figuring the Second Republic as the successor state of the First.

### **The *Anti-Heimatroman*.**

It was against this background that the first *Anti-Heimatroman* emerged. Hans Lebert's *Die Wolfshaut* proved the precursor to a flood of similar novels by authors such as Fritsch, Bernhard, Jelinek and Innerhofer. The *Anti-Heimatroman*, characterised by Josef Koppensteiner as 'eine neue Heimatliteratur, die die Heimat [...] als kaputt denunziert',<sup>55</sup> adopted and hollowed out the idyllised presentation of the province proffered by the traditional *Heimatroman*, revealing the emptiness and hypocrisy inherent within it, and exposing provincial life as a 'stumpfer Bauernalltag'.<sup>56</sup> Central to this portrayal was the brutal subjugation of provincial inhabitants achieved in a manner indicative of the continued prevalence of the National Socialist ideology. Critical opinion differs with regard to the motivations and purpose of the *Anti-Heimatroman*. Lorenz suggests the repressive, bleak and hopeless image of the province projected by the genre to be indicative of an attempt by its propagators to 'reproduce the scheme of the fascist province ex-negativo',<sup>57</sup> punishing the 'pious lie' of *Heimat* resulting from its appropriation by National Socialism.<sup>58</sup> The author of 'Sohn eines Landarbeiters,' Michael Scharang, concurs with this assessment, suggesting that the *Anti-Heimatroman* 'wendet sich gegen die mythologisierende Verhöhnung von Heimat, Landschaft und Literatur' constituting 'eine Heimatdichtung, die die Heimatdichter Lügen straft'.<sup>59</sup> Klaus Zeyringer, on the other hand, cites the motivational basis of the *Anti-Heimatroman* within the experiences of the individual authors, characterising the genre as an attempt to 'break the silence' forced upon them and their

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<sup>54</sup> Joseph McVeigh, 'Das bin ich nur, wenn ich es bin', *German Quarterly*, 61 (1988), 5-21 (p. 17)

<sup>55</sup> Koppensteiner, p. 1

<sup>56</sup> Koppensteiner, p. 2

<sup>57</sup> Dagmar Lorenz, 'Austrian authors and the Dilemma of Regional and National Identity at the End of the Twentieth Century', *Modern Austrian Literature*, 29 (1996), 13-29 (p. 14)

<sup>58</sup> Lorenz, p. 14

<sup>59</sup> Koppensteiner, p. 2

protagonists by provincial upbringings dominated by the National Socialist *Erziehungsstil*.<sup>60</sup> In addition, Koppensteiner confirms that *Anti-Heimatliteratur* perceives *Heimat* merely as 'eine Dimension der politischen Realität,' its primary function that of social criticism.<sup>61</sup> Most significant for our purposes, however, is Mecklenburg's suggestion that *Anti-Heimat*'s appropriation of the provincial milieu is intended to reflect the provincialism of the Austrian nation itself. Mecklenburg characterises the province of Austrian *Anti-Heimat* as a 'model' of the Austrian nation, relating the concept to Steinbeck's 'Mikro-Makro Methode,' which the latter applied 'in the hope that the microcosm would reflect the outlines of the macrocosm.'<sup>62</sup> To underline the point, Mecklenburg further describes the term model as referring to 'ein ikonisches Zeichen [das] dieselbe Eigenschaften [hat] wie das Gezeichnete.'<sup>63</sup> Hence, the 'Desaster der Provinz'<sup>64</sup> so explicitly portrayed by the *Anti-Heimat* genre was, according to Mecklenburg's *Provinz als Modell* convention, intended as a 'microcosmic' representation of the wider national situation, actively encouraging the reader to relate the presentation of the province to the wider national situation, and thus explicitly conforming to the criteria set down by Menasse for a *Nationalliteratur*.

Zeyringer, Thurnher and Lorenz however, agree that the *Anti-Heimat* genre faded into insignificance at the beginning of the 1980s, its particular brand of social criticism having begun to bore the reader.<sup>65</sup> Andrea Kunne ignores the *Anti-Heimatliteratur* until the very end of her study, analysing Innerhofer's *Schöne Tage* and the works of Josef Winkler based upon criteria gleaned from Rossbacher's inventory of *Heimatliteratur* conventions.<sup>66</sup> The case studies of contemporary literature which follow will take a similar approach, analysing the manner in which texts from the 1980s and 1990s treat the various conventions relating to the *Heimat* and *Anti-Heimat* genres in order to determine the veracity of the widespread critical opinion relating to the contemporary status of the *Anti-Heimatroman*. Each will begin with a topographical analysis of the novel in order to determine the extent to which it corresponds to Mecklenburg's *Provinz als Modell* concept, and thus how far the internal

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<sup>60</sup> Klaus Zeyringer, *Innerlichkeit und Öffentlichkeit* (Munich: Franke, 1992), p.93

<sup>61</sup> Koppensteiner, p. 2

<sup>62</sup> Mecklenburg, p. 41

<sup>63</sup> Mecklenburg, p. 42

<sup>64</sup> Menasse, p.102

<sup>65</sup> Koppensteiner, p.9

<sup>66</sup> Andrea Kunne, *Heimat im Roman* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1991)

dynamics of each narrated milieu can be read as emblematic of the wider national situation. Each chapter will then determine whether these internal dynamics correspond to those of paradigmatic *Anti-Heimatliteratur*. It is important to note once again that *Anti-Heimatliteratur* was largely predicated upon the reversal of conventions inherent in *Heimatliteratur*, which it applied and negativised to create the 'frame' for its presentation of the repression inherent in the 'Desaster der Provinz,' and thus, by association, of Austrian life. As we have seen, this presentation usually involved a combination of two thematics, namely the re-narration of the self in order that the 'silence' enforced upon the protagonist might be broken, and secondly the ex-negativo presentation of the village as governed according to National Socialist conventions. This thesis, therefore, will adopt the approach followed by Kunne, illustrating the appropriation and negativisation of *Heimat* conventions within the corpus. The most important of these are the rural setting, the constellation of characters and the creation and perpetuation of in-group/out-group binaries. However, the thesis will also attempt to correct two of the most critical omissions made in Kunne's work. Firstly, it will extend its discussion of *Heimat* conventions to the authors' appropriation of aspects of the *Heimat* discourse, including the centrality of family and local community, and the conventions of *Heimat –Weiblich*. Secondly, it will incorporate the contemporary presentation of *Anti-Heimat* thematics outlined above into its discussion. Particular attention will be paid in each case to the authors' treatment of the various factors involved in the question of Austrian national identity outlined in the initial section of this introduction. The final step will be to combine and summarise the authors' treatments of Austrian national identity, and refer back to the sociological models set out in the first half of the introduction. The aim of this comparison will be to determine whether these texts constitute, with Menasse, 'Leitbild[er] der österreichischen Identität'<sup>67</sup> and thus whether the contemporary incarnation of the *Anti-Heimatroman* can legitimately be characterised as *Nationalliteratur*.

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<sup>67</sup> Menasse, p. 116

# Chapter 1: Josef Winkler- *Der Ackermann aus Kärnten*

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## 1.1 Motivations for *Anti-Heimat*

As has been shown in the course of the introduction, one of the most conspicuous trends in criticism regarding the position of the *Anti-Heimatroman* in the literary landscape of the early 1980s, common both to contemporary critical opinion and that which emerged retrospectively towards the end of the decade is the suggestion that the influence, relevance and significance of the genre had peaked during the latter half of the 1970s, by which time the its presentation of repressive provincial life was beginning to 'bore' the reader.<sup>1</sup> Consensus also prevails regarding the reasons behind this reduction in significance. Both Thurnher and Koppensteiner attribute this to the *Anti-Heimatroman's* perpetuation of the clichés and conventions prevalent in its converse, the *Heimatroman* of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.<sup>2</sup> *Anti-Heimat* authors protested against the mythologisation of the province within *Heimatliteratur* by delivering representations of their provincial upbringings generating 'ein Bild der Hoffnungs- und Auswegslosigkeit des Landlebens, [das] gegen die Landidyllik gestellt [wurde.]'<sup>3</sup> Provincial life was represented as repressive *Bauernalltag* from which the inhabitants were unable to escape, and which offered no opportunity for intellectual stimulation, social advancement, or, most significantly, self-expression, a situation exacerbated by the authoritarian upbringing to which the authors and their protagonists were subjected. It was the fight against this 'enforced silence' which, for Zeyringer, constituted the main motivation for the traditional *Anti-Heimatroman*, with authors rectifying the self-denial forced upon them by their upbringing by means of their narratives.<sup>4</sup> Koppensteiner's observations are similar to Zeyringer's, but extend the latter's emphasis on individual self-expression as a motivation for *Anti-Heimat* writing, suggesting that the genre's main contribution was its attempt to lend a voice to those incapable of expressing themselves as a result of the oppression inherent in the provincial lifestyle.

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<sup>1</sup> Koppensteiner, p. 8

<sup>2</sup> Koppensteiner, p. 8, Thurnher, p. 37

<sup>3</sup> Zeyringer, p. 91

<sup>4</sup> Zeyringer, p. 92

Anti-Heimatautoren stellen sich im Dienste derer, die in Sprachlosigkeit geraten sind. Sie wollen das Schweigen brechen [...] an die Menschen ihrer Heimat herkommen und mithelfen, sie aus der Passivität herauszubringen, Sprachlose zur Sprache zu bringen, Denkanstöße vermitteln.<sup>5</sup>

The emphasis on the genre's contribution to the 'breaking of enforced silence,' whether that of the individual authors or the 'universal' silence engendered by the lack of opportunities for self-expression offered within the provincial milieu, diverts attention away from the second factor in the genesis of the *Anti-Heimat* tradition, namely the fascistic glorification of the province undertaken by the Nazis in the form of so-called *Blut-und-Bodendichtung* of the 1920s-1940s: The tendency to overlook this factor can also be seen in Koppensteiner's insistence that the failure of *Anti-Heimatliteratur* was not its perpetuation of *Blut-und-Boden* conventions, but rather those of the *Heimatroman*, which had first emerged in Austria over a century previously. It is interesting to note that the influence of National Socialism on *Anti-Heimat* authors, and its presentation in the novels he refers to, is at best fleetingly considered, cursory mentions of Innerhofer's *Bauern-KZ* and Bernhard's treatment of the issue constituting the only direct references.<sup>6</sup> In keeping with his focus on the personal motivations of individual authors, Zeyringer implicitly attributes discussions of National Socialism in the *Anti-Heimatroman* to the fact that the majority of *Anti-Heimat* authors were brought up in families who continued to perpetuate the methods of upbringing propagated in the Third Reich.<sup>7</sup> Only Lorenz briefly refers to the importance of the fascistic configuration of the province for the *Anti-Heimat* genre, suggesting that '[c]ritical authors reacted to the glorification of villages and small towns by fascists by [...] reproducing the scheme of fascist literature *ex-negativo*.'<sup>8</sup>

The aim of this first chapter, a reading of Josef Winkler's *Der Ackermann aus Kärnten* (1980) is to examine the validity of the various critics' suggestions regarding the motivational basis of the *Anti-Heimatroman*. The novel has been chosen as a departure point for this thesis for several reasons. Firstly, its

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<sup>5</sup> Koppensteiner, p. 9

<sup>6</sup> Koppensteiner, pp. 6, 8

<sup>7</sup> Zeyringer, p. 93

<sup>8</sup> Lorenz, p. 15



publication date in 1980 places it on the border between the traditional *Anti-Heimatroman* referred to by Koppensteiner and the emergence of what Zeyringer sees as differentiated 'Heimatbedingungen' during the eighties, which has necessarily led to confusion in terms of the novel's supposed relationship to the *Anti-Heimat* tradition.<sup>9</sup> Both Lorenz and Zeyringer classify Winkler's work as paradigmatic *Anti-Heimatliteratur*, alongside authors such as Scharang and Innerhofer, whereas Andrea Kunne suggests that the *Heimatbild* presented within the novel approaches what she refers to as the 'limits' of the *Heimat* genre.<sup>10</sup> Winkler's comments regarding *Anti-Heimat* further complicate the matter, since the author suggests that the designations *Heimatliteratur* and *Anti-Heimatliteratur* are inapplicable to his work:

Beides hat damit nichts zu tun. Wenn jemand ein Buch über die Liebe, das Leben, den Tod in Amsterdam schreibt und er ist hier aufgewachsen [...] und er schreibt vielleicht auch kritisch über Amsterdam, dann kommt kein Mensch auf die Idee zu sagen, das ist Heimatliteratur oder Antiheimatliteratur.<sup>11</sup>

At the core of this reading of the novel, then, will be an examination of the extent of its conformity to the goals of the *Anti-Heimatroman* suggested by Lorenz, Koppensteiner and Zeyringer, as well as the topographical conventions laid down by Norbert Mecklenburg in *Erzählte Provinz*. After assessing the extent to which Winkler's provincial milieu corresponds to Mecklenburg's *Provinz als Modell* concept, the chapter will embark upon examinations of the presentation of *Heimat*, *Anti-Heimat* and fascistic conventions in the context of the novel's two major thematic concerns, namely the dynamics of the *Bauernfamilie*, particularly the relationship between father and son, and the role of religion within the community, in order to demonstrate the author's configuration of each institution as an agent of (fascistic) repression. Such an analysis will demonstrate Winkler's presentation of provincial and therefore by association national identity as governed by authoritarian conventions indicative of a prevailing National Socialist mentality and by a superficial allegiance to

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<sup>9</sup> Zeyringer, p.230

<sup>10</sup> Zeyringer, p. 92, Lorenz, p. 21 and Kunne, p.301

<sup>11</sup> Matthias Prangel, *Die Wiederentdeckung der Genauigkeit*

<[http://www.literaturkritik.de/public/rezensionen.php?rez\\_id=6730](http://www.literaturkritik.de/public/rezensionen.php?rez_id=6730)>[accessed 15/08/2006], para. 41

religious principles which act alongside the family to subjugate provincial inhabitants and drown out external influences.

## 1.2 *Erzählte Provinz*

Whilst an examination of the topography of *Der Ackermann aus Kärnten* may seem incompatible with the aims of the chapter set out above, an understanding of the configuration of space prevalent in Winkler's novel is essential for three reasons: Firstly, an analysis of the parallels between the spatial dynamics of Winkler's provincial milieu and Mecklenburg's conventions of *Erzählte Provinz* will determine the extent to which the provincial milieu narrated within *Ackermann* conforms to the 'Provinz als Modell' concept, and thus whether its prevalent social dynamics constitute a reflection of national identity. Further, a brief insight into the social characteristics of the prevalent milieu will demonstrate the author's appropriation of *Heimat* conventions as a 'framing structure' for the narrative. Thirdly, the layout of the village, which resembles a crucifix, represents the groundwork for the novel's key metaphor to which the narrator, whose childhood memories, and hugely negative perceptions of his provincial surroundings constitute the main source of material for the narrative, constantly returns as the novel progresses. The narrator appropriates the village as crucifix metaphor to obfuscate *Heimat* conventions, generating parallels between the crucified Christ and various characters, including himself and his father, the eponymous *Ackermann*, whose violent subjugation of his son forms the basis of the conflict central to the narrative. Further, the narrator exploits the centrality of the image within the Catholic religion to illustrate the repressive nature of the rites and rituals which govern life in his childhood village, and connects the image to the central issue of sexual repression via instances of sacrilege which manifest themselves in a veiled sexual attraction to the figure of the Christ.

The events narrated in *Der Ackermann aus Kärnten* are set almost exclusively in the narrator's childhood village, assigned with the epithet 'K.' As Kunne suggests, the dominance of the narrated spaces of *Dorf* and *Hof* within the novel corresponds to the *Heimat* setting identified by Rossbacher, an observation which is also true of the novel's cast of characters, made up of farmers, along with a teacher and a priest.<sup>12</sup> This is further evident within the

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<sup>12</sup> Kunne, pp. 265, 30

features of the village itself; besides its thirty houses, 'K' contains only a church and a tavern. Further, the dominant role played by nature within the everyday life of the family portrayed within it constitutes a manifestation of the typical *Heimat* convention of human dependency on nature. The *Hof* provides the family with everything they require to sustain themselves, and the sole source of monetary income alluded to is the auctioning of livestock. In addition, family life is dominated by the *Bauernarbeit* required to keep the *Hof* operational, work carried out by every family member apart from the narrator himself. Further correspondences with Rossbacher's *Heimat* conventions are visible in the references to natural catastrophes, the occurrence of which is shown to motivate a sense of community again typical of the *Heimat* tradition. The community's attitude towards outsiders suggests the perpetuation of paradigmatic in-group/out-group relations, as demonstrated by their treatment of the Yugoslavian in 'Haus 23,' whose inability to speak fluent German results in his rejection by the *Dorfgemeinschaft* (407). Religion's dominance within the village, signified by the crucifixes present in every house, as well as references to religious festivals, and the piety of various characters, most obviously the narrator's grandmother, who bemoans the death of Pope John XXIII and uses her rosary as a source of comfort in times of crisis, is again a characteristic typical of the conventional *Heimatroman*.<sup>13</sup> In accordance with Lorenz's suggestions, however, Winkler's configuration of the province ruthlessly negativises these conventions, figuring 'K', by way of his narrator's memories and perceptions of his childhood, as an inescapable natural hell, governed by familial repression and a religion whose hyperbolic reliance on Catholic rites and rituals promulgates a culture of macabre repression.

Initially, the topographical relationship between the novel's central locale and locations external to it seems to allow Winkler's provincial milieu to evade categorisation according to Mecklenburg's conventions of *Erzählte Provinz*. From the outset, the village is set in a wider context through references to international events, most obviously the deaths of Pope John XXIII and John F. Kennedy, whilst references to Carinthia and to neighbouring villages and towns such as Villach set the village in a geographical context at both local and *Bundesland* levels. From these observations, it would be logical to conclude

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<sup>13</sup> These observations draw extensively on Kunne's discussion of *Ackermann's* relationship to Rossbacher's typology of *Heimatliteratur*. Cf. Kunne, pp. 260-270

that 'K' corresponds to Mecklenburg's 'offene Provinz' However, the typical goals associated with the open province, which 'finde[t] sich [...] dort, wo gestaltete Oppositionen [...] von Provinz/Welt, Land/Stadt, Heimat/Fremde [...] den Erzählhorizont ausweiten'<sup>14</sup> are inapplicable to Winkler's novel. Whereas the narrated topography creates the appropriate conditions for the investigation of the binaries to which Mecklenburg refers through the inclusion of references to external locations, the main role of such references within *Ackermann* is to highlight the monotony of provincial life. Access to external locations, apart from Villach, which has a slightly different function, is almost exclusively via the media, such as the magazine *Die Bunte Österreich Illustrierte*, the photographs of the outside world contained in which are fought over by the narrator and his brother when the magazine is delivered (353). The significant role of the media in the generation of parallels between province and outside world, which, within the conventional *Heimatroman* is usually undertaken either through direct comparison with an external milieu, or the appearance within the village of a character who perpetuates values opposite to those of the provincial inhabitants,<sup>15</sup> is perhaps most obvious in the narrator's reaction to the television programmes he watches in a neighbouring home. His desperation at the adverts broadcasted is predicated upon their presentation of 'eine bessere Welt,' to which he has no access:

Ich fühle Haß, sobald jemand auf dem Bildschirm kokett die Lippen öffnet, um [...] Schokolade einzuführen. Sie sollen [...]uns nicht zeigen, daß es eine bessere Welt gibt. (322)

Further replacements for the topographical presentation of the *Provinz/Welt* binary occur in the form of the village's penetration by manifestations of mass culture which constitute an explicit contrast to the repressive religiosity and *Bauernarbeit* upon which Winkler's village community is founded. The inability of the provincial community to integrate with this external 'pop culture' which is enthusiastically subscribed to by the younger generation, is highlighted by the fact that the children are forbidden to listen to the *Hit Parade* during preparations for their grandmother's funeral (222). Winkler hyperbolises the juxtaposition between the ritual surrounding the death

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<sup>14</sup> Mecklenburg, p. 49

<sup>15</sup> Cf. Kunne, pp. 31-32

of the protagonist's grandmother, emblematic of a key characteristic of the village's culture, and the youth culture the narrator espouses, employing an extended metaphor in which the grandmother's coffin is compared to a guitar, whose strings are provided by her hair, and which her corpse is ready to play (223). These metaphorical comparisons, encountered constantly in Winkler's work, make the incompatibility of the two cultures explicit in the most grotesque way possible, the incongruity of *Bildspender* and *Bildempfänger* repels the reader and thus brutally drives the point home. The manifestations of mass culture in Winkler's provincial milieu constitute the groundwork for the exploration of generational conflict, which will be discussed in more detail later with reference to the relationship between the narrator and his father. It is important to point out, however, that it is exclusively the younger generation who not only espouse popular culture as an escape route from the drudgery of their provincial lifestyle, but who are interested in the world outside the village: The only time the narrator's father leaves 'K' for the town, for example, is to visit his injured youngest son in hospital. He is equally shown as having little interest in events external to the province, prioritising the provincial lifestyle solely dependent on nature.

Katastrophenmeldungen aus der *Volkszeitung* sind für den Ackermann keine Katastrophenmeldungen mehr, zwischen den Zeilen sieht er die schwangere Kuh, die breiter werdende Scheide, bis der Kopf des Kalbes [...] auftaucht [...] (306)

Apart from the trip made by the narrator's father, the narrator himself is the only character to ever leave the village, ostensibly to attend the *Handelsschule* in Villach. These daily excursions, which end with the narrator visiting the cinema to watch horror films are only very briefly referred to, but provide one of the few instances of an explicit exploration of the *Stadt/Land* dialectic. The narrator's visits to the cinema, however, constitute hyperbolised experiences of his life in the village, the horror films he watches replicating the macabre atmosphere that dominates at home, as well as the physical violence he is subjected to by his father when he returns late after his trip (387). These visits to the town, which constitute failed attempts to escape the country, set the groundwork for a more comprehensive exploration of the *Stadt/Land* binary

which occurs in *Muttersprache*<sup>16</sup> where the outcome is similar. The narrator discovers that his inability to leave his childhood village, as well as being predicated upon lack of opportunity, is also bound up with an 'internal bond' formed by his childhood experiences: unable to entirely abandon the province in favour of the metropolis, the narrator's observations regarding his relationship with each milieu suggest, as Kunne contends, an equal dependence on both.

Ich werde aufs Land zurückkehren, auf die Berge meiner  
Kindheitsumgebung und von dort das Heimattal betrachten,  
wahrscheinlich werde ich bald danach wieder für ein paar Monate in eine  
Stadt hinfliehen und wieder aus der Stadt in die Landschaft flüchten und  
wieder in die Stadt flüchten und wieder aufs Land flüchten.<sup>17</sup>

Although *Der Ackermann aus Kärnten* ostensibly generates a metropolis/province binary, then, its importance within the novel is by no means as extensive as the modified form of the convention present, for example, in *Wiener Passion*, which is the focus of the third chapter. Nor is the *Provinz/Welt* contrast achieved by topographical means, but relies instead on various media to represent the outside world, the image of which does not wholly constitute the stark contrast that we might expect, partly hyperbolising the conditions prevalent in 'K'. As can be seen from the above observations, the *Stadt/Land* binary is largely replaced within *Ackermann* by what seems to be a generational split. As the novel progresses, however, it becomes obvious that 'K's group dynamics are somewhat more complex, with in-group/out-group binaries based not solely on generational membership, but rather upon the extent to which various characters either represent or conform to the oppressive cultural norms upon which life in 'K' is founded. Winkler's construction of in-group/out-group binaries modifies the constellation prevalent in Innerhofer's *Schöne Tage*, in which agents of repression are referred to by their function, 'Priester, Lehrer,' whereas those who are subjected to oppression are given names.<sup>18</sup> In Winkler's novel, names are given to those characters who refuse to conform to the repressive drudgery of the provincial lifestyle, a refusal of which the younger

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<sup>16</sup> Josef Winkler, 'Muttersprache' in *Das Wilde Kärnten* (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1995) pp.477-849

<sup>17</sup> Winkler, 'Muttersprache', p. 792, Cf. Kunne, p. 263

<sup>18</sup> Koppensteiner, p.6

generation's enthusiastic espousal of 'pop' culture is indicative. It is important to note that the only members of the younger generation not referred to by name are the protagonist's 'arbeitsam[e], fleißig[e]' brothers, whose integration into provincial life is absolute. Thus, the typical functions of the metropolis/province and province/world binaries are largely internalised within *Ackermann*, with media and mass culture providing the basis for binaries which would usually be topographical in nature.

In the light of these observations, as well as the dominance of the village setting within the novel, which is only ever replaced very briefly by other locations, we can in fact suggest that the spatial configuration presented by Winkler has more in common with the 'closed' province, which is typically adopted as the basis of novels which take advantage of the *Provinz als Modell* concept, according to which 'Provinz für [...] einen Staat, eine Gesellschaft, [steht].'<sup>19</sup> The suggestion that Winkler's province is intended to function as a model of Austrian society, and thus to correspond to Mecklenburg's contention that the *Anti-Heimat* province reflects 'die Provinzialität des Staates Österreich'<sup>20</sup> is supported by the almost complete absence of references to Austrian society from the novel. Indeed, the only manifestation of a specifically Austrian (state) identity to penetrate the village is the picture of the *Bundespräsident* in the narrator's classroom. The narrator maintains that this will be covered with a photograph of himself after his (imagined) death (226). The reference to this custom can be seen to confirm that 'K' is intended to function as a 'model' of Austrian society, since the manifestation of the national represented by the photograph of the *Bundespräsident* is replaced with a picture commemorating an event significant only at a local or community level. This suggestion is borne out by the fact that the picture of the deceased narrator is a pictorial representation of death, which plays a key role in Winkler's narrated province.

Given this conformity to the *Provinz als Modell* convention, then, it can be suggested that the dynamics of the microcosm presented within *Ackermann* can be seen as indicative of the wider national condition. Even at the topographical level, however, Winkler's novel evinces certain characteristics which mark a departure from the traditional *Heimat* and thus *Anti-Heimat* structure: The

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<sup>19</sup> Mecklenburg, p. 41

<sup>20</sup> Mecklenburg, p. 42

construction of a *Provinz/Welt* binary by means of the province's penetration by popular culture rather than explicit comparisons between the province and the outside world suggests a modernisation of typical *Anti-Heimat* conventions indicative of the author's attempt to bring the genre into step with contemporary culture. This attempt is also attested to by the prevalent role played by the cinema in the creation of an (albeit negativised) *Stadt/Land* binary.

### 1.3 The *Dorfkruzifix*

The topography of Winkler's central locale plays a dominant role in *Ackermann* more so than that of any of the other authors whose work features in this thesis. The village takes the form of a crucifix, an image mapped onto it in such a way that the key points on the body of the Christ, head, feet, heart and hands, correspond to locations of significance in terms of the narrator's experience of the repressive provincial milieu (201). The two main agents of this repression are, as we have seen, the Catholic Church and the narrator's *Elternhaus*, their prominence in this respect reflected by their positions on the *Dorfkruzifix*. The role of the church is constantly emphasised through the author's use of a technique of metaphorical layering, by means of which the reader is bombarded with juxtapositions emphasising the role of death and suffering within the Catholic religion and, the life of the village. The connection already explicitly created by the village as crucifix metaphor is built upon by the placement of the *Pfarrhofstadl* and the church and cemetery, which represent the head and feet of the *Dorfkruzifix*. Each of these sites is connected to the joint suicide of two of the narrator's acquaintances, who hanged themselves from a *Kalbstrich* in the barn attached to the *Pfarrhof*. In addition, the house of one of these acquaintances, Jakob, is next to the church at the foot of the *Dorfkruzifix*, the two buildings connected by an 'ameisenhollendünne Streifen' (201) from the house to the church, where the 'Leid des Dorfes' is once more reflected in the crucifix-shaped watermarks on the *Hostien* which in turn represent the body of the crucified Christ.

The most important site however, is the narrator's *Elternhaus*, which represents 'Das Herz des Kruzifix, der Knotenpunkt meines Romans' (201) and to which a lengthy section in the middle of the novel is dedicated. The 'heart' of the village is affected by the suffering reflected in the metaphor of the *Dorfkruzifix*, generating a 'Verbindung mit dem Tod', which 'fließt in die Adern



der anderen Häuser' (201). The presentation of the narrator's *Elternhaus* is key to an understanding of the motivations behind the particular configuration of 'K', which cast the novel as a typical *Heimatroman* according to Kunne's criteria. It is the narrator's attitude to his *Elternhaus* which is the source of the negativity in Winkler's portrayal of provincial life, and the overt hatred displayed towards the milieu itself and the religious rites to which its inhabitants adhere. Whereas Innerhofer's *Schöne Tage* represents 'verbale Rache an der Landschaft',<sup>21</sup> with the provincial milieu and nature itself constituting the target for the novel's satire, the negative portrayal of provincial life in *Ackermann* is a symptom of the specific conflicts which occur within the narrator's *Elternhaus*, particularly that between father and son which, quite literally, constitutes the novel's *Knotenpunkt*.

In the internal topography of 'K,' then, the narrative's central conflicts are summarised. The importance of the father/son conflict and the deaths of the *Lehrlinge* Robert and Jakob, are each reflected through the positioning of the sites with which they are associated, whereas the role of religion within the novel, specifically in terms of its relationship with suffering and death, is reflected in the association of *Kirche*, *Friedhof*, *Pfarrhof* and *Hostien* with Jakob and Robert's suicide, as well as the village's overall topography. The remainder of this chapter will examine the role ascribed to family and Catholic religion in more detail, in an attempt to demonstrate the dynamics of their presentation as agents of repression and their common perpetuation of social structures essential to the effective functioning of National Socialism. Aside from their obvious significance within *Ackermann*, these institutions have been chosen because of their relationship to *Heimat* discourse and national identity.<sup>22</sup>

The relationship between nation and family as presented in *Ackermann* constitutes a side-effect of the particular familial configuration prevalent in the novel. This family, paradigmatically authoritarian, conforms to a structure prevalent in fascist states, including National Socialist Germany and Austria. According to psychologist Wilhelm Reich, whose work the exploration of the novel's presentation of the family will be based upon, the authoritarian family,

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<sup>21</sup> Koppensteiner, p.4

<sup>22</sup> Haller has cited allegiance to the Catholic religion as a major criterion for the *Kulturation* typology of nation (see on page 7) whereas Thurnher makes a connection between *Heimat* and the inner peace achieved through religion. (Thurnher, p. 32)

particularly the *Bauernfamilie* constituted a 'Nation im Kleinen',<sup>23</sup> with the prevalent familial dynamics constituting microcosmic reflections of nationwide hegemonies. Thus, in much the same way as the 'closed' province, Winkler's presentation of the family within the novel can be seen to represent the Austrian nation.

#### 1.4 Province and the authoritarian family

The continued influence of National Socialism within the protagonist's native milieu is made explicit immediately, with the protagonist maintaining 'Hitler war tot, aber sein Geist lebte fort in unserem Dorf, im Reich des Bauernhofes' (235). As the novel progresses, the protagonist builds on this assertion, demonstrating nostalgia for the return of Nazism in the purported opinions of both his uncle, and his father. Whilst the uncle's utterances suggest a desire for the return of the National Socialist regime, however, the stories related by the protagonist's father betray a nostalgic attitude specifically towards the Second World War, during which he served as a conscript (377). Significantly, the father's involvement in the war is one source of the son's animosity towards him, a situation which replicates the dynamics of *Väterliteratur* with which Winkler's novel evinces certain parallels. These can be demonstrated through a brief examination of the key characteristics of the genre. Schlant suggests that *Väterliteratur* was characterised by a 'rage [...] motivated by personally sustained psychological damages,' which authors tended to avenge through the evocation of the genocide in which their fathers had been involved, whether directly or indirectly.<sup>24</sup> Schlant also suggests, however, that these diatribes were motivated in part by the 'schizophrenic' situation of the second generation themselves, who, whilst despising their parents for their association with the Holocaust, were forced to accept culpability for their parents' involvement within the atrocity

While the young vehemently attack the parent generation the two generations are tied together in their self-perception as victims who cannot be held accountable for their deeds. The older generation saw itself as duped and betrayed and thus victimised by Hitler and Nazism. The younger generation has been crippled by bullets from the armories of the

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<sup>23</sup> Reich, p. 92

<sup>24</sup> Ernestine Schlant, *The Language of Silence* (New York: Routledge, 1999), p.82

war generation [...] Those from whose armories [the bullets] came cannot be held accountable for the damage. Therefore, the younger generation finds itself not in a paradoxical but a schizophrenic situation: it violently attacks and insults the parents and sees itself as their victims at the same time that it exculpates them.<sup>25</sup>

In *Ackermann*, Winkler takes these conventions to their logical conclusion. Whilst there is no evidence that the father figure feels victimised as a result of his actions in the war, several of the protagonist's utterances indicate the generational transfer of guilt from the father figure onto himself, as confirmed by his various attempts to compare himself to the crucified Christ. Just as Christ died to atone for the sins of humanity, so the protagonist becomes a site onto which the father's unacknowledged guilt is transferred, and for which he must now atone, a requirement which, paradoxically, his brutal treatment at the hands of his father could be seen to fulfill. Thus, the protagonist's obsession with the soldiers murdered by his father can be seen as a comment on the universal situation of the post-war generation, particularly in Austria, who are forced to atone for their parent's guilt.

The significance of the *Ackermann*'s status as a former soldier has implications for the structure of the narrator's family, which, he suggests, is based upon a 'militärische Ordnung' (301), the dynamics of which are authoritarian and patriarchal. The novel is filled with references to the father's adherence to a mode of discipline predicated on physical violence, and the emphasis upon the physical strength required to undertake 'Männerarbeit' on the farm. The father's attitude can also be accounted for by theory relating to the *Väterliteratur* genre. Anne Fuchs confirms that 'the [post-War] generation of fathers responded to its degradation at the end of the war by exercising its [...] authoritarianism within the four walls of the family unit.'<sup>26</sup>

The military dynamics of the narrator's family are significant, since the authoritarian structure present in the father's brutal treatment of the family suggests his continued subscription to the patriarchal *Erziehungsprinzipien* promulgated by the Nazis, thus demonstrating the novel's perpetuation of *Anti-*

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<sup>25</sup> Schlant, p. 83

<sup>26</sup> Anne Fuchs, 'The Tinderbox of Memory' in *German Memory Contests*, ed. by Anne Fuchs and others (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2006) pp.47-65 (p.50)

*Heimat* conventions laid out by Zeyringer.<sup>27</sup> However, closer examination reveals that the conformity of the dynamics prevalent in the narrator's family to those espoused by National Socialism go beyond the principles of upbringing, since the family structure as a whole conforms to authoritarian paradigms. Although it is important to note that the authoritarian typology of state and family was not exclusive to National Socialism, the various characteristics ascribed to the father suggest that their reproduction within the novel is intended to assist the presentation of the milieu as one in which specifically National Socialist conventions continue to dominate. This suggestion is borne out particularly by the comparisons made between the protagonist's father and Adolf Hitler:

Der Ackermann trägt einen Hitlerbart. Tiere und Kinder bilden sein Volk, das jedem Befehl gehorcht [...] Heil Ackermann! [...] Auf seinem rechten Oberarm trägt er ein [...] Hakenkreuz (221).

The suggestion of a continuation of an authoritarian family structure within Winkler's novel represents justification for a closer examination of that structure, focussing in particular upon those aspects which could be considered typical of National Socialism, in order to demonstrate the author's extension of Lorenz's suggested ex-negativo presentation of the provincial milieu onto the provincial family. The exploration of familial dynamics within Winkler's novel is rendered all the more necessary by the centrality of the family within traditional *Heimatliteratur*, as well as the significant role that familial connections play within general definitions of the *Heimatbegriff*.<sup>28</sup> Of particular relevance here is Wilhelm Reich's *Die Massenpsychologie des Faschismus*, which explores the role of family and religion in the maintenance and perpetuation of principles inherent within the authoritarian state, placing particular focus on the authoritarian structure prevalent within National Socialism.

According to Reich, the particular vulnerability of the *Bauerntum* to 'politische Reaktion,' a term he uses in this context in reference to the National Socialist philosophy of *Blut und Boden*, and conformity to the authoritarian family structure with which the efficient functioning of the National Socialist state as a whole was bound up, was predicated upon the equivalence of 'Familie und wirtschaftlicher Kleinbetrieb' inherent in the structure of the typical farming

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<sup>27</sup> Zeyringer, p. 93

<sup>28</sup> cf. Boa and Palfreyman, p. 26

family.<sup>29</sup> According to Reich, the maintenance of 'familial' connections, essential for the family to function effectively as an industrial unit, was contingent upon the sexual repression of each family member by the patriarch upon whom they were fully dependent.<sup>30</sup> These suggestions are particularly relevant for *Heimatliteratur* since they negativise three main elements of *Heimat* which such literature intrinsically glorified, namely the concept of *Erdgebundenheit*, implicit in the suggestion that the entire family should partake in the work required for *Hoferhaltung*, the connection to the family which constitutes the heart of the *Heimat* tradition, and the work involved in the transformation of 'ein fremdes Stück Erde' into *Heimat*.<sup>31</sup> Reich's suggestions cast these corner-stones of the *Heimat* and *Blut-und-Boden* traditions as instruments of patriarchal oppression, a position also explicit in the vitriolic presentation of each aspect within *Ackermann*. The narrator implies that the function intended for both himself and his brothers was that of 'Lebendiges Werkzeug der Hoferhaltung,' (307) a characterisation which hyperbolises the depersonalisation inherent within the role, explicitly debunking the emotional 'familial connection' central to the *Heimat* tradition by casting the children not merely as workers, but as tools to be exploited by the farmer.

It is worth mentioning that the presentation of the narrator's older brothers attests to the authoritarian family's success in its reproduction of the authoritarian structure in its members, since the father's relationship with the remainder of his sons follows the authoritarian model set down by Reich. Reich suggests that the father's position in the family reflects that which he assumes in the industrial process, in that his attitude to his subordinates is reproduced in his attitude towards his sons, whereas the attitude he has towards his superiors is reproduced within them. Given the lack of such a structure within the farming industry, particularly in the *Kleinbetrieb* presented within *Ackermann* this suggestion appears irrelevant. However, the relevance of the concept of rank is reinstated in the light of the father's previous position in the army and his attitude towards his higher-ranking father-in-law, presented as the only member of the family the father was ever afraid of (377). The fact that the father's relationship with his sons reflects his position in the army makes parallels with

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<sup>29</sup> Reich, p. 62

<sup>30</sup> Reich, p. 109-110

<sup>31</sup> Thurnher, p.34

Reich's contentions more explicit. This seemingly incongruous suggestion is based upon the relationship of the armed forces to the state to which they belong, constituting the physical representation of state power. Thus, the fact that the dynamics of the authoritarian family present in *Ackermann* are based upon a militaristic structure makes the status of the family as 'Nation im Kleinen' even more explicit. The reproduction of the authoritarian structure within the elder sons is evident firstly in their lack of resistance to the work they are forced to carry out on the farm, suggesting their adoption of an *Untertanenstellung* within their relationship to their father. Later in the novel, however, the brothers begin to take on their father's characteristics (390), indicating an increased identification with the father figure, and thus the beginnings of the reproduction of authoritarian *Obrigkeit* within them.

In addition, the brothers' relationship to Catholicism is typical of that which would manifest itself within the authoritarian family, where religion constitutes the prime method of sexual repression required to maintain familial links. According to Reich, this 'religious repression' is achieved in the authoritarian family through the inculcation within the child of what he refers to as 'sexuelle Angst,' based upon the belief that any manifestation of sex constitutes a sin which would be observed and punished by the omniscient God.<sup>32</sup> Within *Ackermann*, this omniscience is literal rather than psychological, given the number of crucifixes within the village, the presence of which engender a fear of masturbation within one of the brothers:

Wenn [Der Älteste] sein steifes Glied in den Händen hält, wirft ihm Gott [...] Kruzifixe auf die Erde. [Er] kriecht unters Bett, um dort [...] mit seinem Geschlecht spielen zu können, aber die Unterseite des Bettes hat Kreuzgestalt. Im Klosett gibt es keinen Herrgottswinkel, dorthin wird er morgen gehen, niemand wird es sehen (357).

The narrator's relationship to his father, the remainder of his family, and to both religion and sexuality, however, is different from that of his brothers since he is never fully integrated into the authoritarian family structure and is thus subjected to altered manifestations of repression, to which he reacts differently. Referring back to Reich's suggestion that the basis of repression in the authoritarian family is the involvement in *Hoferhaltung* and the equivalence

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<sup>32</sup> Cf. Reich, pp.146-149

between family and worker which this represents, the inability of the father figure to induct the narrator effectively into the authoritarian family can be seen as based on the child's inability and unwillingness to function as a 'lebendiges Werkzeug,' a task which his weak constitution prevents him from fulfilling adequately. The narrator's apparently work-shy nature makes him a target for his father's abuse: constantly referred to as 'nutzloser Fresser' 'Nichtsnutz' and 'Arbeitsscheuer,' the consciousness of his own uselessness to his family and the fact that he represents a burden for them is ingrained in the narrator at an early age. On the other hand, the narrator's failed integration into the authoritarian family explains his highly rebellious streak, which manifests itself in his appropriation of popular culture (particularly his hairstyle) and in terms of his relationship with his father, whose inability to instil in him the sense of *Untertanenstellung* that would have been a side-effect of his role in the 'wirtschaftlicher Kleinbetrieb' results in the narrator's attempts to provoke him, and a related failure to obey him without question in the same way as his brothers. When the narrator is physically forced into manual labour, he is able to mount at least a psychological defence, as the following passage demonstrates:

Weisst du noch, wie du mir eine Mistgabel in die Hand drücktest und mich zwangst, die Spitzen in das Heu zu treiben [...] du weißt wohl nicht, daß ich, während ich meinen Händen die kotbehangene Mistgabel ins Heu drückte, in deinen Eigenweiden herumfuhrwerkte (292-293)<sup>33</sup>.

Aside from these instances of 'inner rebellion,' the relationship between father and son is largely characterised by fear, with the narrator constantly avoiding the Ackermann to prevent further physical violence. This fear is somewhat incongruous when juxtaposed with the child's attempts to rebel. However, examination of the family structure as well as the narrator's sexuality suggests the existence of a source of 'Angst' directly related to the child's relationship with its mother. Before examining this more comprehensively, however, it is necessary to look in more detail at the presentation of the child's relationship to his sexuality. From the outset, the narrator's inability to undertake the 'Männerarbeit' expected of him results in his insertion into stereotypically feminine roles, helping his mother in the kitchen and acting as 'Kindermädchen' (301) to his younger brother which could be seen, at least in

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<sup>33</sup> Cf. Kunne, p. 278

part, as the root of his unconventional relationship to sexuality, demonstrated by the episode in which he dresses up in his sister's clothes (328). This action effectively reduces the narrator to the embodiment of the emasculation to which his father subjects him: As he suggests 'Solange du lebst, Vater, verzichte ich auf meine Männlichkeit' (301). The assumption of feminine sexuality in the absence of *Männlichkeit* suggested here, however, constitutes an oversimplification of the issue. The narrative is peppered with instances of homoeroticism, which find their zenith in what Kunne, not unproblematically, refers to as the sacrilegious sexualisation of the crucified Christ.

The prominence and incongruity of these factors within the narrative mean that they are deserving of closer attention. Firstly, however, it is necessary to examine the role of sexuality in the traditional *Heimatroman*, which, as Kunne suggests, was limited to pro-creation in order to produce heirs, a tenet which homosexuality infringes:

Betrachten wir die Homosexualität vor dem Hintergrund des traditionellen Heimatromans, so verstößt sie wesentlich gegen den Erwartungshorizont des Hofes, für dessen Erhaltung die gesicherte Generationsabfolge einer der Grundvoraussetzungen bildet. [Sie] macht den Sohn, der den Erwartungen des traditionellen Schemas nicht entspricht, zum Außenseiter in der eigenen Familie.<sup>34</sup>

The narrator's 'homosexuelle Neigungen,' constitute an *Anti-Heimat* characteristic, and combine with his inability to work on the farm to cast him as the 'outsider' or 'other' figure a further example of an 'internal otherness' in the absence of the topographical split between town and country. Attempts to trace the roots of the various 'perversions' the narrator displays, however, lead back to a conventional *Heimat* topos, namely the relationship between the mother and *Heimat*, which, as well as constituting one of the basic conventions of the *Heimat* genre, was also central to National Socialist family policy: Here, the mother was perceived as the representation of the 'deutsche Idee' and 'Deutschsein und Muttersein' as synonymous with one another.<sup>35</sup> Winkler exaggerates this convention through the demonstration of an overt Oedipal relationship between mother and child. This relationship can be seen as constituting the main source of the father's animosity towards his son, and,

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<sup>34</sup> Kunne, p. 278

<sup>35</sup> Reich, p. 63



given the connection between the Oedipal complex and the castration complex, can also be seen as the root of the child's fear of his father.

Ostensibly, the narrator's mother occupies the role which Boa and Palfreyman ascribe to the mother figure of *Heimat*, her function in the *Hof* limited to bringing up her children and rearing the young livestock, as well as protecting her offspring from their father's violent outbursts (317). Thus, the mother ostensibly provides the 'womb-like' protection typical of the conventional 'mother as *Heimat*' motif. From the novel's outset, however, the author negativises various elements of this motif, in particular the relationship between women and men prevalent within it. As Boa and Palfreyman suggest, men tend to acquire the *Heimat* embodied by women, thus casting women in the role of the male 'possession.' This role is reflected in *Ackermann* by the mother's subjection to her husband's violence, but also in his ability to literally penetrate and destroy the womb-like protection she provides, as the narrator's supposed experience of sexual intercourse between his parents whilst an embryo suggests (280). Further, constant emphasis is placed upon the mother's illness, more specifically her 'krankes Herz,' which is implicitly connected to the *Heimat* motif at the beginning of the novel when the 'kranke Herzschräge' emanating from the 'väterliche[s] Mutterhaus' are presented as the source of the connection with death which determines the life of the village (202). The epithet 'väterliches Mutterhaus' connotes firstly the father's domination of the mother figure, and secondly the blurring of conventions of gender and sexuality which is later shown to be embodied by the narrator. Besides the obvious negativisation of the *Heimat*-as-mother motif engendered by the connection to the novel's motif of suffering, the mother's illness also reflects the decay of the *Heimat* concept represented in Winkler's provincial milieu. As Boa and Palfreyman suggest, the health status of the mother is often synonymous with that of the *Heimat*.<sup>36</sup> Seen in this light, *Heimat* for Winkler is a concept indicative of disease and illness, which, when adapted to the village of 'K,' 'bald tot sein wird' (299).

Further ostensible conformity to *Heimat-weiblich* conventions is visible in the presentation of the relationship between mother and son, which is, at least

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<sup>36</sup> Boa and Palfreyman, p. 27

superficially, conventionally Oedipal in nature, with the narrator referring constantly to his over-dependence on his mother:

Ich war das schwächste Kind und in den Augen des Vaters der personifizierte Tod der Mutter, das Kind, das sich immer wieder an ihre Füße und an ihren Schoß klammerte. Während eines Mittagessens sagte er zur kranken Mutter, *Du siehst schon gleich aus wie der da drüben.* (292)

The tendencies reflected in the above are significant in terms of the relationship between the narrator and his parents. Firstly, the wording of the above can, in the light of Winkler's use of 'Schoß' in other contexts to refer to the mother's sexual organs (304, 280 for example), be seen as an implicit reference to the child's desire for the mother. This provides a basis for the father's animosity towards his son, namely his anger at the child's veiled attempts to possess his mother. In addition, the existence of an oedipal relationship allows the abject fear which the child displays to be linked to fear of castration by the father as the conventional punishment for his oedipal desires. Therefore, the two main elements of the child's relationship with his father, namely fear and rebellion, can be reconciled without compromising the suggestion that the child's induction into the authoritarian family remains incomplete.<sup>37</sup>

Typical of Winkler's work, however, is a tendency to obfuscate paradigmatic Freudian situations. The most significant instance of this is the father's covering of his genitalia when his son mistakenly walks in on him bathing. This can be read as indicating a fear on the part of the father of castration by the son, a topos which has its roots in Greek mythology, where Uranus, the son of the god Cronos, overthrew his father by castrating him and casting his genitals into the sea. Subsequently, the fact that the father perceives his son as a competitor is confirmed, when the narrator's command of language and talent for narrative are suggested as the basis of the father's decision to ban him from speaking in his presence:

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<sup>37</sup> The Oedipus complex is fully explicated by Sigmund Freud in his lecture 'Angst und Trieben.' Cf. Sigmund Freud, *Studienausgabe*, ed. by Alexander Mitscherlich and others, 11 vols (Frankfurt a.M.: Fischer, 1989), I: *Vorlesungen zur Einführung in die Psychoanalyse*, pp. 517-543

Verglichen mit den anderen Bauern warst du sprachlich gewandt, mir hast du die Sprache weggenommen, vielleicht deshalb. Ob du Konkurrenz gewittert hast? [...]neimand war so sprachwitzig wie du (377).

The narrator is shown to be obsessed with language from the outset, constantly frustrated by the animals' inability to understand him, and becoming more upset by his father's verbal than his physical abuse. Various vitriolic passages lamenting the father's 'strangulation' of the narrator's language pepper the text, and explicitly cite the 'reclamation' of this repressed self-expression as the main motivation for the novel. The role of language is central to the presentation of religion within the novel, and thus will be explored in more detail later in the chapter. For now, it suffices to point out that the motif of the reclamation of a repressed ability to express oneself, and the replacement of repressed oral language through written, cast *Ackermann* firmly as a member of the traditional *Anti-Heimat* genre. This classification is also borne out by the protagonist's implicit reference to the process of 'working through' which the reconstruction of his childhood represents: He suggests 'Alles, was ich beschriebe, wird neu' (291), an implicit confirmation that his narrative reproduction of his *Heimatsdorf* fulfils the role of repetition, cited by Freud as a key element of the process of working through trauma.<sup>38</sup>

In his presentation of the family then, Winkler engages in a 'double' negativisation of an element central to both the *Heimat* discourse and correspondingly the *Heimatroman*. Winkler's presentation of the family as based upon oppressively authoritarian conventions represents a negativised portrayal of the traditional *Bauernfamilie*, whereas his representation of the relationship between *Familie* and *Kleinbetrieb* and the repressive familial connections that it involves reproduce *ex negativo* the idea of a connection to family which is at the heart of the *Heimat* concept. The second element of the presentation of family, however, is Winkler's demonstration of the negative psychological effects suffered by the subjects of its patriarchal suppression, thus also debunking the glorious image of the authoritarian *Bauernfamilie* so central to the National Socialist *Blut-und-Boden* philosophy. Within the frame of the family, Winkler also negativises other conventions of the *Heimat* genre, specifically the role of

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<sup>38</sup> Cf. Sigmund Freud, 'Erinnern, Wiederholen, Durcharbeiten' in *Studienausgabe*, xi: *Ergänzungsband: Schriften zur Behandlungstechnik*, pp. 125-136

the mother and the rigid conventions of sexuality, and reveals the extent to which deviation from these *Heimat* norms within the Austrian milieu leads irrevocably to emasculation and physical and psychological repression. More importantly, however, the author's appropriation of the 'Provinz als Modell' concept, as well as the authoritarian family as 'Nation im Kleinen' suggest that certain conclusions can be drawn regarding Austrian national identity, which, on the basis of his presentation of the province, continues to perpetuate specifically National Socialist conventions.

### **1.5 Mein religiöses Gefängnis.**

This final section of the chapter will examine the role of religion within the novel, illustrating its complicity in the protagonist's repression, but also demonstrating the protagonist's various attempts to counter it, firstly through language and secondly through acts of sacrilege.

Within *Ackermann*, religion simultaneously constitutes the main tool of social repression and the main weapon by means of which this repression can be exposed and combatted. Before examining this two-fold role more closely, it is important to note that the root of what we might refer to as religion's 'linguistic repression,' particularly with respect to the protagonist, is Catholicism's constant application of allegory to convey religious concepts, 'Sprichwörter' which constitute the core of religious belief in the village. The narrator's reaction to such allegory in a religious context betrays the fact that he has not been made aware of its metaphorical nature, and thus takes each instance literally, as in the following example:

Staub warst du und zu Staub wirst du wieder, sagte der Priester. [...] Ich erschrak, und fragte mich, wer mich wohl zur Kirchentür hinauskehren würde. (246)

Although the above quotation is free of Winkler's usual vitriol, tending towards comic satire, the sentiment is characteristic of the author's presentation of religious rite, exposing the psychological damage incurred by the child as a result of his literal interpretation of religious adages. This occurs again in the protagonist's reaction to the commandment 'Du sollst nicht töten,' which he universalises, resulting in an overwhelming feeling of guilt engendered by a tendency, common to the majority of the children within the village, to kill various amphibians and insects (231). In each of these instances, language

functions as a tool of repression, firstly as a result of the protagonist's lack of understanding of the concept of metaphor, and secondly because of religion's inability to accommodate the childish misdemeanour that the killing of such animals can be seen to constitute.

The second, contradictory aspect of the relationship between language and religion in *Ackermann* is rooted precisely in the child's tendency to interpret the words of the Bible literally, which leads him to pray for better marks in school, which then fail to materialise. This event seemingly convinces the child of the emptiness and uselessness of religious language, which, he hints, had until this point constituted the only form of language he had been familiar with. This revelation causes him to go in search of other modes of language, replacing the Bible with literary texts, which he is initially unable to understand (293). From this point, the replacement of biblical language with literary language becomes synonymous with the replacement of Catholicism as a religion with language itself, with the protagonist later presenting language as a deity in which he believes (326). As he suggests towards the beginning of the novel, his re-narration of his childhood constitutes an attempt to pit this new-found language, based upon his experience of literary texts, against the language of his childhood, including the language of religious ritual, essentially applying language as a weapon against itself (215). A closer examination of the protagonist's childish reaction to his literal interpretation of the priest's comment 'zu Staub wirst du wieder,' and his questioning of who will brush him out of the Church door, is an example of this process. The child's reaction exposes the absurdity of religious language, as well as the contingency of its elevated status upon a conditioned, metaphorical interpretation into which the child has not been fully initiated. The use of biblical language 'against itself' is even more evident in the protagonist's inversion of commandments, which are paired with references to his repressive family life: 'Du sollst töten, mindestens ein Tier töten, wenn dich [...] dein Vater schlägt.' (273). Here, the inversion of the corner-stone of the Catholic religion demonstrates the irrelevance and incongruity of Catholic principles in the light of the protagonist's familial situation, further emphasised by the father's use of the rote repetition of the ten commandments as a method of punishment (389). As we might expect, much of the vitriol directed at religion within the novel is intended to expose the father's

hypocrisy, his pious religiosity belied by the violence to which he subjects his family.

The father's role in the presentation of religion, however, is more pronounced than the above observation suggests. Religion is inextricably linked to the narrator's family, most specifically the relationship between the protagonist and each of his parents. At various points, Winkler manipulates the familial structure so that the various relationships inherent within it become reminiscent of the three figureheads of the Catholic Church, with the narrator taking the role of the Christ child, his mother, aptly named Maria, Virgin Mary, and his father God. The latter of these parallels is perhaps the most explicit, since the father figure is equipped with characteristics and language reminiscent of those attributed to the deity in the Bible. He suggests, for example a wish to 'form his children after his own image,' (389-390) and the protagonist characterises his father's fist as 'das Werkzeug deiner Kraft' (267). This parallel is particularly significant in terms of the continued prevalence of National Socialism within 'K.,' constituting a manipulation of a technique used by Thomas Bernhard in *Die Ursache*, in which Catholicism replaces Nazism as the governing philosophy in the protagonist's boarding school, and is shown to be structurally identical and equally repressive.<sup>39</sup> Winkler manipulates this device slightly, intending to demonstrate not the replacement of Nazism by Catholicism, but rather the manner in which the two institutions function simultaneously as agents of repression. This becomes obvious during the episode in which the father punishes his son by pointing at the crucifix when the usual, physical violence indicative both of his position in the authoritarian family and of the sadism characterised by Reich as an element of specifically National Socialist repression, does not function effectively (267). Further, religion is symbolically twinned with National Socialism in the protagonist's fantasies which include images of *Heiligenbilder* goose-stepping around the room (201).

Although religion and family do function as agents of (authoritarian) repression, however, the protagonist's relationship with religion differs from that of his older brothers, for whom Catholicism also serves as an agent of specifically sexual repression, as exemplified by the oldest brother's inability to masturbate within sight of a crucifix. This differentiated relationship with religion

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<sup>39</sup> Thomas Bernhard, *Die Ursache: Eine Andeutung* (Munich: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 1977)

has two probable sources, firstly the protagonist's position as *Erzministrant* and secondly his incomplete integration into the authoritarian familial structure. The protagonist views the Church, despite his suggestions to the contrary, as the 'lesser of two evils' in comparison to his home life. The church functions as a place of refuge, since the father '[es] nicht wagt, mich von diesen heiligen Stätten zu holen' (307). This seemingly incongruous function confirms that, rather than its various institutions and manifestations, for example the church and the priest, Winkler's satire is exclusively directed at the philosophy behind the Catholic religion, and the rites and repressive use of linguistic formulations characteristic of it. Secondly, the role as *Erzministrant* generates respect for the protagonist within the community, which plays to the pretensions of grandeur visible within his narrative. Finally, the protagonist's 'rebellious streak' causes him to wilfully desecrate the various 'sacred' accoutrements of Catholicism, stealing wine and *Hostien* from the sacristy, and using his grandmother's funeral as an opportunity both to steal and get drunk on communion wine. His justifications for these actions constitute a further demonstration of the incongruity and inappropriateness of religion against the poverty-stricken background which Winkler creates; the protagonist suggests that he steals the *Hostien* because they provide a variation from the monotonous 'Brot und Speck' which he is constantly forced, for economic reasons, to eat in the family home.

This 'rebellious streak' extends to the narrator's perception of the relationship between sex and religion, which contrasts greatly to that of his elder brother. Whilst the former was unable to engage in masturbation within sight of a crucifix, the protagonist, although conscious of the divine punishment likely to be meted out as a result, is able to do this without showing evidence of shame or fear. Unlike his older brother, he does not attempt to hide his onanism from the crucified Christ, and does not fear his gaze, which, he notes, is directed at his 'feuchte[n] Schoß' (304). This sacreligious willingness to masturbate in the presence of the crucified Christ is combined with occasions on which the child lifts the Christ's loin cloth in order to determine whether he has a penis. This action automatically sexualises and also 'personalises' the Christ, violating the sanctity of the crucifix and the image of Christ upon it by assigning him human attributes. The implied characterisation of the Christ as a sexual being also contradicts Catholic dogma, according to which the Christ is free of sin and thus

would be unable to engage in a sexual act. Significantly, the child's actions are implicitly demonstrated as intended to draw a comparison between the narrator and the Christ, since the narrator's curiosity is motivated by a desire to discover whether 'Jesus denselben fleischlichen Auswuchs zwischen seinen Beinen trägt wie ich' (302). This sacrilege reaches its zenith towards the end of the novel in a scene involving the protagonist and his friend, Eman, praying in church:

In der Kirche knieten wir vor dem Kruzifix aber wir drehten unsere Körper und beteten einander an. Griff ich zu den Holzwänden des Kruzifix hinauf, sah ich dabei auf seine Finger, tasteten seine Hände nach den Lippen des Kruzifix, fixierten seine Augen meine Mund. Sah ich auf das Lendentuch des Gekreuzigten, begann sich mein Körper zu schütteln. Eman lehnte sich an mich, um mein Vibrieren zu dämpfen, niemand dürfte es sehen. Nichts ist größer als die Liebe zu Gott, (410)

The ambiguity of this scene means that it lends itself to various interpretations, by turns relativising and confirming the suggestion that religion does not function as an agent of sexual repression in the protagonist's case. On one level, the above quotation can be read as documenting an instance of religious repression of sex, since the boys do not give in to their obvious desire for one another because of the presence of the crucifix. The question of repression here, however is complicated by the fact that the boys do not merely refrain from any kind of sexual contact, but rather that they transfer their desires for one another onto the crucified Christ. Thus, whilst religion functions as an agent of sexual repression for the remainder of the characters, both Eman and the protagonist are able to use the repressive function of religion against religion itself. In mapping their sexual desires, which they are unable to act upon as a result of their subjection to religious repression, onto Catholicism's central icon, they make religion itself the site of this desire. In doing this, they violate what Reich sees as the central tenet of religion within the patriarchal society, namely the fact that sexual desires represent 'Das Negative der Religion'<sup>40</sup> and thus that the two are mutually exclusive. Although Reich goes on to suggest that 'der religiöse Mensch' replaces sexual with 'religious' arousal, the dialogue surrounding this episode suggests that this is not the case, confirming that the protagonist's piety is merely a matter of show. 'Ich trug

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<sup>40</sup> Reich, p. 141



immer ein Gebetbuch bei mir, um den Priester zu beeindrucken (410). As we might expect, the narrator's usual vitriolic disrespect for religion resurfaces here, since the fact that the desire projected by the two boys onto the Christ is the physical desire for one another, rather than the religious 'desire' which justifies the erotic depiction of the Christ within religion, means that the boys' actions can be seen as monumentally sacrilegious.

### **1.6: A modernised *Anti-Heimatroman*?**

Based on the above observations, it is necessary to conclude that *Ackermann* ostensibly conforms to the conventions of the 1970s *Anti-Heimatroman*, comprising in almost equal measure an ex-negativo reproduction of the fascistic province with Lorenz, and a *sprachliche Abrechnung mit der Kindheit*, thus corresponding to Zeyringer's suggestions. It is important to note, however, that this compliance to *Anti-Heimat* paradigms is not complete, with three specific elements of the novel deviating from convention: Firstly, the destiny of the protagonist means that the novel is able to fulfil the didactic task that Koppensteiner assigns to *Anti-Heimatliteratur* more effectively than its predecessors. Koppensteiner suggests that the didactic message of the traditional *Anti-Heimatroman*, intended, as has already been suggested, to provide a voice to those rendered silent by the harsh realities of the provincial milieu was undermined by two issues. Firstly, traditional *Anti-Heimat* protagonists, almost invariably, end up in situations which re-affirm the prevalence of the province's repressive influences. The protagonist of Scharang's *Sohn eines Landarbeiters*, for example, commits suicide, whilst the heroine of Jelineks' *Liebhaberinnen* ends the novel as a prostitute.<sup>41</sup> Therefore, 'die negativen Kräfte der Heimat siegen in jedem Falle.'<sup>42</sup> Secondly, Koppensteiner contends that the nature of these 'dunkle Mächte' is never made explicit. Neither of these criticisms is applicable to Winkler's novel, however: It is evident from the outset that the 'dunkle Mächte' of the provincial milieu comprise the protagonist's tyrannical father and the Catholic religion, against which the protagonist is able to mount almost constant rebellion by means of the murderous thoughts he entertains towards his father and his sacrilegious antics in his Church. Thus, the protagonist survives the provincial milieu,

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<sup>41</sup> Koppensteiner, p. 9

<sup>42</sup> Koppensteiner, p. 9

mounting his most effective rebellion by re-narrating the province and thus reclaiming the language and associated sense of self which were forcibly suppressed by his provincial upbringing.

Further, use of the 'Provinz als Modell' convention discussed in the first section, means that the portrayal of the repressive effects of these institutions upon the provincial milieu presented in the novel can be seen as indicative of Austrian national identity. One particularly interesting aspect of the novel, however, is the lack of explicit references to the Austrian nation itself. This, however, need not be seen to diminish the novel's criticism of the state. Instead, the lack of explicit references can be explained by the prominence of the *Anti-Heimatroman* within the Austrian canon towards the end of the 1970s. The 'flood' of critical regional novels referred to by Zeyringer likely meant that the Austrian readership was already familiar with the *Anti-Heimat* genre as one whose criticism was aimed primarily at the state, having been confronted with such vitriolic texts as Thomas Bernhard's *Die Ursache*, Scharang's *Sohn eines Landarbeiters* etc. In *Ackermann*, Winkler's various hints function adequately to remind the reader of the 'national' dimension of the novel's satire.

Possibly the most significant variation from *Anti-Heimat* discourse, however, is visible in the novel's topographical dynamics. The province, which remains strictly closed within traditional *Anti-Heimatliteratur*, is permeated within Winkler's novel by various manifestations of mass culture, most obviously pop-music, but including the visual and print media. The intrusion of these factors into provincial life is indicative of a second phase of provincial modernisation, already begun by the phenomenon of mechanisation as visible in Innerhofer's *Schöne Tage*, in which modernisation manifests itself in the arrival of the tractor. The influence of mass culture upon the provincial milieu will provide the thematic focus for the following chapter, a reading of Norbert Gstrein's *Das Register*.

## Chapter 2: Norbert Gstrein- *Das Register*

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### 2.1 *Heimatliteratur, Anti-Heimat or Fremden/Verkehrsliteratur?*

Klaus Zeyringer characterises the 1980s as a form of *Zäsur* in terms of Austrian literature, and more particularly with regard to the declining prominence of the *Anti-Heimatroman*. Echoing Koppensteiner's suggestions that *Anti-Heimatliteratur* was largely defunct by the beginning of the 1980s, Zeyringer suggests that the onset of the decade coincided with the emergence of a 'new generation' of authors whose response to the province was governed by formative experiences of the milieu which, as a result of increasing mechanisation, had differed dramatically from those of their forebears, such as Scharang, Innerhofer and Jelinek. In addition, these traditional *Anti-Heimat* authors had themselves, by the end of the 1970s, completed the process of 'working through' their negative experiences by means of their satire. *Anti-Heimat* narrative thus gave way to a more differentiated literary *Heimatbild* reflective of the contemporary social and economic situation, which concerned itself primarily with the connected issues of mass-tourism and the environment.<sup>1</sup>

For Zeyringer, the post *Anti-Heimat* trend of the 1980s divided into two strands. On the one hand, intensifying urban migration engendered by increasing mechanisation had led to the relocation of the impoverished provincial underclass whose plight provided the departure point for the traditional *Anti-Heimat* narrative, from the country to the city, which inspired 'conventional' *Anti-Heimat* authors to shift their attention from provincial agriculture to town-based industry.<sup>2</sup> The 'industrial *Heimat*' found its converse in the commercialisation and quasi-industrialisation of the province as a result of constantly escalating mass-tourism, particularly in the Alpine regions. The destructive effect of this phenomenon upon traditional provincial/rural communities became the critical focus of the contemporary regional literary tradition, a development which consequently engendered a change in the way the province was narrated. The concept of the *Bauern-KZ* was abandoned in favour of the depiction of provincial communities whose traditional social

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<sup>1</sup> Zeyringer, p. 230

<sup>2</sup> Zeyringer, p. 230

structures had been obfuscated by the inhabitants' envelopment in the so-called 'Alles-für-den-Gast' mentality, and whose family units had been commercialised in order to take full advantage of the economic benefits of the boom in tourism.<sup>3</sup> The relationship between man and nature, intrinsically altered by the complementary processes of mechanisation of agriculture and the 'industrialisation' of the landscape through the installation of the accoutrements of Alpine tourism also provided a major critical focus for this so-called *Fremden/Verkehr* literature. As Zeyringer suggests:

[Es ging] wohl um die Ausbeutung des Einzelnen, meist in der [...] Fremdenverkehrswirtschaft, ging es auch um die „Ausbeutung der Landschaft.“ Heimat. Das waren nicht mehr die Heimatbedingungen des Bauern-KZ. In den achtziger Jahren war Heimat wo noch niemand war.<sup>4</sup>

Close reading of the above quotation, however proves it to be contradictory, constituting by turns a tacit acknowledgement of parallels between the contemporary literary trend and its *Anti-Heimat* predecessor and referring to the emergence of a completely unrecognisable *Heimatbild* during the 1980s, a 'Heimat wo noch niemand war.' Such contradiction becomes even more apparent on examination of the responses of other critics to the authors whose works Zeyringer employs to exemplify the post-*Heimat* oeuvre, amongst them Tyrolean author Norbert Gstrein. Zeyringer characterises Gstrein's first novel *Einer* as indicative of the shift in critical focus away from the *Bauern-KZ* to the 'Alles-für-den-Gast' community. Gernod Pfandler, on the other hand, warns against over-estimating the importance of the 'anti-tourism' motif within Gstrein's work, suggesting that Zeyringer's classification of *Einer* in the tradition of *Fremden/Verkehr* constitutes a misunderstanding of the novel's main aim. According to Pfandler, Gstrein's novel represents an examination of the provincial 'voicelessness' which Zeyringer attempts to relegate solely to the 1970s *Anti-Heimat* tradition:

Die Erzählung *Einer* kreist immer wieder um die Problematik, aber es ist sicherlich ein Fehler, den Text nur an diesem Merkmal festzumachen

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<sup>3</sup> Zeyringer, p. 239-240

<sup>4</sup> Zeyringer, p. 230

[...]. Es geht dem Autor [...] eher darum, allgemein menschlicher Sprach- und Beziehungslosigkeit eine literarische Form zu geben.<sup>5</sup>

Taking into account Aspetsberger's edict that "Heimatroman" ist eine Kollekte-Münze für nichts und alles, wenn er nicht historisch festgemacht wird,<sup>6</sup> the following chapter, a reading of Norbert Gstrein's *Das Register*, published in 1992, will be underpinned by an attempt to illustrate the extent to which the satire inherent in the 'Fremden/Verkehr' trend marked out by Zeyringer relies not upon the outright rejection, but rather the manipulation, exaggeration and perpetuation of conventions inherited not only from the traditional *Anti-Heimatroman*, but from its converse, the *Heimatroman* of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The chapter will argue that Gstrein's combination of traditional (*Anti-Heimat* conventions with an examination of the negative effects of commercialisation upon the provincial milieu represent a continuation of the attempt emerging in *Der Ackermann aus Kärnten* to modernise the *Anti-Heimatroman*, exaggerating and manipulating the genre's various conventions in order to explore more contemporary issues.

## 2.2: Commercialised *Erzählte Provinz*.

As in *Ackermann*, the topography of *Das Register* ostensibly corresponds to the criteria laid down by Mecklenburg for the 'open' province. The framing narrative is set in the *Bezirkshauptstadt* to which the main protagonists, the brothers Vinzenz and Moritz, return prior to the wedding of their former girlfriend Magda. As with Winkler, the majority of the material for the narrative is provided by their childhood memories, which emphasise their relationship with their father, their more complicated relationship with Magda, and their respective ascendancies and downfalls, which, as the novel's first epigraph suggests, are attributable to the provinciality of Tyrol, and by extension that of Austria itself, a situation once more indicative of typical *Anti-Heimat* conventions. In contrast to Winkler's novel, however, the brothers' narrative of their memories takes an oral, rather than written form, encouraged by the interrogation undertaken by their sister, Kreszenz. The *Binnenerzählung* of the

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<sup>5</sup> Gernod Pfandler *Das Strukturprinzip der Wiederholung bei Norbert Gstrein* (unpublished master's thesis, University of Vienna, 1996), p. 62

<sup>6</sup> Friedbert Aspetsberger 'Unmaßgebliche Anmerkungen zur Einschränkung des literaturwissenschaftlichen Heimatbegriffs', in *Topoi der Heimat und Identität*, ed. by Peter Plenar and Peter Zalen (Budapest: Druckerei der Loránd-Eötvös-Universität, 1997) <[http://magyar-irodalom.elte.hu/palimpszeszt/09\\_szam/02.htm](http://magyar-irodalom.elte.hu/palimpszeszt/09_szam/02.htm)> [Accessed 28th August, 2006], para. 16

brothers' memories widens the novel's topography to include the village in which their father grew up, as well as various American locations, which, in contrast to the peripheral locations in *Ackermann*, are each set in explicit contrast to the novel's central locale, thus emphasising the dialectics of *Stadt/Dorf* and *Dorf/Außenwelt*, a function which Mecklenburg applies explicitly to the open province.<sup>7</sup> Again an examination of the relationship between the central milieu and the rest of Austria reveals a lack of 'Wege nach Außen' which lead to named locations within the country – although the narrative suggests that Vinzenz travels to various locations within Austria during his ascendancy to the rank of world champion skier, these are truly peripheral since none of the events that take place within them are ever narrated. Thus, the dominant topographical constellation in terms of the novel's presentation of Austria consists of the *Bezirkshauptstadt* and the neighbouring village, with any paths leading to internal Austrian locations blocked through the technique of narratorial omission, used extensively and to similar effect in Faschinger's *Wiener Passion*. The closure of these internal 'Wege nach Außen' mean that, once again, the topography of *Das Register* can be characterised as a mixture of the 'closed' and 'open' province, with the absence of direct references to other internal locations constituting grounds for the suggestion of a partial allegiance to the 'Provinz als Modell' convention set down by Mecklenburg. As we shall see, the binary of *Staat* and *Provinz* is built upon as the novel progresses through the emergence of explicit parallels between the two milieus, which manifest themselves most explicitly in the manner in which each presents itself to the outside world.

Of much more interest within *Das Register*, however, are the concrete topographical features of the central locale, as well as its social characteristics. The opening passages, which deal with Vinzenz's and Moritz's home town generate a *Provinzbild* which diverges extensively from that present in Winkler's novel. The landscape through which each of the brothers' trains passes is focalised in such a way that the various features indicative of man's interference in nature are prioritised. Gstrein's is a province in which nature has no place, relegated to a state of practical invisibility or rendered unrecognisable by the installation of facilities essential for the effective functioning of the tourist

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<sup>7</sup> Mecklenburg, p.42

industry, including ski-lifts, electricity pylons, power stations and advertising. The small villages and farms indicative of the traditional relationship between man and nature central to *Heimat* discourse, and which would have conventionally formed the dominant narrated spaces of *Heimatliteratur* are dwarfed by technological progress, reduced to 'Spielzeug, unerkant und unerreichbar weit weg' (11). Even the natural manifestation of humanity, the biological organism of the human being is absent from the provincial surroundings, a situation which can be seen to constitute a comment on the increasing phenomenon of provincial depopulation. The only reminders of human presence here are the manifestations the technological progress which have undermined the natural, the electricitly pylons seemingly 'das einzig Lebendige' (12) present in the provincial surroundings. Thus, the introductory passages present a hugely contrasting milieu to the dreamlike *Idyll* of traditional *Heimat* landscape, which has been obverted into an industrial nightmare. The province no longer represents *Heimat*, but rather 'eine unbewegt starre, unwirkliche Welt' (13) reminiscent in many ways of the altered focus of Zeyringer's *Fremden/Verkehrsliteratur*.

In terms of topographical features, the most obvious deviation from traditional *Anti-Heimat* paradigms is the replacement of the narrated spaces of *Hof* and *Dorf* which dominated in traditional *Heimatliteratur*<sup>8</sup> with that of a provincial town, the *Bezirkshauptstadt*, a change which serves the novel's preoccupation with the effects of the commercialisation engendered by the tourism industry upon the provincial milieu. This commercialisation is further shown to have rendered unrecognisable the attitude and mentality of the provincial inhabitants, who enact a watered down, and at the same time exaggerated version of adherence to traditional *Heimat* values which emphasised community, family and religion. The authenticity of their subscription to these values, however, is belied by their altered mentality, which revolves around technological progress, the monetary value of various luxuries, and the acquisition of material goods which reflect their inherited, and therefore by implication unmerited, status. Gstrein implicitly draws attention to the incongruity of this role when assigned to descendants of farming stock, representing them as having to 'force' themselves into their luxurious,

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<sup>8</sup> Cf. Kunne, p. 34

fashionable outfits, inferring that they are somehow unsuited to their role as industrial magnates (65). However, the most significant characteristic of the second generation of tourist industry pioneers is their place of residence, not in the town, but rather in the villages that surround it. Far from functioning as a metropolis, the *Bezirkshauptstadt* constitutes 'ein verschlafener [...] Haufen von Häusern, mit ein tausend kleinkarierten Krämer- und Beamtenseelen.' (60), whereas the villages contain the 'Großväterlich[e] Hotelburg[en]' (61) which are the source of the second (and third) generation's wealth. Thus, in terms of the commercialism which governs the everyday life of Gstrein's provincial milieu, the internal dichotomy between 'town' and 'village' is largely reversed, with the villages functioning as loci of material wealth and economic prosperity, which, according to Simmel, constitute specifically metropolitan characteristics, whereas the *Bezirkshauptstadt* is presented as overwhelmingly provincial in nature. This reversal of the traditional dichotomy between province and metropolis becomes even clearer on the father's visit to the village where he grew up, whose inhabitants, during the arguments that occur due to the father's pomposity, suggest that 'sie allein mit ihren Steuern eine Horde Schmarotzer aushielten, eine ganze Hundertschaft von Betteln, wie er einer war' (64).

The topographical properties of Gstrein's narrated province, then, largely correspond with Zeyringer's suggestion that the author's work is to be classified as paradigmatic *Fremden/Verkehrsliteratur*, the traditional spaces of *Dorf* and *Hof* replaced by a milieu dominated by the accoutrements of the tourist industry, and whose inhabitants are enveloped in the commercial and economic benefits that this industry bring with it. The reversal of the metropolis/province binary in the context of the 'internal Austrian' milieu presented in the novel also constitutes a deviation from traditional *Heimat* and therefore *Anti-Heimat* paradigms. Most importantly, however, Gstrein's emphasis on manifestations of mass culture in the form of the tourist industry, as well as the various luxuries acquired by the grandchildren of the *Hotelpioniere* are suggestive of a continuation of the process begun by Winkler in *Ackermann*, where the ostensibly 'closed' province was permeated by other manifestations of mass culture, most obviously pop-music. Within Gstrein's province, this mass-culture is presented as all-pervasive, its negative effects on both provincial topography



and the inhabitants mentality constituting, as we are about to see, one of the main thematic concerns of Gstrein's novel.

## 2.3 Die glückliche Heimkehr?

A closer examination of the opening passages of *Das Register* suggests that the abandonment of principles inherent in *Heimatliteratur* is not as total as a purely topographical assessment may suggest. The novel's departure point is indicative of the *Heimkehrer* motif, widespread in the various incarnations of the *Heimatroman*, including the *Bauernromane* and *-dramen* of the turn of the century, the *Blut-und-Boden-Dichtung* of the 1930s and 1940s, and the so-called *Heimkehrerliteratur* of the post-war period. Thurnher has underlined the importance of the motif to the *Heimat* tradition by citing Homer's *Odyssey* (in German *Die Heimkehr des Odysseus*) as the archetypal *Heimatroman*.<sup>9</sup> The key to the *Heimkehrer* motif is the re-adoption of the home-comer by their family and the provincial community, i.e. the reclamation by the *Heimat*, and, conversely, the homecomer's reclamation of the *Heimat* as their own. As we have seen, however, the introductory sections of *Das Register* present a *Provinzbild* which is by no means indicative of the emotions of *Sicherheit* and *Geborgenheit* with which the idyllic province of *Heimatliteratur* was associated. Correspondingly, the brothers' attitude towards their return home is predicated not upon the positive emotions inherent in the traditional *Heimkehrer* topos but rather upon an ambivalence manifest in the mode of focalisation each brother adopts: Moritz's focalisation of the region through which his train passes constitutes a waking dream, explained by his constant oscillation between waking and sleeping. For Moritz, the province appears as a set of static but incomplete images, mainly 'Umrisse' and 'Silhouette' of the buildings and mountains that pepper the provincial landscape. Moritz's focalisation of these features as one-dimensional suggests that he perceives them as spaces of emotional emptiness, devoid of positive connotation. The emotional and psychological distance inherent in Moritz's focalisation intrinsically cast him as an external and uninvolved observer of the provincial space, a stranger arriving in an unknown, and unreal, location. Vinzenz's focalisation is similar to Moritz's, although the view of the provincial landscape he conveys is less comprehensive. For the few seconds during which Vinzenz observes his

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<sup>9</sup> Thurnher, p. 25

surroundings, however, he reveals that he perceives them in a similar way to his brother, this time as 'wechselnd[e] Bilde[r]' (15). Vinzenz finds that this perception has also been distorted, restricted to a mode of 're-recognition' and nostalgia, perhaps more reminiscent of the views of a traditional *Heimkehrer*. The transition into this mode of perception, however, constitutes an involuntary psychological reaction on Vinzenz's part, which is presented negatively as restriction, implying that he is forced to recognise his surroundings because no other mode of perception is available to him. Further, his assumption of the role of the *Heimkehrer*, which his recognition of his surroundings could be seen to have precipitated, is almost immediately belied by his reaction to his arrival at the station:

Im ersten Augenblick scheint Vinzenz unschlüssig, wie er, angekommen, eine Weile in seinem Abteil sitzen bleibt und sich ganz dem Wunsch hingibt, weiterzufahren, über alle Grenzen hinaus (17).

In the course of *Das Register's* opening sections, however, it becomes clear that Gstrein does not merely negativise the *Heimkehrer* motif, but combines it with a further infringement of traditional *Heimat* concepts. As Rossbacher suggests, the traditional *Heimatroman* was generally narrated by a conventional third person omniscient narrator.<sup>10</sup> *Das Register* subverts this convention, the *Rahmenerzählung* dominated by Vinzenz and Moritz's first person plural narration, the emergence of which can be seen as the result of a mode of regression, which, given comments made by critics such as Boa and Palfreyman and Ní Dhúill, can be associated specifically with the *Heimkehr*. As Boa and Palfreyman suggest, the conventional feminisation of the bearer of *Heimat* alluded to in the first chapter supposedly generates a parallel between the protection and security offered by the *Heimat* and that afforded by the mother. With reference to the work of psychoanalyst Lacan, we can see the feminised *Heimat* as synonymous with the earliest stage of childhood development, prior to the child's separation from its mother and subsequent entrance into the patriarchal social order, Boa and Palfreyman suggest, is represented by the *Vaterland*.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Kunne, p.37

<sup>11</sup> Boa and Palfreyman, pp. 26-27,

Gstrein adopts and exaggerates this process of regression, which in the brothers' case manifests itself in the emergence of the unconventional first person plural consciousness which dominates the *Rahmenerzählung* and which constitutes an oral representation of the 'gemeinsames Tagebuch' they kept as children. During their initial homeward journey, the brothers' modes of focalisation begin to converge, for example when noticing the time on the station clock (13, 17). The process of convergence is completed by the brothers' first sight of one another on the station platform, which they focalise simultaneously and in exactly the same manner, each noting, 'wieder, und wieder wehrlos, wie ähnlich sie sich sind' (14,17), their obvious ambivalence suggestive of a mutual desire to deny their familial connection. The brothers' efforts to distance themselves from one another are highlighted at various points throughout the novel: They refuse to converse, even when left alone, and ensure that they do not come into physical contact. However, the permanence of physical similarity as a marker of a familial connection is inescapable, and as such the brothers are ultimately 'defenceless' against their likeness. This dialectic of ambivalence and defenceless is also reflected in their connection to the provincial *Heimat*. Despite their attempts to remain distanced from their surroundings, they are defenceless against reclamation by the *Heimat* which manifests itself in their linguistic convergence, the emergence of which they are unaware.

## **2.4 Gendering the (*Anti*-)Heimat?**

The topos of regression as a result of the return to the feminised *Heimat* represents merely an element of a thoroughgoing obfuscation of the conventional relationship between gender and *Heimat* within the novel, which is predicated upon the association of each concept with the discourse of commercialism dominant within Gstrein's narrated province. The conflation of gender and commercialism is largely bound up with the brothers' relationship with their father, which initially seems to conform to traditional *Anti-Heimat* paradigms. The father's dual obsession, with author Ernest Hemingway, whom he glorifies as a paragon of masculinity, and the commercial success of his own *Fremdenverkehrsponier* father causes him to imbue his sons with an exaggerated sense of their own masculinity, as well as a fervour for success as a route to economic prosperity, the latter implicitly linked to the topic of sex by

the father's mantra, 'Geld macht glücklich, Geld macht geil' (125).

Unsurprisingly, their constant confrontation with their father's dual obsession during their upbringing engenders within them a specific manner of perceiving women, at the centre of which is a hyperbolised version of the *Besitzverhältnis* which dominates in traditional kinship systems and constitutes the crux of the conventional gendered interpretation of *Heimat*, in which women, who embody *Heimat* are 'owned' by the men who 'inherit' it. This discourse of the masculine inheritance of the feminine, central to both traditional kinship systems and the conventional relationship between *Heimat* and gender is exaggerated and commercialised in *Das Register*, where it becomes, as we shall see later, predicated not upon inheritance, but rather upon the cash nexus, with women reduced to objects of economic as opposed to hereditary exchange, a transformation which engenders the ironisation of the traditional *Heimat* role of the mother.

The increasing centrality of this economic *Besitzverhältnis* to the brothers' perception during their adolescence is clear from the montage of episodes which document their behaviour towards various peripheral female characters, characterised in each case as a 'faux-pas.' The first of these involves the girl the brothers' pejoratively nickname 'Pummel.' Their focalisation of her is reminiscent of Ernest Hemingway's narrated descriptions of female characters, highlighting those parts of the body (including the upper thighs and breasts, particularly the cleavage) associated with female sexuality, which they imagine violently 'dominating:' 'Stell dir vor, du pumperst, du puderst die Pummel' (92-93). This image of hyperbolically violent masculinity is juxtaposed by the following episode, dealing with the boys' behaviour towards the family's cleaner. In the absence of their parents, the brothers, as 'Hausherren' (93) 'supervise' the cleaner to ensure that she does not steal anything, whilst tempting her to do so by laying a thousand shilling note flagrantly on the carpet. The brothers' 'surveillance' of the cleaner places them in the dominant role in what is essentially an economic *Besitzverhältnis*, a role which is then implicitly sexualised by their voyeuristic observation of her response to the thousand shilling note, which they watch hidden from view from a cupboard, 'vor Aufregung zitternd' (94). The final image in the montage, a documentation of the brothers' first sight of a prostitute explicitly confirms the link between money,

commercialism and gender: However, the fact that the prostitute is also the subject of the brothers' gaze ensures that the situation remains indicative of the dominating role of masculinity (95-96). This suggestion is borne out by the fact that the act of observation does not involve the emasculation inherent in the relationship between masculinity and prostitution which is engendered by the need to pay for sex (although this aspect resurfaces later in Moritz's case.)

The only female character to (eventually) escape the mode of perception governed by the conflation of masculinity and commercialism is the brothers' girlfriend Magda, whom they shared knowingly as children and subsequently unwittingly as adults. The plotline involving Magda constitutes the core around which the novel's various sub-plots revolve, with Kreszenz's questions regarding the brothers' relationship with her dominating the framing narrative. As the novel progresses, it becomes increasingly obvious that the brothers' memories of Magda are steeped in guilt, the exact source of which is never revealed, despite the fact that every memory the brothers reveal to the reader throughout their 'interrogation' comes progressively closer to betraying the reasons behind it. Initially, these memories present Magda as strong and confident, with an easy, sarcastic sense of humour and a highly impetuous streak. Further, the manner in which the brothers perceive and treat her is very different from their behaviour towards other women, since both Vinzenz and Moritz are able to maintain a supposedly monogamous relationship with her.

The scenes dealing with the liaisons between the brothers and Magda are not indicative of the exaggerated sexuality which they display towards women like Pummel, but rather of a more permanent form of companionship. Various aspects of these scenes betray the underlying instability of each relationship intrinsically engendered by Magda's betrayal of each brother with the other.<sup>12</sup> This instability manifests itself most obviously in the comparisons made between each scene and scenes from a film, 'ruck, zuck, aneinander gereiht,' (192) which can be seen to reflect the unrealistic escapist fantasy that both relationships represent, a suggestion confirmed by the brutal inversion of the idyll on Moritz's return from the United States, when Magda takes a pregnancy test with a positive result, and is automatically reduced, in a perversion of the brothers' usual reduction of women to their sexual organs, to

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<sup>12</sup> The dynamics and time-scale of the brothers' simultaneous relationships with Magda remain ambiguous.

the sum of her bodily fluids. Her response to her pregnancy is to drink herself into a stupor, eventually vomiting, and urinating in her sleep (206).

Subsequently, she attempts suicide by slitting her wrists (207).

Based on the above observations, the narrative strand involving the brothers' relationship with Magda can be characterised as indicative of *Heimat* gone sour. The prospect of her assumption of the role of matriarch through the birth of her child, and her subsequent forced entry into the *Heimat* discourse is more than Magda can cope with, a situation compounded by the confusion surrounding the child's paternity given the various implications that Magda, after Moritz's return from the United States, was maintaining a relationship with both brothers simultaneously. The possibility of becoming a mother causes Magda to revert to a state similar to the antithetical mother figure represented by Kreszenz, who is presented as the family member most eager to leave her childhood *Heimat*, and to infringe the clichéd conventions of *Heimat* by decidedly rejecting the role of wife and mother. From the novel's outset, and particularly from the section of the introduction that Kreszenz focalises, however, it becomes clear that she has failed to realise her escapist ambitions and has instead been inserted into the role that she was so keen to avoid, becoming a paradigmatic female *Anti-Heimat* protagonist. Unable to flee the repression intrinsic in the provincial milieu by any other means, Kreszenz is forced to resort to masturbation and increasingly severe self-harm as her only available escape routes, thus mimicking the bloodletting or 'Aderlass' through which Magda attempts to free herself (28-29). The constellation of these two figures, who act in this respect as mirror images of one another, represents the miserable 'Catch 22' situation of women within the new, commercialised *Heimat*, a situation which replicates traditional *Heimat* conventions. Through her attempted refusal to take on the status of matriarch, Magda becomes enveloped in the same mode of self-harm as escapism that Kreszenz becomes caught in as a result of her reluctant acceptance of it.

Most importantly, however, both Kreszenz's and Magda's circumstances are significant in terms of the overall situation of the feminine as *Heimat* within Gstrein's provincial milieu. This is particularly evident in Magda's transformation to a debased form of biologised, rather than sexualised femininity on the news that she is pregnant. From this transformation, we can

conclude that the only role available for women within Gstrein's milieu is that of commercialised objects of male sexual desire, as shown by the brothers' reactions to the peripheral female characters they observe. Any attempt to transcend the boundaries of the commercialised *Besitzverhältnis* through the adoption of the conventional *Heimat* role of the matriarch is doomed to failure, since women who take on such roles are intrinsically de-sexualised, as demonstrated hyperbolically by Magda's abrupt transformation.

What Gstrein presents us with here, then, is a modified manifestation of the conventional mother/whore binary, the dynamics of which are summarised by Reich:

Der Geschlechtsakt um der Lust willen entwürdigt [...] die Frau und Mutter, und wer Dirne ist, wer die Lust bejaht und danach lebt. [...] Der Kriegsimperialismus fordert, daß in den Frauen keinerlei Auflehnung gegen die ihnen aufgehalste Funktion, nur Gebärmachine zu sein, aufkomme. Das heisst, die Funktion der Sexualbefriedigung darf die der Fortpflanzung nicht stören.<sup>13</sup>

Gstrein manipulates the conventional mother/whore dynamic by presenting the traditional *Heimat* role of motherhood as incompatible with the commercialised provincial milieu, in which male/female relations are governed by a particular form of the *Heimat Besitzverhältnis* based not upon generational inheritance as Bütterfing suggests,<sup>14</sup> but rather on the acquisition of the feminine through economic exchange, a discourse intrinsically embodied by the prostitute who Moritz seeks out after Magda's suicide attempt. In doing this, Moritz can be seen to reassert his claim to the sexualised masculinity he subscribed to as an adolescent, which was not evident in his relationship with Magda, and which would necessarily have been compromised by his insertion into the *Heimat* discourse and the adoption of the conventional gendered *Heimat Besitzverhältnis*. Further, obvious parallels exist between the prostitute and the biologised image of Magda which precedes her description. These manifest themselves mainly in both women's drunkenness, as well as the references to the prostitute's wig (211), which parallel the various references to Magda's hair within the novel, and constitute a further emphasis upon the superficiality inherent within the commercialised province in comparison to that

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<sup>13</sup> Reich, p. 109-110

<sup>14</sup> Boa and Palfreyman, p. 26

intrinsic within conventional *Heimat* discourse. In the context of Gstrein's provincial milieu, then, the conventional *Heimat* discourse has been replaced by one which is governed by commercial principles which inherently obfuscate traditional male/female relations by excluding the role of motherhood and prioritising the sexual and economic aspects of the female existence which the prostitute embodies. The introduction of this particular discourse of femininity once more represents a perpetuation and modification rather than an outright rejection of a traditional *Heimat* topos, namely that of the inherited *Besitzverhältnis* between men and women.

In seeking the particular brand of masculinity he temporarily lost during his 'monogamous' relationship with Magda through sex with a prostitute, Moritz casts masculinity alongside femininity as a commercial product which can be acquired through economic exchange. The fact that masculinity has to be 'paid' for, and that a prostitute is cast in the role of its purveyor, however, can be seen to invalidate masculinity itself through the emasculation inherent in the need to pay for sex. Correspondingly, Moritz's encounter with the prostitute obviates his gaze, the main tool by means of which both he and Vinzenz subjugate the peripheral female characters who feature in the montage discussed above: Moritz '[weiß] nicht, wohin schauen' as the prostitute undresses (211). Further, the ensuing sex-act underlines the falsity and the superficiality of the *Besitzverhältnis* acquired through economic exchange, her subjection to him through the act of sex characterised as 'nur mehr [ein] Theater [...] gut oder schlecht abgespiel[t] [...]' (212).

The emasculation that Moritz experiences during his encounter with the prostitute presents an element of an alternative generational discourse in *Das Register*, which paradoxically constitutes both the root and the obverse of exaggerated masculinity, namely the concept of androgyny. In order fully to understand the author's treatment of this concept, and its relevance to the discussion of gender and *Heimat*, it is first necessary to examine the dynamics of the brothers' family structure. In much the same way as in Winkler's work, the dominant figure within the family is the father, whose relationship with his sons constitutes an important element of *Das Register*. The dominance of the father figure is combined with an effective sidelining of the mother figure, who, on the few occasions on which she does feature, is presented negatively, either as



utterly subordinate to the father, or as a victim. Given the parallels referred to by Boa and Palfreyman between *Heimat* and the blissful (and illusory) childhood stage of the 'imaginary' before the child's separation from its mother and subsequent socialisation by the father,<sup>15</sup> we can see the exclusive emphasis on the paternal line and the exclusion of the maternal in *Das Register* as constituting an extensive modification of traditional *Heimat* roles. The exclusion of the female from the *Heimat* discourse is equivalent to the exclusion of the bearer of *Heimat* which is acquired and therefore owned by men. However, the exclusion of the woman from her role as bearer of *Heimat* leads necessarily to the downfall of the gendered *Heimat* discourse, since the *Besitzverhältnis* upon which it is predicated necessarily breaks down, the absence of the mother figure meaning that the patriarch must necessarily become both the owner and bearer of *Heimat* values.

The effect of this androgyny is clearly visible in the presentation of the father within *Das Register*, who, despite his highly patriarchal method of discipline and his obsession with *Männlichkeit* is a highly ambivalent figure in terms of the gender role that he occupies. Clues to this can be found in his obsession with Ernest Hemingway, who, despite his status as an icon of masculinity, wrote, particularly towards the end of his career, novels in which gender became a nebulous construct, and in which androgyny was a common feature.<sup>16</sup> In accordance with the suggestion that commercialism necessarily subverts masculinity, the validity of each of this characteristic with reference to the father figure in *Das Register* can be called into question. The ultimate effect of his exaggerated expectations of both his sons, cast him, rather than the mother, in the role of the oppressive, feminine *Heimat*, in the vernacular of Boa and Palfreyman, from which both brothers constantly profess a wish to escape. The root of these expectations, which reflect the father's desire to make up for his own inability to emulate the commercial success of his own father, can also be seen to cast the validity of his masculinity into doubt: Unable to inherit the family hotel because of his status as the second son, the brothers' father was ejected from the village in order to take up a town-based *Lehrerexistenz*.

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<sup>15</sup> Boa and Palfreyman, pp. 26-27

<sup>16</sup> For an analysis of the role of gender in Hemingway's late works, see J. Gerald Kennedy. 'Hemingway's Gender Trouble' *American Literature*, 63 (1991), pp. 187-207

Despite the father's purported local patriotism, which manifests itself through his defense of the village in '[der] Sprache des Dorfes' (64) during times of scandal, his treatment of the village community on his occasional visits, during which he adopts a patronising and intellectually superior tone which belies his membership of the village community. As a result, the father's occupation as *Lehrer* can be seen to have subsumed the other facets of his identity, including his familial connection to his father and brother, and, given the emasculating nature of his treatment by the men of the village, also his masculinity (67).

The presentation of gender in *Das Register*, then, is governed by an examination of the manner in which commercialism effects the conventional paradigms of gender and *Heimat*. The commercialised province obfuscates the traditional roles of matriarch and patriarch as typical of *Heimat* discourse by commercialising the conventional patriarchal discourse of ownership of the *Heimat* by casting overtly sexualised femininity as a buyable product, and by causing women who seek to extend the value of femininity through insertion into the traditional *Heimat* role as mother to be both repressed and de-sexualised. According to the commercial conventions of the modern province, sexualised masculinity also becomes a saleable commodity, its re-creation sought through the acquisition of sex through economic exchange. The commercialisation of masculinity, however, intrinsically devalues it, the only manifestation of masculinity 'on sale' a superficial 'Theaterspiel' which has the paradoxical effect of emasculating its purchaser. The exclusion of maternal femininity and the denigration of masculinity is repeated within the brothers' family through the androgyny of the father figure, whose emasculation reflects his simultaneous role of owner and bearer of *Heimat*.

## **2.5 Austrian identity: Between commercialism and *Anti-Heimat*.**

Having examined commercialism at the provincial, and, through an examination of its effect on the *Heimat* conventions relating to gender, at the familial level, it remains to widen the scope of investigation to Gstrein's presentation of the relationship between commercialism and national identity. This section constitutes only the first half of the presentation of national identity in *Das Register*, however. Whilst the novel's presentation of gender and the province explicitly binds the issues of *Anti-Heimat* and commercialism together, the novel's presentation of national identity can be divided into two strands, the first

of which centres on Vinzenz's elevation to world champion in slalom and thus deals with the specific effect of commercial and sporting culture on national identity. In contrast the second, the strand relating to Moritz's trip to America, takes a more conventionally *Anti-Heimat* stance regarding issues of national identity. It is worth pointing out that Gstrein's novel, whilst less vitriolic than Winkler's *Ackermann* is generally much more explicit in its criticism of the Austrian nation. Whilst Winkler was able to rely on his readers' familiarity with the *Anti-Heimatroman*, whose conventions *Ackermann* largely conforms to, as a genre whose criticism of the provincial milieu was usually intended to be applied to the state as a whole, the altered literary landscape in the Austria of the 1980s, including the supposed disappearance of the *Anti-Heimat* genre, meant that Gstrein was unable to rely on public familiarity with the *Heimatroman*. Gstrein's return to explicit denigration of the state, more indicative of Bernhard and Jelinek, can be seen as a further indication of his attempt to revitalise the *Anti-Heimat* genre. This is not to suggest, however, that Gstrein's comments regarding national identity are exclusively explicit in nature. The novel is peppered with various allegorical references to aspects of Austrian history, the most obvious of which is the question of guilt relating to the National Socialist past, to which the chapter's final section will be dedicated. This aspect of *Das Register's* presentation of national identity is particularly significant, insofar as it connects the nation's presentation as *Anti-Heimat* to the topic of commercialism via the concept of 'Das Register'.

### **Austrian identity and commercialism**

The narrative strand most relevant in the discussion of the relationship between national identity and commercialism deals, as has already been suggested, with Vinzenz's ascendancy to the rank of champion slalom skier. Gstrein's treatment of national identity in this context strengthens his use of the 'Provinz als Modell' convention by setting up an explicit parallel between microcosm and macrocosm, replicating the effects of the commercialism surrounding sport upon the provincial community at the national level. Thus, a brief examination of the town's reaction to the sporting event it hosted, namely the Olympics of 1976, is required at this point. The attitude towards Tyrol conveyed throughout the novel is somewhat vitriolic, the population characterised as 'ein[e] Hord von Speichelleckern und Arschkriechern [...]' and the region itself as a 'Zinnsbordell'

(59). Conversely, however, the games trigger a flood of local patriotism at odds with this attitude:

Es grassierte [...] ein übersteigertes Selbstbewußtsein, ein aufgeputschter, [...] Lokalpatriotismus [...] Die Stadt [war] ein Zentrum, ein natürliches Weltzentrum, ihr Name [...] war immer und immer wieder Anlaß, stolz zu sein, Alpenstadt, Sportstadt und Sporthauptstadt (114). Es war alles eins, aber erst mit dem Zusatz tirolisch, tirolerisch, galt es als echt, in ein anständiges Licht gerückt oder als Markenprodukt, ganz im Sinn des alten, uralten unausrottbaren Spruchs „Wer ein Tiroler ist, ist ein Mensch, wer keiner ist, ist keiner (115-116).

Here, then, a contradiction is visible in the manner in which the town is presented. In the media and commercial furore that surrounds the games, the Tyrolean identity is lost, the 'Bezirkshauptstadt' becoming part of the social world of sport, its identity subsumed by the event taking place there, as signified by the substitution of its official description by epithets referring to sport. Conversely, however, the games produce a hefty influx of tourists, and a subsequent and widespread attempt to capitalise on the Tyrolean identity by commercialising its various aspects. This process of commercialisation is shown to envelop the traditional *Volksmusik* and *Volksstücken* of the *Bundesland*, the presentation of famous Tyrolean intellectuals, the improved image of the *Landeshauptmann* and so on. For the purposes of the winter games, Tyrol becomes a form of commercialised *Heimat*, a marketable and highly profitable product whose image by no means reflects the pessimistic representation of the town conveyed to the reader throughout the rest of the novel.

The presentation of national identity in the narrative stand involving Vinzenz essentially repeats this mode of identity loss on a national level. From the novel's outset, Vinzenz refuses to acknowledge allegiance to any form of 'collective identity,' whether regional or national, and claims the credit for his first championship victory for himself. It is important to note that, as a result of this, Vinzenz is summoned to office of the *Direktor* and castigated for his statement (125-126). This encounter is significant because, in paradigmatic *Anti-Heimat* narrative, for example *Schöne Tage*, the school functions along with the church as a representative of the state. Thus, the director's admonition

of Vinzenz can be seen simultaneously as an attempt by both the local milieu and by the state itself, to cash in on his victory, an attempt that Vinzenz is only able to successfully resist until he becomes a member of the national team, where he is forcibly moulded into a manifestation of commercialised Austrian-ness. Significantly, this process of 'moulding' is constantly presented as state-sanctioned, with the national team employing specialists to educate its members in various cultural activities. Thus, Vinzenz is taught table-manners and dancing, his style of dress is altered, and he is forced to wear make-up for the various occasions he attends. Most significant, however, are perhaps the elocution lessons that he undergoes, which rob him of his Tyrolean dialect - 'a' nicht 'o' statt 'a' (158-159) - and thus of his regional identity, suggesting identification with the regional and identification with the national to be mutually exclusive. Not only does Vinzenz lose his dialect, however, he is forced to mimic the state-employed elocution coach, implicitly suggestive of the requirement they conform to the state's rhetoric regarding its own identity. This suggestion is confirmed through the characterisation of the goal of these 'modifications' as the projection of a so-called 'entsprechendes Äußeres' (158). This can be read as a comment on the 'polished' appearance that Austria continues to present to the outside-world in order to disguise its internal failure to deal with the consequences of its involvement with National Socialism, a ploy that was exposed brutally during the Waldheim Affair of the mid eighties, which, given references to the 1976 Winter Olympics, which occurred during the boys' childhood, can be deduced as the period during which Vinzenz's elevation takes place.

As a result of his 'training' at the hands of the various team coaches, Vinzenz loses his ability to prevent both the nation as a whole, and in particular his *Heimatsdorf* from 'cashing in' on his success, as is demonstrated by the various newspaper headlines, referring to him merely as 'Vorführösterreicher,' and 'Liebling der Nation,' with the nation, by way of the state institution of the press, claiming Vinzenz's various victories as their own. Significantly, this once more represents a modification of Tyrol's presentation as 'Sportstadt' during the Winter Olympics. Just as Tyrol became characterised solely on the basis of the sporting event occurring there, so Vinzenz 'becomes' the Austrian nation he has been forced to represent in the social world of sport, a process which is

repeated once more on a local level. The reaction of the townspeople is literally to claim him individually as theirs, telling stories involving 'wer mit ihm [...] wann und [...] wo was – als [müßte man] sich in einem Netz von [...] Erlebnissen vergewissern, daß er ein Mensch war' (197). Besides the townspeople's attempt to reclaim their 'prodigal son,' this quote also constitutes a reference to the symbolic entity that Vinzenz has become at the expense of his personal identity. During a reception the town is transformed into a commercialised Alpine fairytale, once more 'presenting a face' to the outside world as the hometown of the 'Weltmeister.' The narration of this passage sarcastically emphasises the superficiality of the event, at which the town's reclamation of Vinzenz is completed: On his arrival, Vinzenz is received like a hero, but is subsequently silenced by the intervention of so-called 'Stadtväter [...] allen voran der Bürgermeister (201). Vinzenz's silencing is significant for two reasons, firstly reinforcing the loss of his personal identity through his presentation as a symbol of the town's success (underlined by the fact that it is the mayor who speaks in his place.) Further, however, the refusal to allow Vinzenz to speak also serves the purpose of disguising the falsity of such a presentation, since his altered accent would expose him as a representative of a crafted national identity rather than the false regional allegiance to which the remainder of the town subscribes.

The culmination of Vinzenz's identity loss, however, occurs at the end of his career in an event which constitutes the zenith of the novel's examination of the dialectic of personal identity and commercialism. Having constantly lost various races in Austria, Vinzenz travels to America, where he experiences a short-lived and diluted version of his former greatness. As a result of his former fame as a skier, he receives what is tellingly presented as ein 'Angebot aus Hollywood' (213), a location which, as the centre of the world film industry, is not only governed according to strictly commercial principles but is also in the business of producing and hyperbolically stylised realities through the medium of film. Given the attempts by both the Austrian nation, in the guise of the ski-team, and the protagonists' home town to produce stylized Austrian and Tyrolean realities, the first motivated by the need to mask the internal failure to deal with Nazism, and the second in order to cover up the repressive realities of the provincial lifestyle that linger under the surface, references to Hollywood

take Gstrein's examination of the superficiality of such realities to their logical conclusion. Having had his identity manipulated in order that he might variously represent an idealised manifestation of both Austrian-ness and regional identity, Vinzenz's 'Angebot aus Hollywood' engenders his complete reduction to an automaton of clichéd Austrian national identity, his role as a promiscuous ski-instructor involving the monotonous repetition of the lines 'hi, I'm Austrian, hi' (213-214).

### **Austrian identity and *Anti-Heimat***

Gstrein's treatment of *Anti-Heimat* paradigms takes a more conventional form in Moritz's experience and perception of national identity, which, as suggested earlier, constitutes a more explicit manifestation of Winkler's vitriolic presentation of the concept in *Ackermann*. Moritz's reaction to his national identity also constitutes an exaggerated repetition of his perception of his familial and local identities, with the character attempting to distance himself from his Austrian-ness throughout the novel. Moritz's ambivalence towards his national heritage, which occasionally tips over into vitriolic hatred, is bound up with his relationship with his father, whose improved attitude towards Vinzenz as a result of his skiing successes means that Moritz is completely sidelined, with his father refusing to acknowledge him as his son. Paling in comparison to his brother's sporting successes; Moritz's 'career' in academia never advances beyond the junior rank of *Assistent*, a situation which ensures Moritz's incursion of his father's disapproval during his rare visits to the family home. In the arguments which ensue, Moritz explicitly blames the state of Austrian universities and the country's attitude towards the sciences for his lack of career progression (168), a situation he attempts to remedy by spending a semester in a provincial town in the United States. The American town effectively constitutes the *Idylle* to the Austrian *Anti-Idylle* from which Moritz attempts to escape. Far from seeming out of place, commercialism, which manifests itself here in the limousines which had become part of the topography of the Austrian province, now shares the landscape with rows of palms, citrus trees and verdant lawns, the limousines becoming part of nature and seemingly 'floating' through the province during the night. In accordance with this altered dynamic, the situation that Moritz finds himself in on arrival in America constitutes a mirror of his reaction on his arrival in the Austrian province. Far from attempting to maintain

a psychological distance from the surrounding landscape, Moritz's enthusiasm for America causes him 'aus allem etwas machen [zu müssen]' (180); he becomes fascinated by the landscape, and is unable to tire of its beauty. Unfortunately, however, the effect of his arrival in the province is also the exact opposite to that of his arrival in the Austrian *Anti-Idylle*: Whereas, as we have seen, Moritz was unable to escape reclamation by his hometown, he finds himself unable to integrate himself fully into the American community, to which he wishes to belong, feeling detached from the events occurring around him:

Was geschah schien abgekoppelt von ihm, in einer anderen Wirklichkeit zu geschehen, manchmal zähfließend verlangsamt – aber gewöhnlich in immer schneller aufeinanderfolgenden [...] Bilder, und in ihrem Rahmen erschien ihm alles untastbar (186).

Moritz's consciousness of his inability to integrate effectively manifests itself in his somewhat bizarre perception of himself as a paedophilic 'österreichischer Untertan' (185). This is particularly significant, since, Moritz's 'otherness,' and his inability to resolve it, is demonstrated as being predicated not only upon his Austrian identity, but rather upon the stigma that surrounds him as a result of this, which is hyperbolically conveyed as equivalent to that which would surround a paedophile. However, the image created also carries connotations of the ridiculous and pitiable, suggesting that Austrian national identity also embodies these characteristics. It is important to note here that Moritz's inability to traverse the boundaries imposed by his national identity once more constitutes a reversal of traditional *Heimat* paradigms of in-group and out-group. Essentially, Moritz wishes to transfer out of the *Anti-Heimat* that the Austrian province represents, a reversal of the usual attempt inherent in *Heimatliteratur* outsider to traverse into the province in question.

The image of the paedophilic 'Schokoladenonkel' constitutes only part of Moritz's vitriolic response to the concept of Austrian national identity, which surfaces on two further occasions during his stay in America, the comments made on each occasion referring to specific aspects of Austrian history, including the National Socialist past and the *Habsburg* period. On the first occasion, Moritz derides the concept of Austrian national identity in general suggesting that the various totems of Austrian-ness, in particular its history, offer no unique characteristics which would not be applicable to other countries.



The most significant section of this tirade, however, is Moritz's suggestion that the Austrian past constitutes 'eine [große] Vergangenheit, wie andere Vergangenheiten auch, mit Zauberwörtern, Habsburg, Habsburg-Lothringen oder Zugang zum Meer (193). Conspicuous in this list is the omission of references to the Second World War and the Holocaust, a sarcastic perpetuation of the theory espoused by Görlich that these events are not part of the Austrian past.<sup>17</sup> These comments are complemented by two further vitriolic tirades, the first of which denigrate Austria's attitude towards Germany and its dynastic past, and the second of which constitutes a map of Austrian national pride, which categorises countries according to the position they hold within Austria's cultural imaginary:

In der eigenen Einschätzung einmal zu hoch einmal zu niedrig, schien man [...] ein gestörtes Selbstwertgefühl als wesentlichen Teil seines Nationalbewusstseins zu sehen [...] scheinbar sprech- und denkbehindert, in mühsamen Dialekten neige man dazu, sich innerhalb der Sprachgemeinschaft von vornherein zurückzunehmen, im schlimmsten Fall als Tschusch, ja Tschusch, und verzieh die Deutschen ihr [...] Deutschsein nicht (191).

Mit einer Kategorie A, exklusiv, mit exklusiven Ländern, USA und Deutschland, auch wenn man Deutschland mit seinen Piefkes, Preußen und Pmmes-frites-Fressern am liebsten zu Hölle [...] gewünscht hätte' (194).

In combination, the above quotations can be read as an interpretation of the Austrian attempt to hide their connection with Germany and thus evade responsibility for their role in National Socialism, an interpretation which also includes comments regarding the racism which is still inherent in Austrian society. The image conveyed is of a country which covers up its linguistic connection to Germany through a refusal to speak, or by slipping into 'mühsame Dialekten' in order to disguise their German heritage. This linguistic deception is combined with an attempt on the part of Austrians to exploit their former dynastic connection to other Central European States, who here are reduced to the pejorative term for Slav, 'Tschusch.' Here, Gstrein seems to suggest that the Austrians invert their racism towards one group, the Slavic peoples, in order

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<sup>17</sup> cf. Ernst Josef Görlich and Felix Romanik, *Geschichte Österreichs* (Innsbruck: Tyrolia, 1970) pp. 551.

to perpetuate that which they must necessarily display towards Germany in order to increase the likelihood that their 'uncomfortable past' will be effectively veiled. However, since the Austrian nation generally perceives the Slavic races as inferior, Austrians themselves cannot be perceived as Slavic, and thus apply this pejorative epithet to other former dynastic states, thus perpetuating a culture of snobbery and racial purity which is presented here as the core of Austrian identity.

On his return home, the persona Moritz takes on comes to resemble that which his brother was forced to adopt at the hands of the national team, although Moritz does not merely become a manifestation of false Austrian-ness, but combines this with an attempt to evince characteristics of the American identity also. This transformation manifests itself solely in Moritz's language. Convinced that his regional dialect is incompatible with the Americanisms that pervade his language, Moritz adopts 'ein [e] pingelig[e] Hochsprache,' (194-195) in a process reminiscent of Vinzenz's loss of his regional identity under the ministrations of the elocution coach employed by the national team. The falsity and pomposity of this *Hochdeutsch* is noticed by the staff at his 'Stammgeschäft,' who mimic his accent 'in möglichst affektiertem Ton' (195). In a further recurrence of the theme of reclamation, however, Moritz's attempt to retain traces of American national identity within his language are not enduring, brought to a halt by a jarring reconfirmation of Moritz's inability to escape his national identity, which manifests itself in his exposure to the negative elements of the Austrian national character: 'Als er am selben Tag [...] in der Altstadt angerempelt wurde, und statt einer Entschuldigung auch noch einen Fluch zu hören bekam, wusste er wo er war' (195).

Through the explicit comments in the narrative strands referring to the brothers' respective ascendencies and downfalls, then, Gstrein largely continues the perpetuation of traditional *Anti-Heimat* paradigms, placing them in a new light through a simultaneous examination of the nexus of issues surrounding national identity and commercialism, which are particularly prevalent in the narrative referring to Vinzenz's experience on the national team. Gstrein treats national identity in much the same way as male and female sexuality, presenting it as a potent and profitable commercial product, which can be stylised in order to produce a 'front' which will mask the internal realities

of the nation concerned. The examination of these 'realities' is emphasised in Moritz's narrative, where racism and evasion of historical responsibility are presented as the driving forces behind Austrian national identity. Various parallels exist between the two narratives, which manifest themselves mostly in the influence of the hub of commercialism which the United States represents. It is the influence of this commercial *Heimat*, which represents the antithesis to the commercialised *Anti-Heimat* of the Austrian province, which reduces each brother finally to a shallow manifestation of their national identity, which in much the same way as the Austrian province, is shown to be an inescapable entity with the nation constantly refusing to relinquish its hold over its subjects

## **2.6 Austrian identity and guilt – *Das Register***

As suggested above, this final section is dedicated to the manner in which *Das Register* deals with the concept of collective guilt: The novel's presentation of this subject takes in each of the strands of the discussion of national identity discussed above, constituting by turns a traditional *Anti-Heimat* investigation of Austria's failure to come to terms effectively with its National Socialist past, which is presented through the medium of commercialism by the concept of the 'Register.' In addition, Gstrein's presentation of the subject is bound up with issues discussed earlier in the chapter, including the brothers' relationship with both their father and with Magda. An examination of the presentation of guilt, however, must begin with a re-examination of the issue of generational identity, which, like national and regional identity, is presented in the novel as an inescapable imperative. As the novel progresses, both Vinzenz and Moritz take on several of their father's characteristics, Moritz becoming obsessed with Ernest Hemingway, and Vinzenz constantly telling stories of his paternal grandfather. The second significant aspect of the novel's configuration of generational identity within *Das Register*, however, is that descent is figured as a contract of ownership, the key to which is *Das Register*, which in the novel constitutes a list of economic debts that the younger generation owes to the older, a reflection of the father figure's obsession with commercialism and money. However, besides the economic debt, the price that the brothers must pay in order to be considered a descendent of their father is to live up to the legacy of their grandfather, thereby alleviating the guilt which the father evidently feels at his own inability to do so. It is important to note that Moritz and

Vinzenz have no involvement in their father's failures, and are thus not culpable in any way, but instead have their father's guilt forcibly wrought upon them as a form of familial obligation.

The concept of the younger generation's obligation to 'pay the price' of the older generation's guilt is equally applicable at national level. The price paid for membership of the Austrian nation is to absolve the guilt of the previous generation. It is in this light that the brothers' guilt surrounding their relationship with Magda becomes significant. Various inferences, particularly to Magda's hair, which leads the brothers to nickname her 'Absalom' (21), suggest that Magda can be seen to symbolise Jewishness within the novel. Further, despite constant hint that the brothers attach a feeling of guilt to Magda, the source of this guilt remains indeterminate. The lack of ability to determine the precise source of guilt can be seen as indicative of the second post-war generation, who have inherited a feeling of guilt, but have no first-hand experience of its source, which is merely conveyed to them abstractly by an (often biased) education system, the media, and other vehicles of cultural memory.

The relationship between guilt and national identity as presented in *Das Register* is further complicated by a second issue which is exemplified by Moritz's response to the confirmation of his national identity on his return to America (see page 72 above.) This represents the crux of the ambivalence inherent to the Austrian attitude towards guilt, founded in a dichotomy of guilt and pride:

In Zukunft galt es wieder, sich von vornherein selbst zu entschuldigen, überhaupt sich an sich und an allem mit der größten Selbstverständlichkeit schuldig zu wissen wie von Kind an, unausweichlich. Und oberstes Gebot war es, auf seine Herkunft zu schauen, sie nicht [...] zu vergessen, oder man kam in Verruf, sich ihrer zu schämen und wurde schräg angeschaut, von unten von oben herab (195).

The converse of the brothers' 'payment' for their father's guilt is his insistence on their idolisation of its source, namely their grandfather: As the above quotation suggests, Gstrein presents Austrian national identity as revolving around a similar dichotomy. The guilt intrinsic in Austrian national identity presented as so permanent and grievous that it must constantly be

acknowledged 'von Kind an.' However, the antithesis to this is the national pride generally perceived as intrinsic in membership of any nation. The key question that Gstrein asks in his presentation of guilt, then, is how these two aspects of Austrian nationhood can justifiably co-exist.

Norbert Gstrein's *Das Register*, then, flouts Koppensteiner's suggestion that the *Anti-Heimat* genre became obsolete at the beginning of the 1980s, as well as Zeyringer's suggestion that the genre was completely replaced by his *Fremden/Verkehrsliteratur*. In combining them with an examination of the damaging effects of commercialism on the provincial milieu, Gstrein is able to adopt and invert many of the conventions inherent to the *Heimat* genre, including the traditional *Heimkehrer* motif, as well as the conventions relating to *Heimat* and gender more generally, thus literally creating from *Das Register* a negatively charged *Heimatroman*. The novel also adheres to many of the conventions of the 1970s *Anti-Heimatliteratur*, through its direct presentation of the social reality of provincial life lurking behind the commercialised picture which is created for the outside world. As well as vitriolic comments regarding Austria's continued failure to acknowledge its National Socialist past, and references to the continued racism in the country, which configure it as a traditional *Anti-Heimat*, pervaded by a similar style of hypocrisy to that which floods Gstrein's commercialised province, the Austrians featured in the novel harbour an entirely negative attitude towards both the state and the region they inhabit. The emphasis on commercialism also adds a new dimension to Austria as *Anti-Heimat*, by presenting Austrian national identity as a commercialised concept founded upon the need to present an external front 'acceptable' to the rest of the world, and thus distance the country from the uncomfortable past whose influence continues to linger under the surface.

## Chapter 3: Lilian Faschinger - *Wiener Passion*

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### 3.1 Habsburgische *Heimatliteratur* and the imperial hangover.

One of the most influential concepts in the analysis of 20<sup>th</sup> Century Austrian literature is the *Habsburgerische Mythos*, examined in Claudio Magris' seminal work *Der habsburgerische Mythos in der modernen österreichischen Literatur*. The focus of the study is the literary mythologisation of the Habsburg Empire during the period surrounding its downfall. The most important aspect of the so-called *Habsburger Mythos* for our purposes is its connection to the *Heimatroman*, which manifests itself most explicitly in so-called *Habsburgische Heimatliteratur*. Significantly, the authors whose works Magris includes in his discussion of this sub-genre wrote during the mid-19th Century, calling attention to the flaw inherent in the restriction of the designation *Heimatliteratur* to that of the *Heimatabewegung*, as borne out by Magris' comments regarding the goals of the genre's Austrian variant. The critic suggests that the 'escape into the province' supplied, for example, by Adalbert Stifter, was motivated by the desire to divert attention from the threat to the Empire represented by the increasingly nationalist mentalities of the Empire's city-dwelling middle classes. The cities became symbolic for an Empire in crisis, and it was this political predicament rather than the social catastrophe of modernity which prompted authors to seek refuge in the myth of the 'heile Alpenrepublik,' where the traditional dynastic order could continue unaffected by the nationalistic pretensions of city-dwelling subjects.<sup>1</sup>

More significantly, however, parallels can be drawn between the principles of *Heimat* and those of the literary *Habsburger Mythos* prevalent during the Empire's immediate aftermath. An attempt to ally this configuration of the *Habsburger Mythos* with *Heimatliteratur* seems incongruous, since the authors whose works perpetuated the inter-war *Habsburger Mythos* were, according to Magris, Ödön von Horváth, Joseph Roth and Robert Musil, whose best-known works are set in Vienna. The parallel between this particular brand of metropolitan literature and *Heimatliteratur*, however, is visible in their

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<sup>1</sup> Claudio Magris, *Der habsburgerische Mythos in der moderneren österreichischen Literatur* (Vienna: Zsolnay, 2000) p. 165

common predication upon an attempt to escape into the sentimentality of a bygone age, motivated by the desire for the return of the values associated with it. This can be seen as an instance of *Primitivismus*, based on the 'discontent of the cultured with their culture,' and as such upon the opposition between nature and culture.<sup>2</sup> Within traditional *Heimatliteratur*, this discontent manifested itself in a desire to return to the relationship between man and nature indicative of a civilisation in which culture, at least in its modern guise, had yet to bring its influence to bear, and was therefore irrelevant. The inter-war *Habsburger Mythos* constitutes a mirror image of Mecklenburg's *Primitivismus*, since the object of nostalgia is a lifestyle based not on a relationship between man and nature, but rather that associated with an age of specifically Austrian cultural advancement and the dynasty which was the driving force behind it. Further, the desire for a return to this way of life is expressed by representatives of an historical epoch of 'cultural vacuum' in which the status of a specifically Austrian national, and therefore cultural, identity was in doubt, if not irrelevant. The First Republic's provisional government intended to reduce Austria to an annexe of Germany, branding the country 'Republic of *Deutschösterreich*' and thus confirming the country's status as a mere constituent of the German *Kulturnation*, simultaneously suppressing an independent Austrian culture.<sup>3</sup> Further, the subsequent affirmation of such an independent culture provided by the establishment of the First Republic was by no means comprehensive, based not upon the concept of *Willensnation*, but rather upon the political pressure exercised by the victorious Entente.

The parallel between the *Habsburger Mythos* and *Primitivismus* is also visible in terms of the milieu in which literature perpetuating the myth was set. As we have seen, much of the literature we are dealing with focussed on Vienna, which, as the former *Residenzhauptstadt*, functioned as a metonym for the Empire itself. The existence of elements of *Heimat* discourse in literature with a setting so far removed from the province blurs not only the 'good country, bad town' binary, but also that between nature and culture, and provincialism and urbanism. The establishment of an historical link between *Heimat* and the city-based inter-war *Habsburger Mythos* thus has significant implications for the

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<sup>2</sup> Mecklenburg, p. 64

<sup>3</sup> For analyses of these events Menasse, p. 249-275

role of the two concepts within contemporary Austria, and therefore within the country's contemporary canon.

Robert A. Kann characterises the continued influence of the Habsburg Empire in Austria as an 'imperial hangover,' which affects the country more than the Empire's other successor states. The imperial hangover is visible in manifestations of imperial culture inherited from the Habsburgs, as well as in the continued emphasis on bureaucracy exemplified by the obsession with titles and honours which has its roots in Habsburg Austria.<sup>4</sup> Perhaps the most significant manifestation of the imperial hangover is visible in what we might refer to as a contemporary *Habsburger Mythos*, the Empire having been reconfigured within cultural memory as 'an Ehren und an Siegen reich, glorified as a beacon of power, prestige, upright Catholic faith, military prowess and outstanding contributions to the arts and sciences.'<sup>5</sup> The culture revered most in this respect is that of the *fin-de-siècle*, which, as Kann points out, provided the backdrop for developments in art, literature, music, symbolic logic and psychoanalysis.<sup>6</sup> Kann's contentions are supported by Menasse, who refers to contemporary Austria as a 'museum to the Habsburg Empire.'<sup>7</sup>

The contemporary imperial hangover, then, is similar in nature to the *Habsburger Mythos* perpetuated in inter-war literature, in that each prioritises the *fin-de-siècle* as the main object of nostalgia. As has been shown in previous chapters, however, the concept of *Heimat* in Austrian literature has evolved since the end of the nineteenth Century when the bastions of *Heimatliteratur* referred to by Magris were in full production. The purpose of this chapter is to determine whether it is possible to speak of a similar evolution in literature perpetuating the *Habsburger Mythos*, and, most importantly, the link between the two genres. The following reading of Lilian Faschinger's *Wiener Passion* will argue that the novel constitutes a city-based *Anti-Heimatroman*, with the author adopting the conventions inherent in the genre in order to deconstruct the contemporary *Habsburger Mythos*, and, correspondingly to alter the parameters of the imperial hangover. This two-step process is predicated upon Faschinger's inclusion of two separate narrative strands within *Wiener Passion*, one of which

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<sup>4</sup> Robert A. Kann 'The Case of Austria', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 15 (1980), 37-52 (p. 39)

<sup>5</sup> Kann, p. 38

<sup>6</sup> Kann, p. 46

<sup>7</sup> Menasse, p.123



relates to contemporary Vienna, and the second of which focuses on the Vienna of the *fin-de-siècle*. Each of these narrative strands is dominated by one key element of the *Anti-Heimat* genre: Faschinger's contemporary Vienna, narrated by Magnolia Brown and Josef Horvath, is presented as overwhelmingly provincial in nature, both in terms of the locale's topography and the 'provincial' attitudes displayed by its inhabitants. After examining each of these factors, the chapter will turn its attention to the *fin-de-siècle* milieu, illustrating Faschinger's adoption and manipulation of the *Anti-Heimat* topos of enforced silence, and the mode of self-renarration employed by *Anti-Heimat* protagonists as a method of combating it. It will be argued that Faschinger's purpose in employing these topoi is to 'debunk' what we might refer to as the contemporary *Habsburger Mythos*, i.e. the glorified status of the dynasty in contemporary cultural memory, by illustrating exactly those institutions most associated with the era, for example the Catholic faith, literature and psychoanalysis, as well as the dynasty itself, the agents of the protagonists' repression through silencing. The final section of the chapter will focus upon Faschinger's alteration of the parameters of the so-called 'imperial hangover,' discussing the aspects of *fin-de-siècle* culture which have been adopted into the contemporary milieu.

### 3.2 Metropolitan landscape as *Erzählte Provinz*

The prominent topographical configuration within the novel's *Binnenerzählung*, set in contemporary Vienna corresponds to Mecklenburg's 'Zwei-Ort Schema,' since, although Vienna constitutes the novel's primary setting, Faschinger includes a section set in New York. The dominance of the 'Zwei-Ort Schema' is underlined through the introduction of 'Unbestimmtheitsstellen,' which obscure the connection between the two cities, and between the cities themselves and their geographical surroundings, configuring them as 'islands' which are isolated from one another but which together comprise the narrated world of *Wiener Passion*.<sup>8</sup> This obscuration of geographical connections is achieved through Magnolia Brown's narration of her journey to Vienna, which begins with a view of New York from the air, but is interrupted when the narrator falls asleep, resuming only after the plane has landed in Schwechat airport (31). This technique allows New York's topographical presentation as an 'island,' since the

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<sup>8</sup> Cf. the title of Mecklenburg's second collections of studies relating to the province *Die grünen Inseln: Zur Kritik des literarischen Heimatkomplexes* (Munich: Iudicium, 1986)

reader is given no sense of its immediate geographical context or its relationship to Vienna. The conventional goal of the 'Zwei-Ort Schema,' to support the 'ästhetische Valenz des binären Kulturmusters Stadt/Land bzw. Metropolis/Provinz,'<sup>9</sup> is visible in a modified form in *Wiener Passion*: Magnolia's narrative of her preparations for the journey to Vienna presents New York as a bustling milieu, dominated by crowds, traffic and technological innovations indicative of the stereotypical metropolis. Faschinger proceeds to invert the *Heimat* convention of 'bad urbanity,' Magnolia's narration of the view from the aeroplane idyllising the metropolitan milieu, and in doing so emphasising those elements indicative of urban progress (39). This idyllised vision of urban New York forms a sharp contrast to Magnolia's reaction to Vienna, which confirms the city's configuration as province by emphasising its negative aspects, associated not with technology or culture, but rather with natural phenomena (62). As the novel progresses, the 'Zwei-Ort Schema' is complicated by Magnolia's discovery of Rosa Hawelka's biography, which introduces the *Binnenerzählung* set in *fin-de-siècle* Vienna. The addition of this setting causes a breakdown in the good urbanity/bad provinciality dialectic set up between New York and Vienna, since the *fin-de-siècle* configuration of the city evinces characteristics intrinsic in both the contemporary Viennese (provincial) and New York (urban) milieus.

Faschinger's manipulation of Mecklenburg's principles of *Erzählte Provinz* is also evident in her presentation of the novel's central locale which encompasses Vienna's first district and the *Naschmarkt*. Faschinger's presentation of this location repeats the technique of narrative closure at the local level. Mecklenburg suggests that the representation of 'closed province' is based on a tension between 'geographische Referenz, die räumliche Kontinuität nach allen Seiten verlangt und fiktionale Geschlossenheit, die alle Wege 'nach aussen' durch Unbestimmtheitsstellen gleichsam sperrt.'<sup>10</sup> Within *Wiener Passion* this tension is reflected in the narrators' tendency to relate their journeys within the city in comprehensive detail. This pedantic narrative, however, is combined with omissions which obscure the connection between the novel's central location and the rest of the city. Horvarth's walk with the *Präfekt* from the *Hofburg* to *Kaffeehaus Frauenhuber*, for example, is described

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<sup>9</sup> Mecklenburg, p. 46

<sup>10</sup> Mecklenburg, p. 46

in the minutest geographical detail, whereas Magnolia's description of her arrival in Vienna only begins once she reaches the *Ringstrasse*. (132, 32)

At the local level, Faschinger once more manipulates the conventions of the closed province to her own ends, perpetuating Menasse's 'Austria as museum' motif and solidifying the connection between *fin-de-siècle* and contemporary Vienna. The restriction of the setting to the first and fifth districts allows the narrators to reference the vestiges of imperial rule located there, including the *Hofburg*, the *Ringstrasse* and *Stephansdom*. As the novel progresses, the author proceeds to open 'Wege nach Außen' which lead from the central location to similar landmarks, including *Schönbrunn* and the *Zentralfriedhof*. Further such paths lead to spots mentioned by Rosa in the course of her biography. Thus, Magnolia and Horvarth travel to Nußdorf, where they visit the guest-house *Zur blauen Traube*, whose present-day *Wirtin* evinces similar characteristics to her predecessor referred to by Rosa (205). Magnolia also visits the Sigmund Freud museum, passing the *Landesgericht*, where Rosa is incarcerated before her execution (234).

As a narrated space, then, contemporary Vienna constitutes a combination of both the open and closed province characteristic of the text corpus discussed within this thesis. Vienna is set in an international context through Faschinger's inclusion of a representation of New York as well as references to other countries. However, Faschinger applies the conventions of closed province to separate the city from that external world, the space perpetuating the feelings of its inhabitants, who react to anything originating outside the city with a mixture of ignorance and ambivalence. The inclusion of this Vienna/Außenwelt binary allows Faschinger to exploit the in-group/outgroup binary cited by Roszbacher as central to *Heimatliteratur*<sup>11</sup> casting Magnolia as 'outsider' to illustrate the provincial nature of the Viennese mentality. This mixing of conventions is repeated at the local level, with Faschinger 'opening' the 'closed province' of the novel's central locality only when this process serves the overall goals of the novel.

### 3.3 Metropolitan provincialism?.

Having discussed the provincialised topography of Faschinger's contemporary Vienna, it is necessary to explore the extent to which this provincialisation is

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<sup>11</sup> Kunne, p. 36

perpetuated within the lifestyles and mentalities of the Viennese inhabitants, which Faschinger illustrates mainly in the character of Josef Horvarth. Horvarth embodies a legion of hyperbolised Viennese stereotypes: Aside from his complaints about the inclement weather and his resulting ailments, Horvarth displays tendencies to melancholia and a stereotypically Viennese obsession with death, exhibited most obviously by his decision to rent an apartment in the final residence of his idol, composer Franz Schubert. Furthermore, Horvarth displays an attachment to cemeteries, four of which he cites as 'die Orte, die ich in Wien am meisten schätze' (9). In addition, the pedantic and snobbish narrative style Horvarth employs indicates his *Präpotenz*, a quality cited by Bruckmüller as most associated with the Viennese character.<sup>12</sup> The fact that Horvarth's neighbours evince similar characteristics suggests the characters, their attitudes, and the milieu that they inhabit to be typical of the Viennese condition, which subsequently becomes the object of the author's satirical criticism.

Particularly relevant in this respect is Horvarth's lifestyle, which contradicts the criteria laid down by Georg Simmel as indicative of a metropolitan existence. Simmel sees metropolitan life as predicated upon participation in social, occupational and economic life, each of which is governed by the money economy. The dominance of the money economy in the metropolis in turn engenders a mentality according to which the emphasis on personal relationships characteristic of rural life is abandoned in favour of economic survival.<sup>13</sup> The *Naschmarkt* community, however, is founded upon the network of relationships between Horvarth and the mother substitutes of which the community is composed. These relationships are, however, not indicative of Simmel's 'social life,' since Horvarth constantly distances himself from his acquaintances, referring to them either by their occupations or by their surnames. Neither is the (initial) benefit Horvarth seeks from these relationships financial in nature. Instead, the narrator requires of his associates the patience to discuss his various ailments. During an exchange between Horvarth and the

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<sup>12</sup> Ernst Bruckmüller, 'Wien und die österreichische Nationalidentität' in *Von den Hauptstädtern und den Hintersassen: Wien als Bundeshauptstadt*, ed. by Erhard Busek (Vienna: Edition Atelier, 1987) pp.19-36 (p.22)

<sup>13</sup> Georg Simmel, 'Die Großstädte und das Geistesleben' in *Die Grossstadt. Vorträge und Aufsätze zur Städteausstellung*, ed. by Th. Petermann (Dresden: [n.publisher], 1913) pp. 185-206 <<http://gutenberg.spiegel.de/simmel/essays/grosstad.htm>> [Accessed 15/08/2006] (para.10)

customers at the local pharmacy, it further becomes apparent that this network of relationship is based upon habitual behaviour, since the conversation is narrated in the present rather than the past tense, suggesting both its content and form to be a matter of routine. (10-11). Significantly, this emphasis on the habitual is not restricted to Horvarth's immediate circle, with the *Trafkantin's* reaction to Horvarth's suggestion that she seek medical advice for her back pain suggesting that an inability to cope with change is universal amongst the inhabitants of the fifth and sixth districts (13). In sum, the habitual behaviour emphasised in each of these episodes further demonstrates Faschinger's configuration of contemporary Vienna as province rather than metropolis. As Simmel suggests:

Der intellektualistische Charakter des großstädtischen Seelenlebens [wird] begreiflich, gegenüber dem kleinstädtischen, das vielmehr auf das Gemüt und gefühlsmäßige Beziehungen gestellt ist. Denn diese [...] wachsen am ehesten an dem ruhigen Gleichmaß ununterbrochener Gewöhnungen.<sup>14</sup>

Horvarth's ability to participate in the metropolitan way of life becomes more and more impaired as the novel progresses. His illness begins to prevent his involvement in working life, necessitating the curtailment of the lessons whose fees comprise his only income. This lack of participation leads to a shortage of money and thus an incapability to participate in the money economy, thus forcing Horvarth to rely on his personal relationships to acquire those resources necessary for the maintenance of his lifestyle. This reliance upon the local community is highly significant in terms of Vienna's presentation as *Provinz*, since Horvarth prefers to rely on his personal acquaintances for a loan, rather than involving the bank. This decision, as well as Horvarth's acquisition of loans 'in kind' from his social circle demonstrates the community's self-sufficiency, and its ability to survive without institutions representative of the money economy so central to Simmel's metropolis.

Complete elimination of metropolitan influence from Faschinger's narrated Vienna is complemented by references of varying subtlety to the *Heimat* discourse which pervade Horvarth's narrative. These include mentions of *Café Anzengruber*, which shares its name with one of the foremost

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<sup>14</sup> Simmel, para.11

representatives of the *Bauern drama*, and the pharmacist's suggestion that Horvarth should allow his movements to be governed by nature and the seasons, 'so wie die Schwalben,' (10) a philosophy indicative of the provincial lifestyle.<sup>15</sup> Most important, however is Horvarth's display of local patriotism, firstly with reference to Vienna and secondly to his neighbourhood, a level of identification equated by Haller to the connection exhibited by provincial inhabitants to their local village.<sup>16</sup> In Horvarth's case, this connection is predicated upon two of the foundations of rural life, firstly an (albeit illusory) sense of self-sufficiency alluded to by his suggestion that his immediate locale provides him with everything he needs, and, secondly, upon a pronounced sense of community (26).

Horvarth's connections to both his neighbourhood and Vienna, however, are more complex than these insights suggest. The hints at a *Heimat* connection are loaded with irony, products of Horvarth's grievous lack of self-knowledge and an associated misinterpretation of the role he plays within the community.<sup>17</sup> This self-deception manifests itself in his assertion that he is unable to leave Vienna because of his obligation to his students, a statement whose fallacy becomes explicit as the novel progresses, with Horvarth losing students as a result of his incompetence as a voice coach. In much the same way, Horvarth's love of Vienna is rendered ironic by the contribution of the Viennese weather to his ill health. The fact that the city itself is primarily to blame for Horvarth's ailments is suggestive of *Anti-Heimat* conventions, reminiscent of the experience of Franz Innerhofer's protagonist Holl, who perceives the natural world as complicit in the province's transformation into a *Bauern-KZ*.<sup>18</sup>

Horvarth's response to his surroundings, however, is the exact opposite of Holl's. The former maintains a love for the city apparently comparable with his love for his mother (11). It is worth noting the return of the *Heimat* as mother motif here, which manifests itself in a highly comic oedipal relationship between

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<sup>15</sup> Kunne, p. 34

<sup>16</sup> Max Haller and Stefan Gruber, 'Die Identität der Österreicher zwischen local-regionaler, nationaler und europäischer Zugehörigkeit' in *Identität und Nationalstolz der Österreicher*, ed. by Max Haller (Vienna: Böhlau, 1993), pp. 383-430 (p. 384)

<sup>17</sup> The students who 'depend upon him,' seemingly as children depend upon the presence of a father, prove themselves, as the novel progresses, to be by no means loyal to Horvarth, whose constant illness causes two of them to stop taking lessons with him.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. Koppensteiner, p.5

son and mother, the former's idolisation of the latter based upon a grave misconception of maternal abilities. The validity of Horvarth's reverence for his mother is constantly relativised by the insights into her character he provides, by means of which he obviously intends to emphasise to her exemplary maternal skills. This technique is demonstrated in Horvarth's references to his childhood, spent ill, and thus in his mother's deficient care, predicated upon the philosophy that music constitutes a more effective cure for illness than medicine (17). Horvarth's description of his mother's attempts to heal his ailments betrays his failure to appreciate the irony of the music she chooses to cure him, namely Mahler's *Kindertotenlieder* (16). Horvarth's refusal to recognise that his mother's ministrations exacerbated his sickly condition, as well as his failure to acknowledge her true nature, as 'geistig and 'selbstbezogen' (236) parallel his reaction to the town, whose contribution to his sickly constitution he also refuses to fully acknowledge. Further, the oedipal nature of the relationship between Horvarth and his mother casts her, once more, as emblematic of the 'suffocating' *Heimat* from which the son wishes to break away.<sup>19</sup> From the novel's outset, it is obvious that Horvarth subconsciously wishes to escape his mother's influence, which she continues to exert from beyond the grave. This desire manifests itself in the dream which provides the motive for his visit to her grave, where he encounters Magnolia for the first time (27-28). Given the link between Horvarth's connection to the city and his love for his mother, it is possible to read her presentation in the novel as a comment on the progression of the *Heimat* concept. The presentation of Horvarth's mother in life, as a superficially indulgent matriarch who evinces behaviours indicative of psychosis, and in death as a grotesque monster, parallels *Heimat*'s evolution. Originally connoting a superficially devotional connection to local surroundings, *Heimat* became indicative of a suffocating atmosphere, one pervaded by an undercurrent of psychosis. This led in turn to its configuration as a monstrous and grotesque concept in the form of the *Anti-Heimat* tradition<sup>20</sup>

Given the links between Vienna and mother as *Anti-Heimat* discussed above, it is significant that Horvarth's physical health should improve as a result

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<sup>19</sup> Boa and Palfreyman, p. 27

of his relationship with Magnolia. The couple's consummation of their relationship in Horvarth's mother's bed functions as a rebirth for him, destroying his mother's continued influence over him, and thus effecting Vienna's transformation from an illness-inducing *Anti-Heimat* to a milieu more representative of the *Heimat* idyll. This transformation is underlined by the couple's engagement and Magnolia's pregnancy at the end of the novel, which signifies their impending entrance into the *Heimat* discourse through their adoption of parental roles.

Besides demonstrating these particular characteristics of the *Anti-Heimat* genre, however, the contemporary narrative, and also to a certain extent the narrative strand relating to *fin-de-siècle* Vienna evinces a *Heimatroman* structure, with the arrival of an outsider constituting each narrative's departure point. Magnolia's arrival is used to further expose the provincial mentality which manifests itself in the natives' reaction to her progressive attitudes, and in their lamentation of the disappearance of the 'traditional' Austrian culture. This combination is exemplified by Magnolia's visit to a *Schuster*, who demands an exorbitant fee to reattach the heel to her shoe, justified because the nails required are not available locally. This is followed by a diatribe regarding the lower quality repairs provided by modern businesses, which he refers to as 'Warenhäuser' (192). This example of Viennese traditionalism is significant, highlighting not only the inability of Viennese industry to cope with goods from more 'advanced' cultures, but also blaming the advent of commercialism for a reduction in quality of workmanship. This claim is constantly repeated throughout the narrative, with Tante Pia bemoaning the reduced quality of meat available thanks to the decreasing number of traditional butchers, (65) and Horvarth blaming the increasing number of voice coaches for a reduction in the standard of musical culture (134). The transfer from the traditional to the commercial can be paralleled with the transfer to industrial practises whose introduction in the early 1900s motivated the *Heimatbewegung*. The inability of the Viennese to deal with modernity, both in terms of culture and business, can be seen as a form of delayed reaction to the abandonment of pre-modern values which threatens Viennese civilisation. The fact that Viennese society is shown to be undertaking this change in the late 1990s is indicative of a cultural lag consistent with Magnolia's characterisation of her trip to Vienna as time



travel which has taken her back a century (29), to the time at which the rest of European civilisation was being forced to come to terms with this transformation. It is important to note that the cultural aspects whose demise is lamented are often vestiges of Habsburg rule, for example the *Wiener Sängerknaben*, the successors of the choir that sung in the *Hofburgkapelle* revered by former member Horvarth. During his meeting with the *Präfekt*, the two discuss the declining quality of the 'Knabenmaterial,' and the Viennese music scene in general (134-135).<sup>21</sup> In mourning the demise of their culture, therefore, the residents of Magnolia's Vienna continue to lament the demise of imperial traditions.

After the *Schuster* has finished his diatribe, he proceeds to question Magnolia about her origins. Her ensuing narrative regarding her her parents' encounter at a demonstration for African Americans rights, which led to her conception in Central Park constitutes a representation of a culture opposed to its Viennese 'counterpart, her conception presented as an instance of rebellion against 'die Älteren und zugleich meist auch Konservativeren' typical of the beginning of the 'so genannte Sexualrevolution' (196). The *Schuster's* reaction speaks volumes as to his attitude towards these topics, the naivety displayed by his mixture of astonishment and fascination once more typically provincial. Besides highlighting the provinciality of the Viennese mentality, this passage also emphasises Magnolia's disparate ethnic identity. Her African American ethnicity makes her an outsider, her lack of 'pure' Austrian blood barring her induction into the Austrian culture, whilst her Bohemian heritage means that a positive reaction to that culture is demanded of her. This is demonstrated by Pia's reaction to Magnolia's request to be allowed to eat something other than the *Kuttelflecksuppe* forced upon her by her Aunt:

[...] sie erlaube sich, mir die Frage zu stellen, was ich, in deren Adern gottlob nicht nur afrikanisches, sondern auch [...] altösterreichisches Blut flösse, gegen ein böhmisches Nationalgericht einzuwenden hätte [...] Den [...] Kochvorgang würde sie mir nicht mitteilen, weil man Rezepte dieser Art prinzipiell nur an Landesleute weitergebe, unter welche ich mich bedauerlicherweise nicht uneingeschränkt einreihen ließe [...] (64-65)

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<sup>21</sup> It is worth noting the homoerotic overtones of the discussion, which cast the *Wiener Sängerknaben* as an institution which encourages both homosexuality and pedophilia.

The fact that Magnolia is prevented by her disparate ethnicity from gaining access to the Austrian culture is indicative of the chauvinism of the native Viennese, who are represented as a 'closed' group, entry into which is predicated upon an understanding of their culture and traditions, as well as the possession of certain physical characteristics, most important among them skin colour and a strict adherence to dress code. The Viennese attitude to foreigners is thus indicative of an exaggerated version of the 'ethnonation' typology. Even under the terms of 'ethnonation', Magnolia has claim to acceptance because of her parentage, and, to a lesser extent her command not only of German, but *Wienerisch* (195).<sup>22</sup> Judgements regarding her heritage, however, are made solely on the basis of her skin colour, as her encounter with the *Greisin* suggests. This constitutes one of many instances of chauvinist behaviour described in Magnolia's narrative but is particularly important since it connects the phenomenon to the imperial hangover. The *Greisin* is one of the novel's most vehement opponents of the Empire, her opposition based not upon the repression of the serving classes by the bourgeoisie, but rather the latter's financial exploitation by the government. Given her constant references to her 'wirklicher Hofrat' father, the *Greisin*'s vitriolic comments regarding the Empire are also utterly hypocritical Faschinger's reference here to the designation 'Wirklicher Hofrat' is significant, since it represents a true manifestation of the imperial hangover. The title was introduced as compensation for the dilution of the *Hofrat*'s social status through what Kann refers to as the contemporary 'inflation of titles'.<sup>23</sup> In repeatedly referring to her father's title, the *Greisin* emphasises his position in the Empire's social order, and thus, by association, her own, presenting her racist attitudes as a 'hangover' from the dynastic period:

Wo wir hinkämen wenn diese Kreaturen auch noch unseren schönen vierten Bezirk überschwemmtten, [...] ihn bevölkerten mit ihrer abstoßenden schwarzen Brut, [...] ihr Vater, der als Wirklicher Hofrat in den Ruhestand getreten sei, habe immer gesagt, er werde es gottlob

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<sup>22</sup> As we saw in the introduction, acceptance of individuals as 'members' of national groups based on their ability to speak the local language is an important part of the *Kultrnation* typology which is inextricably linked to that of the *Ethnonation*.

<sup>23</sup> Kann, p.38

nicht mehr erleben [...] daß unser gesegnetes Land von den Negern aus Afrika erobert würde [...] (72).

The views of the ticket-seller in the *Sterbehaus* add a further layer to Viennese chauvinism. Her answer to Horvarth's inquiry as to whether the flats in the building are for rent is indicative not of the *Ethnonation* but rather the *Kulturnation* configuration of national identity, and demonstrates the character's allegiance to the German *Kulturnation*:

Soviel sie wisse werde der siebenköpfige türkische Familie [...] delogiert, weil [...] die Mietergemeinschaft sich [...] gegen die ständige Anwesenheit einer ethnisch fremden Gruppe im Sterbehaus Schuberts ausgesprochen habe, der doch eine zutiefst deutsche Musik komponiert habe [...] (22).

Close examination of the positions represented by the *Greisin*, Tante Pia and the ticket seller shows the particular brand of racism they display to be similar in nature to the racial policies perpetuated by the National Socialist regime. Pia's observations regarding Magnolia's ethnicity categorise the status of various races according to their blood. This act of 'ethnic prioritisation' is problematic, carrying connotations of racial categorisation into 'höhere' and 'niedrige' Rassen' upon which National Socialist racial policy was based.<sup>24</sup> The ticket seller's statement regarding the Turkish family takes this even further. The suggestion that the Turks must be evicted from Schubert's *Sterbehaus* clearly casts them in the role of the 'kulturzerstörende Rasse' alluded to by Hitler in *Mein Kampf*, the connotation being that their presence taints the manifestation of (pan-German) culture that the composer's music represents. Conclusions of a similar nature can be drawn from Pia's comments regarding the Magnolia's clothing, which she regards as inappropriate for the mass she attends with Horvarth, which represents a paradigmatic Viennese cultural event, and are conveyed in a hugely vitriolic manner by the *Greisin*'s suggestion that the 'Neger aus Afrika' are are populating Vienna 'mit ihrer abstoßenden schwarzen Brut.'

As the novel progresses, implicit references to National Socialist racial policy continue, manifesting themselves specifically in Pia's disapproval of Magnolia's relationship with Horvarth, ostensibly based on the fact that it places

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<sup>24</sup> Reich, p.86

Magnolia within the 'Ausländerfaktion, [...] die die Chancen der Hoffnungen der heiratsfähigen Wienerinnen auf Familiengründung schmälerten.' (386). These comments, as well as those of the *Greisin* regarding the 'hässliche Brut' are reminiscent of the National Socialist concern regarding *Blutvermischung*. As Reich suggests, National Socialist *Rassentheorie* was founded on the precept that 'bei Blutsvermischung des Ariers mit "niedrigen Völkern" [käme] immer der Niedergang des Kulturträgers [aus].'<sup>25</sup> This 'Niedergang' was not merely biological, in terms of 'körperliche[r] und geistige[r] Rückgang'<sup>26</sup> but also cultural:

Die Blutsvermischung und die dadurch bedingte Senkung des Rassenniveaus ist die alleinige Ursache des Absterbens alter Kulturen, denn die Menschen gehen am Verlust jener Widerstandskraft [zugrunde], die nur dem reinen Blute zu eigen ist.<sup>27</sup>

### 3.4 Magnolia's Vienna: *Anti-Heimat* incomplete.

Faschinger's contemporary Vienna, then, is presented as a milieu which corresponds at least in part to the topographical, literary and psychological definitions of *Anti-Heimat* and province, and in which the fascist attitudes indicative of National Socialism continue to prevail. However, although the prominence of a traditionalist mentality in a provincial setting, the rigid maintenance of in-group/out-group binaries and the prominence of a right-wing world view constitute important characteristics of the *Anti-Heimatroman*, their existence within *Wiener Passion* is insufficient justification for the novel's designation as *Anti-Heimatliteratur* since arguably the most important element of *Anti-Heimat* is absent from the contemporary narrative. As we saw with reference to *Der Ackermann aus Kärnten*, the *Anti-Heimatroman* usually constituted a form of 'verbal revenge' on the part of authors and protagonists for the repressive upbringings to which they had been subjected in the provincial milieu, the mode of self-renarration so central, for example, to Winkler's work, intended to break the silence forced upon them not only by their familial situation, but also by various state institutions, including education and religion. Although Magnolia is repeatedly subjected to attempts to repress her gendered and ethnic identities, particularly from Tante Pia but also from various peripheral

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<sup>25</sup> Reich, p. 86

<sup>26</sup> Reich, p. 87

<sup>27</sup> Reich, p. 86

characters, she is normally able to put up some form of resistance, usually by passing off the various derogatory comments as the insignificant symptoms of the foibles and eccentricities of underdeveloped Viennese culture or by simply refusing to acquiesce to the various demands made of her. Magnolia's ability to combat these various attempts at repression is unsurprising, given the author's attempt, via her discussion with the *Schuster*, to underline the fact that the protagonist is the product of a sub-culture that views human rights as paramount as a result of the long struggle required to acquire them during the 1960s.

The topoi of repression through silencing and combative self-renarration, however, constitute key characteristics of the *Binnenerzählung*, the autobiography of *Dienstmädchen* Rosa Hawelka, composed whilst she awaits execution for the murder of her serial-rapist husband. The mode of self-renarration at the heart of traditional *Anti-Heimatliteratur* is a recurring topos in Faschinger's novels, in which it serves as a weapon against the silence imposed on women by the patriarchal society that her narrated Austria always represents. As Pfandl-Buchegger suggests, 'Die Angst vor der Auslöschung durch die Sprachlosigkeit ist Lilian Faschingers Charakteren ebenso zu eigen wie den Figuren Samuel Becketts, über den sie eines ihren frühesten Gedichte schrieb.'<sup>28</sup> As the following section will demonstrate, however, Faschinger exploits this conventional *Anti-Heimat* motif in order to expose the fallacy of the *Habsburger Mythos* by figuring those institutions which form the basis of the *fin de siècle*'s glorified image within the contemporary imaginary, among them literature psychoanalysis and religion, as points in an all-pervasive network of institutions which ensures the preservation of the *fin de siècle*'s strictly patriarchal, class based social structure, and is therefore responsible not only for Rosa's silencing and repression, but that of the serving classes in general.

### **3.5 Fin-de-siecle Vienna: The topography of repression.**

Faschinger's *fin-de-siècle* Vienna is the only milieu to be analysed in this thesis which does not correspond in any way to Mecklenburg's convention of *Provinz als Modell*. The *Binnerzählung* is set in two of the Hapsburg Empire's member states, namely Austria and Bohemia, and the topographical links between these

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<sup>28</sup> Ingrid Pfandl-Buchegger, 'Ich reihe die Worte zu Schnuren und knüpfe Netze: Weibliche Identitätssuche in Lilian Faschingers Romanen', *Script*, 19 (2001), 12-23 (p.12)

locations are narrated explicitly on several occasions. *Fin-de-siècle* Vienna itself does not conform to the convention of closed province in the same way as its contemporary counterpart. Instead Rosa has 'free rein' of the city, constantly traversing the boundaries between the *Innenstadt* and the various outlying districts. The omission of the 'Provinz als Modell' convention, which constitutes a departure from the traditional *Anti-Heimatschema*, and thus could be seen as indicative of Faschinger's desire to avoid satirisation of the *fin-de-siècle* state, serves on the contrary to make such criticism even more explicit, since the milieu's narrated topography casts Faschinger's *fin-de-siècle* Vienna not merely as a model of the wider national/imperial situation, but rather explicitly as an embodiment of it. The topography of the *fin de siècle* reflects the omnipresence of the state within public life, with state-run institutions of repression dominating the 'metropolitan' landscape: Rosa spends most of her time in Vienna incarcerated in one or other of these institutions, including a psychiatric hospital, a workhouse and a jail. Furthermore, her various (brief) periods of freedom are punctuated by constant visits to churches and to the *Vermittlungsstelle* where she seeks work. The allegiance of these institutions to the state is constantly highlighted through various characters' use of the imperial prefix 'k.k.', (kaiser-und-königliche) to refer to them. Those institutions not referred to in this way usually contain further manifestations of state involvement, such as the presence of the *Kronprinz* at the various concerts Rosa attends at the *Musikverein*. The allegiance of church and state is also referred to frequently, for example in the Ursuline's response to the *Jungtschchen*, in which they equate God and the Emperor, referring to 'Die von Gott und unserem Kaiser etablierten Ordnung.' It is particularly telling that the only way Rosa can escape the repressive influences of state and religion within the *fin de siècle* is to seek refuge in the underground sewer system, the only location in which she does not function in an enforced, subordinate role, whether as servant, mistress or wife. Here, she is free for the first time to express herself creatively by learning to play a (stolen) zither, and discovers a community in which she is treated as an equal. Significantly, the characters that make up this community all originate from the dynastic provinces, a testament to the effectiveness of the state's attempts to uphold its centrifugal class-based structure, allowing those seen as 'inferior' due to the distances of their various birthplaces from the

*Residenzhauptstadt* to be visible within the topography of the city only when they are fulfilling the repressive functions set out for them by the ruling classes, which highlight their inferior position in the Empire's social structure.

As Kennedy notes, the need to make the underclasses, more particularly the *Dienstbotenklasse*, invisible is combined with a requirement that their voices be manipulated in order to reflect and perpetuate their inferior and submissive position within the Empire's social structure, as well as to conform to the conventional *fin-de-siècle* conceptions of femininity, and for any attempts to transgress these class based boundaries to be forcibly silenced.<sup>29</sup> Kennedy herself outlines the various ways in which Rosa's voice is either manipulated or repressed, ranging from the transformation of her natural mezzo soprano into what Kennedy refers to as an 'etherial soprano' in order that she might 'sing like an angel' to the insistence of her various employers that she remain silent whilst undertaking her chores.<sup>30</sup> Whilst Kennedy implicitly acknowledges the link between silence and loss of identity, she views the occurrence of the latter in Rosa only as a direct result of her submission to Witwe Galli, contending that her subjugation through witchcraft 'denies her an identity as well as a voice.'<sup>31</sup> What Kennedy thus fails to recognise is that the protagonist's silencing and interruption are explicitly linked to the repression of her own identity, with Faschinger once more perpetuating the link between enforced silence and self-denial which Zeyringer sees as key to the traditional *Anti-Heimatroman*. Two examples should suffice to illustrate this link. Firstly, Rosa justifies her unintentional transgression of class boundaries in playing the Lidner's piano by suggesting that the action 'hätte [...] mich in eine recht glückliche Epoche meiner Vergangenheit zurückversetzt da mir vergönnt gewesen war, auf einem Pianino aus Mahagoni zu spielen (220-221), a comment which refers to her time the *Kurort* where she grew up. Frau Lidner effectively strips her of this part of her identity, firstly by interrupting her playing, and secondly by characterising Rosa's narrative of her childhood as a lie. A similar interruption occurs later, when Rosa compares psychoanalyst Dublhoff's research into the meaning of dreams with her mother's attempts to decode her own dreams with the help of

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<sup>29</sup> Ellie Kennedy, *Genre Trouble* (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Queens University, Canada, 1993), p. 116

<sup>30</sup> Kennedy, 118-119

<sup>31</sup> Kennedy, p. 117

the *Traumbuch der Phäroen*. Again, Dublhoff interrupts Rosa, refusing to acknowledge the merit of the connection she attempts to make and castigating her mother's attempts at decryption as worthless. Once more, Dublhoff denies Rosa's identity as an individual by railing about the 'Ignoranz und Unbelehrtheit der unteren sozialen Schichten, vor allem die ihrer weiblichen Mitglieder' (467). In doing this, the psychoanalyst effectively invalidates Rosa's childhood education, and, by figuring her as a mere 'part' of a collective, firmly reduces her to her (inferior) gendered and ethnic identity, explicitly reinforcing the class barriers that Rosa has, once again, attempted to infringe.

The most grievous repression of identity that Rosa experiences at the hands of the psychoanalytic institution, however, occurs during her incarceration in the *Irrenheilanstalt* after her attempted escape from her third employer, Witwe Galli. Completely sane on arrival, Rosa is forced by the monotony of her daily life to repeatedly read the cookbooks and prayer-book she inherited from her mother, until she knows them by heart. Subsequently, Rosa wanders the corridors repeating prayers and recipes from the books aloud to herself whilst wearing her mother's hat. These various inherited objects take up a highly ambivalent role within the novel, symbolic simultaneously of Rosa's generational and therefore personal identity, and of the repression via the instruments of religion and class system which both herself and her mother are subject to. Therefore, whilst the repetition of prayers and recipes, and her refusal to remove her mother's hat constitute Rosa's attempt to maintain her personal identity, this attempt is ultimately doomed to failure since Rosa repeatedly verbalises her own insertion into subordinate and repressive roles by the class-system and religion which the inherited objects also symbolise. This situation explicitly demonstrates the inescapable nature of the socially-prescribed, class-based norms of *fin-de-siècle* society, which, once more, correspond with the 'dunkle Mächte' of the traditional *Anti-Heimat* province.<sup>32</sup> Correspondingly, Rosa's attempt to reassert her own identity has a highly ambivalent outcome, when she becomes insane, developing logorroeah, and is ejected from the institution as a result. This highly disparate conclusion to Rosa's time in the institution, from which she is ejected for being insane, having arrived with her mental faculties intact, confirms that the *Irrenheilanstalt*

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<sup>32</sup> Koppensteiner, p.9



functions primarily as an institution of state repression, performing exactly the opposite function from that which we would expect. Rather than healing any kind of mental illness, the *Anstalt* in fact functions to repress Rosa's personal identity even further by engendering psychological illness, and thus achieving through psychiatric treatment what Witwe Galli could not, namely Rosa's psychological subjugation.

Essentially, then, Rosa's decision to 'narrate' herself whilst waiting for her execution can be seen to correspond with the typical *Anti-Heimat* motif of 'breaking enforced silence.' During her various occupations in the Viennese milieu, Rosa is constantly silenced and interrupted in order that she might be prevented from transgressing the class boundaries imposed by her ethnic and gender identities and thus from contradicting the strict social structure of the *fin de siècle*. Further, each attempt to silence her symbolically deprives her of various aspects of her personal identity, particularly her childhood and her generational identity. In penning her autobiography, Rosa reasserts this personal identity, pitting it against of the *fin de siècle*'s attempt to force her into a submissive silence. To suggest, however, that these instances of individual silencing represent the extent of repression within Faschinger's *fin de siècle* would constitute a grave underestimation of the novel's overall message, as well as its connection to the *Anti-Heimat* genre. The cultural institution of psychoanalysis, and the social institution of the *Beamtentum*, which Frau Lidner is a member by virtue of her husband's position as *Oberpostrat* are merely 'subsidiary' constituents of a network of institutions which are responsible not only for Rosa's individual repression, but for the repression of the serving classes as a whole. Although Rosa does function as a metonymic representative of particular social class, in much the same way as Hohl of *Schöne Tage* and Josef in *Ackermann*, Faschinger is much more explicit in her extension of Rosa's repression to the entirety of her social class. At various points in the text, Faschinger repeats the motif of silencing and manipulation of narrative, applying it to the wider social sphere of the *Dienstbotenklasse*, and thus explicitly fulfilling the requirement, again laid down by Zeyringer, that *Anti-Heimat* narrative should confront the reader with the plight of the 'unterdrückte, soziale Schicht.'<sup>33</sup> Faschinger's adoption of traditional *Anti-Heimat* conventions

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<sup>33</sup> Zeyringer, p. 230

is confirmed once again by the fact that the main agents of collective repression are the family and religion, institutions which are inextricably linked in the figure of Rosa's mother, who is the most vociferous proponent of Catholicism within the novel, and who teaches the child to live according to Christian principles. However, within Faschinger's *fin de siècle*, the concept of a Christian upbringing is synonymous with indoctrination into the class- and gender-oriented norms upon which the Empire's social order is founded. Thus, Rosa is taught from the outset that her destiny, imposed upon her by virtue of her gender and her ethnic origins, is not only to lead a life of servitude, but to be grateful for the physical and mental anguish with which such a role is bound up (93-94). From the outset, Rosa's forced adoption of this life of 'grateful servitude' is connected with religion, figured as pre-determined for her by the 'God-ordained' world order, her mother suggesting that any transgression of pre-ordained class-boundaries enforced by her subordinate role would be tantamount to the destruction of this world order, and thus gravely infringe God's will. Rosa's pastor, Pater Bouhmill, is complicit in this religious indoctrination, preaching sermons whose content perpetuates the sentiments expressed by Rosa's mother (94). As the novel progresses, the extent to which Rosa has taken these sentiments to heart is constantly and painfully highlighted, her response to the most repressive situations, whether starvation, enforced sleep-deprivation or physical exploitation, generally to seek out the nearest hagiographic icon to give thanks for the dubious 'opportunities' Fortune has afforded her, or to pray for the 'einmütiges und gehorsames Gemüt' (218) required to fulfill her duties appropriately. Further, Rosa is too naïve to appreciate the extent of her exploitation, generally passing off the various instances of mistreatment she encounters as 'kleine Unannehmlichkeiten' which pale in comparison to her fortune in securing positions in middle-class households (249).

As the novel progresses, the responsibility for Rosa's indoctrination with the discriminatory imperial values is passed to the various state and religious institutions in which she is housed, most significantly the convent school she attends in Prague after her mother's death. Here, the mechanics and pervasiveness of *fin-de-siècle* religious repression begin to become apparent. The state's ability to maintain the repressive class system is demonstrated as predicated upon a collective version of Rosa's individual religious repression at

the hands of her mother.<sup>34</sup> The serving classes as a whole are inculcated with the notion that their subordinate and repressive roles are God-ordained and pre-determined. Simultaneously, their perceptions of those elements of society that seek to contradict this master-narrative are manipulated through an elaborate system of propaganda and mystification. The main examples of such 'elements' are the members of the Bohemian nationalist movement who the Ursulinen characterise as:

schändliche Elemente, welche die von Gott und unserem Kaiser [...] etablierte Ordnung nicht respektierten [...] kriminelle Individuen, denen nichts heilig sei, die sich über feste, in Natur und Religion verankerte Gesetzen einfach hinwegzusetzen gedachten, [...] Subjekte, die ihre Mitbürger mit einem nebulösen, böhmisches Nationalbewußtsein genannten politischen Gefühl infizieren, [...] und die harmonische soziale Ordnung unseres Reiches zur Zielscheibe ihrer radikalen Zerstörungswut machen wollten. (150).

This propagandistic description of the Bohemian nationalists reiterates the notion of the repressive social order as pre-ordained, describing the latter in terms of its concrete manifestations, the law and religion, central foundations of the imperial order which the 'criminals' for whom 'nothing is holy' are presented as infringing. This explicitly tangible social order is then set against the concept of a Bohemian national identity, which is figured as nebulous, abstract, and thus meaningless, and, further, as a disease with which the nationalists wish to 'infect' the population. The propaganda also serves to underline the position of the Bohemian people in the social order, with the rights demanded by the nationalists presented as unreasonable and inappropriate to their class. The universal acceptance of the role of servants as pre-ordained and based on religious principles is further underlined later in the novel, when Rosa attends an interview at Vienna's central *Vermittlungsstelle*, where she is confronted with a crowd of women seeking positions in bourgeois households. Amongst them is Bohemian Nationalist Ljuba, who mounts various attempts to incite a tempered 'organisation' of the serving classes, encouraging them to demand the workers' rights which would automatically be afforded them in a democratic society. The assembled servants' reaction to Ljuba's suggestions is particularly

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<sup>34</sup> It is important to note once again Faschinger's presentation of church and state as inextricably linked.

telling, their voices demonstrated as manipulated to the extent that they merely parrot the propagandistic dogma disseminated by the Catholic religion in the guise of the *Ursulinen*. On this occasion, however, this propaganda is extended through the introduction of a second element, namely the notion that the serving classes' unconditional acceptance of their situation is based upon their naïve acceptance of the automatic reversal of the master/servant relationship which will occur in the after-life. These assertions are rendered doubly ironic by the terrible physical condition of those from whom they originate:

[...] eine ältere, abgearbeitete Frau [...] sagte [...] wie könne sie [...] derart unangemessen Ansprüche stellen [...] sie müsse sich doch ihrer weiblichen Natur bewusst sein, die Umwälzungen und Umbrüche gewaltsamer Art verabscheue [...] Wolle sie denn die von der Natur gegebene, von Gott gewollte Ordnung umstoßen[...]? Dienen sei Herrschen, schrie eine dritte, von der Schwindsucht gezeichnete Frau [...] habe sie diese christliche Wahrheit nicht begriffen, [...] Dann wurde sie von einem Hustenanfall geschüttelt (229-230)

Consistent with Rosa's experience of individual repression, the state's manipulation of the collective voice of the *Dienstbotenklasse* demonstrated by the above observations is complemented by the complete suppression of the collective voice when its representatives attempt to traverse class boundaries. This 'collective silencing' is illustrated most obviously in the state's reaction to Ljuba's attempt to found the *Dienstbotenfanal*, which she sees as the first step in the 'Ringern um die [der Dienstbotenklasse] zustehenden Rechte'(296). The *Dienstbotenfanal* constitutes a manifestation of an attempt to unite the *Dienstbotenklasse* and utilise its collective voice in an effort to acquire workers' rights. Such an action would inherently obfuscate the boundaries between the dominant *Mittlebürgertum* and the serving classes upon which the Empire's social order is contingent, compromising the middle class's ability to effectively exploit their 'subordinates.' Just as Rosa's various attempts to traverse class boundaries are silenced by both Dublhoff and Frau Lidner, the *Dienstbotenfanal* is shut down by the state's *Zensurbehörden* who, 'im Namen Seiner Majestät des Kaisers von Österreich und Königs von Ungarn,' confiscate all the copies of the magazine, which they characterise as '[...] staatsfeindliches Schriftgut, das

sich die Verhetzung und Radikalisierung einer ganzen sozialen Schicht zum Ziel setzte' (363).

The social structure of Faschinger's *fin-de-siècle* Vienna, then, is presented as predicated upon the subjugation of the serving classes through the ministrations of various state institutions. Faschinger's adoption of the *Anti-Heimat* topos of self-renarration by portraying the *fin de siècle* in the form of Rosa Hawelka's autobiography, the penning of which constitutes the protagonist's ultimate rebellion against the manipulation and silencing of her individual voice by the *fin de siècle*. Faschinger protests against the iconic status of the epoch in Austria's contemporary collective imaginary by figuring exactly those institutions upon which this status is predicated, amongst them psychoanalysis and the Catholic Church, as those most complicit in the subordination both of Rosa and the entire *Dienstbotenklasse*. The deviation from the traditional mechanics of the *Anti-Heimatroman* visible in Faschinger's abandonment of the 'closed province' configuration and therefore of Mecklenburg's 'Provinz als Modell' convention does not compromise the novel's criticism of the *fin-de-siècle* state, since, as *Residenzauptstadt*, the social dynamics of the Viennese milieu set the tone for the national situation, rather than functioning as a model of it. The main function of the *Provinz als Modell* convention, to imply a microcosm-macrocosm relationship between province and state, is therefore rendered unnecessary in Faschinger's *fin de siècle*, the fact that the state itself is the object of the author's criticism evident in the omnipresence of 'k.k.' institutions within the metropolitan landscape, and their explicit involvement in the culture of repression which dominates the *fin de siècle*. As well as being more explicit in her criticism of the state, Faschinger also goes to great pains to illustrate the fact that Rosa's repressive situation is common to the entirety of the *Dienstbotenklasse*, thus explicitly fulfilling a further criterion of Zeyringer's 'Heimatroman von unten' by demonstrating the plight of an 'unterdrückte soziale Schicht'.<sup>35</sup>

### 3.6 The imperial hangover negativised

Having demonstrated the methods by which Faschinger debunks the *Habsburger Mythos*, it is necessary, finally, to sketch out her alteration of the parameters of Kann's imperial hangover by explicitly detailing those aspects of

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<sup>35</sup> Zeyringer, p. 230

the *fin-de-siècle* milieu that are perpetuated in the contemporary. Possibly the most obvious of this is the centrifugal social structure, which, in the *fin-de-siècle*, views a character's social status as explicitly linked to the distance of their birthplace from the *Residenzhauptstadt*, with those originating from the dynastic provinces automatically viewed as inferior. A similar structure is visible within Faschinger's contemporary milieu, with Magnolia's condescending and racist treatment by the Viennese natives determined by her skin-colour and alternative dress sense reminiscent of Rosa's treatment at the hands of the *Mittelbürgertum*, which is also predicated upon her ethnic origins:

Als Böhmin würde ich wenigstens nicht die Stirn haben, die unverschämten Lohnforderungen zu stellen, wie man sie von den österreichischen Hausangestellten gewohnt sei (210).

As well as betraying similarities with Rosa's situation, however, Magnolia's treatment, particularly at the hands of her Aunt, demonstrates an alteration in the structure of *Herrschaft und Unterdrückung* prevalent within the *fin de siècle*: Whereas the Bohemian 'Nicht-Wienerin' Rosa is subject to horrific treatment in the *fin de siècle* because of Bohemian heritage, the contemporary 'Nicht-Wienerin,' Magnolia falls victim to Pia's racist tendencies, despite the fact that, as Rosa's niece, the latter shares her Bohemian heritage. Thus, the contemporary status of Bohemian heritage is equal to that reserved for the Viennese *Mittelbürgertum* within the *fin de siècle*. Pia evinces characteristics similar to those of Frau Lidner, who impresses upon Rosa the importance of good personal hygiene, the neglect of which she characterised as typical of the Bohemian race whilst Pia castigates the husband of the Bosnian caretaker for demanding an unreasonably high price to fetch wood for the stove, citing such behaviour as 'typical' of his ethnic group (139). The altered status of the Bohemian race from the role of the *Unterdrücker* to the *Herrscher* can further be seen as symptomatic of the Habsburg Empire's glorification in the contemporary milieu, with Pia referring to Magnolia's heritage not as Bohemian, but rather as 'Alt-Österreichisch' (65).

Further similarities between the treatment received by Magnolia and Rosa are evident in each character's status as a member of the group perceived as representing the greatest threat to their respective societies, Rosa's Bohemian heritage connecting her with the Bohemian nationalists, and

Magnolia's African American ethnicity allying her with 'die Neger aus Afrika' responsible for the reduction in the 'purity' of the Viennese population.

Magnolia's more progressive outlook is also responsible for her perception as a threat to the traditional Viennese culture. Within the contemporary milieu, then, the scope of the 'centrifugal' societal structure, which existed merely within the boundaries of the Austrian Empire during the *fin de siècle*, is visible on an international scale, the new 'enemies' not the Bohemian nationalists, who threatened to destroy the political basis of the Empire, but rather those from further afield, whose threat to Austria does not manifest itself on a political, but rather on a cultural, (and to a certain extent 'biological') level. Significantly, however, the ability of the contemporary Viennese to control politically what they see as a new 'threat' to their culture is diluted in a more enlightened and modern society. Unable to control the 'threat' through the inculcation and enforcement of inscribed social roles, which, in the *fin de siècle*, were, supported by institutions such as the church and educational establishments, the resentment felt amongst the native population manifests itself in more explicit and vociferous, racist attacks. The lack of state-supported instruments of repression is cited by the German nationalist who, towards the end of the novel, begins a spate of sexual attacks on foreign women (significantly only those of African descent), as a reason for his actions:

Da die zuständigen Behörden sich nicht zur Ausweisung dieser fremden Subjekte entschließen könnten, müssten Menschen wie er [...] zur Selbsthilfe greifen (351).

The fact that the state is apparently unable to function as an instrument of repression within contemporary Vienna confirms the suggestion that Faschinger presents us with an *Anti-Heimatroman* in two halves, with repression being cast as the exclusive function of the *fin de siècle*. This is confirmed by the altered status in contemporary Vienna of those dynastic institutions which functioned as instruments of state repression. Both psychoanalysis and religion have been reduced to the status of tourist attractions, as Magnolia's visits to the Sigmund Freud Museum and *Stephansdom* tend to suggest. Manifestations of *fin-de-siècle* culture, on the other hand, are perceived as laughable, empty signifiers of a by-gone age. The removal of the dynastic power which constituted the ultimate source of the

repression of which such institutions were indicative, and which were at the root of Vienna's iconic status within Central Europe and the rest of the world, has reduced the city to an *Anti-Heimat* province, in which the social attitudes disseminated by the *fin de siècle* institutions continue to dominate, but are diluted by the absence of the dynasty that was the driving force behind them.





## Chapter 4: Doron Rabinovici: *Suche nach M.*

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### 4.1 *Heimat* and Second-Generation Jewish Literature – a new *Zäsur*?

Through the examination of contemporary texts dealing with the provincial milieu, previous chapters have successfully contradicted Koppensteiner and Zeyringer's suggestion that the *Anti-Heimat* genre had lost significance by the end of the 1970s. Readings of Winkler's *Der Ackermann aus Kärnten* and Gstrein's *Das Register* have shown that contemporary novels dealing with the provincial milieu perpetuate and manipulate conventions of *Heimat*- and *Anti-Heimatliteratur*, combining discussion of Austria's National Socialist past with that of topics at issue in the contemporary environment. The combination of traditional and contemporary discourses within these novels suggests a dialectic of continuity and difference indicative not of the genre's sudden replacement in the manner suggested by Zeyringer<sup>1</sup> but rather a gradual evolution, with the conventions inherent within *Anti-Heimatliteratur* being reconfigured in order to endow the genre with continued relevance in a contemporary context. A reading of Faschinger's *Wiener Passion* has shown that these conventions can also be re-applied to the metropolitan milieu, the converse of the traditional *Anti-Heimatliteratur* setting. Faschinger's 'provincialisation' of Vienna suggests a partial breakdown in the metropolis/province binary, a contention supported by the metropolitan elements within *Das Register's* (supposedly) provincial milieu. This mixture of the metropolitan and provincial in contemporary literature devalues Zeyringer's suggestion of a complete relocation of *Anti-Heimat* from the province to the metropolis; from the analyses conducted so far, we can conclude that the split metropolis/province binary is by no means as clear-cut as Zeyringer suggests, and that the conventions of *Anti-Heimat* constitute 'universal constants,' applicable regardless of the milieu involved.

Although the literature analysed thus far was produced in the 1980s and 1990s, its authors became established during the 1980s: Dagmar Lorenz has categorised Josef Winkler as an author of traditional *Anti-Heimatliteratur*,<sup>2</sup> whilst

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<sup>1</sup> Zeyringer, p. 230-231

<sup>2</sup> Lorenz, *Regional and National Identity*, p. 24

Faschinger and Gstrein feature in Zeyringer's comments regarding the 1980s 'trend' of *Fremden/Verkehr*.<sup>3</sup> Thus, analyses of novels produced by these authors are unhelpful with regard to the question of the direction which the *Heimat* concept and the related issue of national identity in literature will take in the future. This question will form the basis of this final chapter, a reading of Doron Rabinovici's first novel, *Suche nach M.*

Despite the fact that the publication of Rabinovici's novel in 1997 pre-dates that of *Wiener Passion* by two years, there are various reasons why *Suche nach M.* can be seen as more contemporary than Faschinger's work. The most important of these lies in the fact that Rabinovici's work is representative of a literary tradition, referred to by critic Lisa Silverman as a 'minor literature,'<sup>4</sup> which itself only began to emerge at the end of the 1980s, beginning with novels such as Menasse's *Sinnliche Gewissheit* (1988) and Schindel's *Gebürtig* (1992). These novels, produced by members of the second post-Shoah generation of Austrian Jews supposedly evince different configurations of Austrian national identity and *Heimat* from those of their 'Gentile' counterparts:

[...] Jewish and Jewish-defined authors explored the concept of *Heimat* from a different point of view. [T]heir works exemplified that the Austrian experience of Jews and Gentiles differed in every imaginable aspect [...]<sup>5</sup>

In order to explain this chapter's methodology it is necessary to examine the value of *Suche nach M.* as 'minor literature.' Silverman suggests that this lies in the author's subversion of the view of 'Austrian' and 'Jewish' as 'distinct, firmly bounded categories'<sup>6</sup> and his ability to create an Austro-Jewish 'hybrid,' character, which is 'more tenable and reflective of the complex nature of Austrian Jewish identity.'<sup>7</sup> In creating this 'hybrid,' Rabinovici fulfils the criteria of a minor literature which constitutes, as Silverman, in reference to the work of Bhabha suggests, a 'counter-narrative of the nation that continually evokes and erases its totalising boundaries.'<sup>8</sup> Although Bhabha's assessment of the relationship between the nation and literature seems to contradict Menasse's

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<sup>3</sup> Zeyringer, p. 231

<sup>4</sup> Lisa Silverman, "Der richtige Riecher" *The German Quarterly*, 72 (1999), 252-264 (p.252)

<sup>5</sup> Lorenz, *Regional and National Identity*, p.24

<sup>6</sup> Silverman, p. 252

<sup>7</sup> Cf: Silverman, p. 261

<sup>8</sup> Silverman, p. 262

suggestions regarding *Nationalliteratur*, there are similarities between each critic's point of view, since, in evoking and erasing the nation's totalising boundaries, literature must necessarily comment on the nature of those boundaries, and therefore the nature of a nation's identity: Thus, the evocation and erasure of a nation's 'totalising boundaries' as part of the 'inhaltliche Besonderheiten' of a specific novel will necessarily lead to the novel's fulfilment of Menasse's major criterion for *Nationalliteratur*, allowing 'Rückschlüsse auf die Besonderheiten der gesellschaftlichen Organisationsform, der Gewordenheit und der aktuellen Verfaßtheit [einer Nation].'<sup>9</sup> This chapter will examine the role played by *Anti-Heimat* features within *Suche nach M.*, emphasising their involvement in the question of Austro-Jewish hybridity, in order to evaluate the veracity of Silverman's argument and Lorenz's comments regarding differentiated concepts of *Heimat* within the literature of the Second Post-Shoah generation.

## 4.2 Metropolis and province abandoned: Eine 'übernationale Geographie.'

In much the same way as the other novels, *Suche nach M.* contains certain parallels with the conventions of *Erzählte Provinz* and thus with conventional (*Anti-*) *Heimatliteratur*. The novel's topography is characterised by a combination of 'closed' and 'open' space. Vienna once again constitutes the central locale, and, just as in *Wiener Passion*, is set in an international context immediately, with Jakob Scheinowitz, the focaliser of the first 'episode' reading newspaper reports of international events.<sup>10</sup> As the novel progresses, this 'internationalisation' is emphasised through journeys to locations inside and outside Europe. In contrast to *Wiener Passion*, however, geographical reference has little role to play, with Rabinovici giving only scant information regarding the locations of the novel's various settings. Thus, Arie Arthur Bein travels to undisclosed locations in Italy and Israel, whilst Dani Morgenthau journeys to 'ein arabisches Land.' (44) Although Rabinovici never describes the journeys of the various characters between Vienna and their destinations, the 'Unbestimmtheitsstellen' he introduces are never explicitly highlighted as they are in *Wiener Passion* (when Magnolia falls asleep on the aeroplane for

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<sup>9</sup> Menasse, p. 116

<sup>10</sup> Doron Rabinovici, *Suche nach M.* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1997), p. 7. Further references given in the body text.

example) nor are the various locations ever explicitly set in direct contrast to one another (although an implicit 'contrast' is generated between the central and perimeter locations). Although Rabinovici adopts similar techniques to Faschinger the result is quite different, with the novel's locations presented not as 'Inseln', but as part of the same 'geographical arena.' Whereas Faschinger's introduction of 'Unbestimmtheitsstellen' is intended to draw attention to the distance, in terms of both geography and social progress, between Vienna and New York, the lack of geographical reference in plot strands set either inside or outside Vienna prevents the reader of Rabinovici's novel from drawing such comparisons. Rather than highlighting distance, Rabinovici's refusal to narrate journeys is intended to metaphorically reduce the space between locations, indicating a devaluation of national and local territories, a trend which, as Lorenz suggests, is common in second-generation literature.

This 'dissolution' of boundaries, along with the ability of several of Rabinovici's characters to transcend national borders with ease and frequency, can be interpreted in two ways. Firstly, it is indicative of a nomadic tradition at the heart of the Jewish community, rooted in the exodus from Egypt to Israel still celebrated annually at *Pessach*. This tradition, along with the historical lack of a 'national' configuration of Jewish-ness, rectified in 1948 when Israel was established, constitutes the foundation of the non-territorial conception of *Heimat* and the disregard for notions of 'nation' within the Jewish community. This nomadic quality was perpetuated by the constant manifestations of European Anti-Semitism, as Henryk M. Broder suggests:

The possibility that a pogrom might erupt [...] led [the Jewish community] to develop certain habits [...] It was best to have everything portable [...] Material things [...] were not important [...] Learning was important, food was important, family cohesion was important. For Jews, *Heimat* has never been a territorial concept [...] Whatever Jews needed for a feeling of home they had with them.<sup>11</sup>

The fact that Rabinovici's narrated topography is rooted in a Jewish trait ostensibly limits the degree to which his conception of space can be seen as representative as regards the future direction of the *Heimat* concept in Austrian literature. A closer examination of nomadic life-style and its relevance in

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<sup>11</sup>Henryk M. Broder, 'Heimat – No thanks' in *Jewish Voices, German Words*, ed. by Ella Lappin, trans. by Krishna Winston (North Haven: Catbird Press, 1994), pp. 80-101 (p.84)

contemporary society, however, suggests that a nomadic existence is more indicative of modern-day life than initially seems to be the case. Riedl characterises contemporary existence as increasingly nomadic, referencing in support of his argument the increasing intensity of migration which has augmented the number of *Heimatvertriebene* and *Heimatlose* who 'fill waiting rooms,' approaching, as Anat Feinberg suggests a 'post-modern discourse [which] recognises the protean and hybrid nature of society.'<sup>12</sup> Feinberg goes on

The age of political unrest and social destabilisation is, first and foremost, the age of massive migration, of uprooted people, of refugees and exiles – the century of exile. Doubtless one of the most conspicuous exponents of this nomad phenomenon is the Diaspora Jew [...]<sup>13</sup>

The validity of Rabinovici's 'supra-national' conception of space increases further in the light of contemporary political and social developments that have reduced the validity of national territories, the expansion of the European Union and the increasing phenomenon of *freie Personenverkehr* representing two of the most significant. In spite of its somewhat negative origins, many positive connotations can be associated with the modern representation of 'rootlessness' within the writing of the second post-Shoah generations, indicative of a discourse of cosmopolitanism which casts Jewish characters as the epitome of Kant's *Weltbürger*.

Es werden [bei Rabinovici und Honigmann] eine übernationale Geographie konstruiert, ein vielsprachiges Kulturverständnis, das auch für Dischereit und Schindel charakteristisch ist [...] Die für Durchschnittsdeutsche und -österreicher noch ausstehende emotionale Integration eines in der Verschmelzung begriffenen Europas oder einer übernationalen Weltkultur ist [...] bei den meisten [...] jüdischen Autoren der Post-Shoah-Generationen bereits vollzogen.<sup>14</sup>

Rabinovici's 'übernationale Geographie' suggests the metropolis/province split to be largely irrelevant within *Suche nach M.*, which seemingly operates on a geographical plane which reduces the significance of

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<sup>12</sup> Joachim Riedl, 'Heimat! Welche Heimat?' in *Heimat: Auf der Suche nach der verlorenen Identität*, ed. by Joachim Riedl (Vienna: Brandstätter, 1995), pp. 7-9 (p. 7)

<sup>13</sup> Anat Feinberg, 'Abiding in a Haunted Land', *New German Critique*, 70 (1997), 161-181 (p.163-164)

<sup>14</sup> Dagmar C.G.Lorenz, 'Erinnerung um die Jahrtausendwende,' in *Deutsch-Jüdische Literatur der 90er Jahre*, ed. by Sander L. Gilman, pp.149-161 (p. 154)

local factors, of which the metropolis/province is one of the most significant. However, what we might refer to as the novel's 'perimeter' narrative topography, characterised by internationalism and the devaluation of the territorial, is contrasted with a central topography whose mechanics reinstate the metropolis/province binary as an applicable concept with Rabinovici's work. In his conception of the narrated topography of Vienna and its relationship to the outside world, Rabinovici maps Mecklenburgian conventions of *Erzählte Provinz* onto the metropolitan milieu. Whilst Rabinovici's narrated Vienna is, on the one hand, an open space, in that the existence of 'Wege nach außen,' is emphasised by the characters' journeys to other countries, none of these 'Wege' lead to any locations within Austria. The omission of the 'national' geographical layer sets up a contrast between Vienna and the outside world which can be equated to the *Provinz/Welt* binary inherent in traditional *Heimatliteratur* which we have encountered in a reverse polarity in Josef Winkler's work. In *Suche nach M.*, however, the elimination of 'national' topography, which the effective presentation of the *Provinz/Welt* binary is contingent upon, goes hand in hand with a deprioritisation of local factors, both in terms of topography and attachment to local community. Vienna is never figured as a site of 'local patriotism,' nor is the city itself explicitly denigrated, with criticism generally aimed at city and country (nation) simultaneously. Similarly, topographical factors indicating a metropolitan milieu are largely omitted from the narrative, in which the only institutions referred to explicitly are a coffeehouse, a bank and a shopping centre. Significantly, however, the only one of these establishments to be described in any detail is the coffeehouse, the setting for the first part of the initial episode, with Rabinovici calling the reader's attention to characteristics indicative firstly of a specifically 'Austrian' culture, and secondly of various attempts to veil the Second World War and the Austrian experience of National Socialism. Although Vienna is presented as metropolitan, then, this aspect of the city, and its (in)ability to function as a 'metropolis' is not at issue within *Suche nach M.* in the same way as in Faschinger's work. Instead, Rabinovici's deprioritisation of local topography and omission of the national suggests, once more, the application of Mecklenburg's *Provinz als Modell* concept, albeit in a somewhat modified form: At the core of Rabinovici's novel is an examination of the psychological and social issues

which arise amongst the inhabitants of the city, particularly with reference to the first and second post-Shoah generations of the Jewish community and their non-Jewish Austrian contemporaries. As will become clear as the chapter progresses, the majority of these conflicts are generated not by factors originating in the Viennese milieu, but are side-effects of post-war Austrian memory politics and the discourse of 'continuation' and 'mystification' of the past upon which it was predicated, a discourse which was responsible for the lack of effective *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* within Austria. Rabinovici's Vienna functions primarily as a social and political microcosm whose dynamics provide an appropriate background for the exploration of the effects of state hegemonies upon a section of the population. The mapping of state-set conventions upon a particular milieu marks a departure from the traditional application of *Provinz als Modell* where the emphasis on the province is intended to reflect Austria's provinciality. Rabinovici, however, prioritises the opposite polarity, mapping Austrian state conventions onto a local community.

This is not, however, to suggest that the mapping of qualities from the local onto the national milieu is absent. The creation of a Vienna which is barren, featureless and lacking in any characteristics suggestive of identity connotes an attempt to denigrate the notion of a specifically Austrian national identity, a suggestion borne out by Rabinovici's refusal to name either Vienna or Austria, referring to them as 'diese Stadt' and 'dieses Land' respectively. Whilst this refusal to name suggests a devaluation of the notion of national 'territory' through a refusal to acknowledge the validity of the notion of a territory claimed and named by a particular community, this reasoning alone is insufficient, since other nations are named within the novel. It is important to point out that the refusal to refer to Austria and Vienna using their official designations is a characteristic not just of most of Rabinovici's work: 'Der Richtige Riecher,' for example, refers to Vienna as 'W\_\_\_\_,' whereas the article 'Politik als Volksbrauch' refers to Austria as 'Das Alpenland.'<sup>15</sup> A clue to the reasons behind the rejection of the validity of Austrian nationhood, which this refusal to name the country constitutes, can be found in Rabinovici's perception of the basis of the Second Republic which was founded upon the silencing of what

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<sup>15</sup> Doron Rabinovici, 'Politik als Volksbrauch', *The German Quarterly*, 75 (2002), 1-8 (p.1)

Rabinovici refers to as 'die wesentlichen ideologischen Kontroversen',<sup>16</sup> referring to Austria's participation in National Socialism and the concomitant circumstances of the Holocaust. Thus, the refusal to name both Vienna and Austria can be seen as a 'mirror-image' of this official silencing, which, as we will see later in the novel, represents the main barrier to the construction of group and individual identity in post-war Vienna, and thus the main reason for the city's inability to function effectively as *Heimat* for both the Jewish and non-Jewish population.

The narrated world of *Suche nach M.*, then, incorporates various conventions indicative of an (*Anti-*) *Heimat* conception of narrated space, but omits the dichotomy between metropolis and province which we have encountered, to some degree, in the majority of the other texts studied. Whereas Faschinger applied the spatial conventions of *Erzählte Provinz* to reflect the 'provincial' nature of Austrian society, which contrasted explicitly with the 'metropolitan' New York, Rabinovici operates on a different topographical level, abandoning the metropolis/province binary in favour of that between Vienna as city, made synonymous through the use of the *Provinz als Modell* convention, and the *Außenwelt*, comprised in Rabinovici's novel of Israel, Italy and Germany. This dichotomy, however, is by no means as direct as that between metropolis and province inherent in traditional *Heimatliteratur*, serving primarily, as we will see later, as a method by which the effects of the internal milieu of Vienna as city/state affect the responses of its inhabitants firstly to the outside world, and secondly, through contrast with the response of Zionist Jews, to the question of Jewish identity construction.

#### **4.3 Assimilation or exclusion – Rabinovici's 1960s Vienna**

The removal of the metropolis/province binary, combined with the dissolution of territorial borders can be seen both to reflect, and to provide the basis for Rabinovici's exploration of the viability of a hybridised Austro-Jewish identity, since it allows the author to manipulate the boundaries between each group. As Lotman suggests, the contrast between the 'heile Provinz' and the 'feindselige Stadt' provided a clear-cut distinction between the in-group (provincial) and the

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<sup>16</sup> Doron Rabinovici, 'Literatur und Republik oder Ganz Baden\* liest die Krone' in *Was wird das Ausland dazu sagen?* ed. by Gerald Leitner (Vienna: Picus, 1995), pp. 127-139, (p. 133)



out-group (town).<sup>17</sup> Its removal in Rabinovici's novel internalises the conflicts between the Jewish and non-Jewish Austrian communities, which are conducted within the boundaries of the Viennese milieu. In addition, the metaphorical removal of borders in Rabinovici's international topography reflects the nature of the borders between in-group and out-group. Whereas the existence of distinct topographical boundaries, of which that between metropolis and province is probably the most obvious, leads to an equally distinct differentiation between in-group and out-group (as can be seen, for example, in the context of Magnolia's status in *Wiener Passion*), their omission or dissolution in *Suche nach M.* allows the author to experiment with traditional in-group/out-group dynamics, and to explore the viability of hybridity between the two groups. This exploration is undertaken by means of blurring the borders between Austrian Jews and non-Jewish Austrians by introducing factors which bind the two groups, as well as instances of members of the Jewish community taking on the characteristics of the Austrian, but also through the reversal of the polarity between the communities, casting each variously in the role of in- and out- group.

These devices are particularly pronounced in the novel's first episode, which is focalised largely by Holocaust survivor Jakob Scheinowitz, and incorporates as settings a Viennese coffeehouse and an apartment belonging to a Jewish couple. Scheinowitz's references to the 'Prachtstraße der ehemaligen Residenzstadt' and the monument to 'eine[m] Antisemiten von Weltrang' (7) suggest that the coffeehouse in question is Café Prückel, a setting which, as a result of its status as a manifestation of 'imperial hangover' constitutes 'common ground,' and thus a reference to a point at which Austrian/Jewish hybridity was, ostensibly, maintained. The prominent position of the Habsburg culture in Austrian cultural memory is replicated in that of the contemporary Jewish community: The Habsburg Empire had provided a *Heimat* for the Jews, who were not only able to integrate into the dynastic structure which 'decoupled citizenship from ethnic and religious identity,'<sup>18</sup> but attained unprecedented recognition and status, a development which anchored the Habsburg Empire within the Jewish collective consciousness as a site of 'Jewish advancement

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<sup>17</sup> Cf. Kunne, p. 31

<sup>18</sup> Matti Bunzl, *Symptoms of Modernity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), p. 54

according to the nineteenth-century model of German-Jewish emancipation.<sup>19</sup> This was particularly true for the *fin-de-siècle*, during which Jews were at the forefront of music (Schönberg,) literature (Schnitzler) and psychoanalysis (Freud).<sup>20</sup> Continuing the perpetuation of the *Habsburger Mythos*, a feature particularly common in the literature of Jewish authors during the Empire's aftermath<sup>21</sup>, the post-Second World War Jewish community glorified the *fin de siècle*, viewing the 'hangovers' from the period, most obviously the Viennese coffeehouse, as sites of 'Jewish continuity.'<sup>22</sup> Given the role played by the Jews during this epoch of Austrian history, the prevalent relationship between the Jewish and non-Jewish Austrian communities constitutes an Austrian manifestation of German/Jewish symbiosis. Enzo Traverso demonstrates the extent of the Jewish identity crisis caused by the myth of symbiosis,<sup>23</sup> at the root of which was Jewish acculturation, 'the process by which Jews absorbed German culture [...] to prove themselves fit for membership of German society.'<sup>24</sup> Scheinowitz constitutes a fictional representation of this identity crisis: As the novel progresses, he is revealed as a paragon of acculturation, the descriptions of him emphasising the accoutrements of coffeehouse culture he carries on his person. Later in the novel, we also discover that Scheinowitz has two doctorates in German literature and philology. Gilman suggests that both outward appearance and the Jewish variant of German constitute the most conspicuous manifestations of Jewish 'otherness' in the German speaking world.<sup>25</sup> In choosing to study German to the level he has, Scheinowitz has attempted to disguise this 'otherness' to gain access to the Austrian 'in-group,' a function which his appropriation of the style of dress worn in the Viennese coffeehouse also fulfils: In order to gain access to Austrian culture, it is necessary for Scheinowitz to suppress his Jewish identity by appropriating various outward manifestations of Austrian-ness.

Scheinowitz's attempts to gain access to Austrian culture through assimilation suggest a concrete boundary between in- and out-group as applied

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<sup>19</sup> Bunzl, p. 54

<sup>20</sup> Michael P. Steinberg 'Jewish Identity and Intellectuality in Fin-de-siècle Austria,' *New German Critique*, 43 (1988), 3-33

<sup>21</sup> Magris, p. 154

<sup>22</sup> Bunzl, p. 54

<sup>23</sup> Enzo Traverso, *The Jews & Germany* (Lincoln, NA: University of Nebraska Press, 1995)

<sup>24</sup> Ritchie Robertson, *The Jewish Question in German Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 253

<sup>25</sup> Sander L. Gilman, *Jüdischer Selbsthaß* (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1993), p.16

respectively to the non-Jewish Austrian and Austro-Jewish communities. However, this boundary is relativised by Scheinowitz's behaviour at the Fischers' apartment, which is configured as a Jewish space. The relegation of Jewish-ness to the private sphere can be seen as a commentary on Austrian post-war memory politics. Their status as the prime victims of National Socialist aggression meant that the existence of the Jewish community in Vienna undermined the Second Republic's 'founding myth' of victimhood, a situation which led to their forced externalisation from Austria's imagined community.<sup>26</sup> Thus, the Jewish community in Austria was 'tolerated,' on the understanding that they would not draw attention to themselves by inciting public discussions that could undermine the validity of Austria's perceived status as first victim.<sup>27</sup> At the same time, Rabinovici demonstrates a corresponding desire within the Jewish community to separate themselves from the Austrian community. In keeping with the motif of detective fiction, whose conventions pervade Rabinovici's narrative, this is achieved by references to 'Losungen' and 'Paßworte,' the knowledge of which will allow 'Einlaß' into the private world of Jewish-ness. Whilst strengthening the separation between the public and the private, and thus the Austrian and Jewish communities, the existence of such 'Paßworte' suggests an insistence on exclusivity on the part of the Jewish *Gemeinde* which mirrors the situation at Café Prückel: Just as specific behaviours are required to gain acceptance within the Austrian culture that the coffeehouse symbolises, so it is necessary to be inducted in specific formulations in order to gain access to the Jewish community. The fact that certain behavioural 'codes' constitute mutual criteria for acceptance into each group blurs the polarity between them as in-group and out-group, since, in much the same way as the Austrian community, the Jewish community is presented as one which Jakob wishes, but is unable, to gain access to. This suggestion may seem inconsistent given Scheinowitz's behaviour whilst at the Fischers' party, during which he attempts to distance himself from the other guests 'bekannt mach ich mich mit wem ich will' (16) as well as using humour firstly to distance himself from, and secondly to undermine the seriousness of, the topics they discuss (17), and constantly expressing his desire to leave. Whilst these actions seem once more to be indicative of a desire to deny his

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<sup>26</sup> Bunzl, p. 36

<sup>27</sup> Silverman, p. 293

Jewish identity in favour of the assimilated identity as an 'Austrian,' an examination of Scheinowitz's observations regarding his position within the Jewish community suggest a different reason for his behaviour. Far from seeing the Jewish community as inferior to the Austrian, Scheinowitz perceives himself as an imposter, who, through the knowledge of the correct formulae can access a world 'die ihm schon seit langem nicht mehr zustand (10). As becomes clear later in the novel, Scheinowitz's self-perception as an impostor is bound up with the appearances of the *Greis*, who mistakes him for the printer Adam Kruzki, a misidentification which saved Scheinowitz's life when an SS soldier made the same mistake during a 'selection' (100-101). In this light, Scheinowitz's attempts to distance himself can be seen as psychological compulsions necessitated by the guilt he feels at having survived in Kruzki's place, and thus effectively having stolen his *Heimatrecht* within the Jewish community. In the character of Scheinowitz, Rabinovici presents a complex case of *Überlebensschuld*, which, according to Niederland, focuses on the question 'Warum habe ich das Unheil überlebt, während die anderen [...] daran zugrunde gingen.'<sup>28</sup> The irrelevance of personal identity and the arbitrary nature of survival under the circumstances of the Holocaust which are at the root of *Überlebensschuld* are implicitly referenced during the subsequent conversation between Scheinowitz and Kruzki's wife, who, once more, mistakes him for her husband. In the course of the conversation we are made aware that the parallels between Scheinowitz and Kruzki extend beyond their physical resemblance, since both had been left by their wives and daughters before the Holocaust. Whilst Kruzki was murdered during the Holocaust, his wife and daughter were able to survive, whereas the opposite is true of Scheinowitz. (18-22.) Thus, the two men are set up as mirror images of one another, a device which is strengthened by Scheinowitz's assumption of Kruzki's identity, through which his self-perception as an impostor is fulfilled. The connotations of Scheinowitz's assumption of Kruzki's identity are more far-reaching, however, as illustrated during his attempt to justify his actions. After leaving the party, Scheinowitz asks himself. 'Hatte er [Tonja] in die Irre geführt, weil sie ihn an Hannah erinnerte [...] Oder gar, weil Tonja überlebt hatte, während Hannah...?' (22.) In taking on Kruzki's identity, Scheinowitz seeks to transfer onto Tonja the anger he feels towards his wife as

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<sup>28</sup> William G. Niederland, *Folgen der Verfolgung* (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1980) p. 232

a result of her betrayal, at the same time reclaiming access to the familial connection to 'his' wife and daughter, lost to him, firstly because of Hannah's betrayal, and secondly as a result of the Holocaust. Scheinowitz's fulfilment of the role of 'impostor' then, can be seen not only in his assumption of Kruzki's identity, but also in his attempt to claim another's *Heimat*, in the form of a familial connection, for himself.

In his portrayal of 1960s Vienna, then, Rabinovici lays the groundwork for the exploration of the validity of Austro-Jewish hybridity, the lack of concrete topographical boundaries which would normally function as the basis for in-group/out-group paradigms engendering and reflecting the potential for characters to traverse between the groups. In the post-war milieu, however, hybridity is impossible, firstly because of the tension between the two communities created by the need to maintain the First victim thesis which necessitated the removal of Jewishness from the Austrian public sphere. Further, Rabinovici adopts the traditional *Heimat* topos of attempted transgression of in-group/out-group boundaries to reject assimilation as a valid method of attaining hybridity, demonstrating its predication upon the subjugation of Jewish identity through the appropriation of behaviours indicative of Austrianness. In Jakob Scheinowitz, Rabinovici demonstrates a further barrier to hybridity, namely the guilt generated by survival of the Holocaust, which obfuscates his personal identity and his identity as a Jew to the extent that he must abandon both in order to survive. It is important to note that, in his final plea to the *Greis*, an attempt to finally re-claim his identity as Scheinowitz, Jakob references what might be seen as the root of his 'assimilated' identity,' his previous position as 'Germanist und Philologe,' his rejection of which allows Rabinovici to demonstrate the untenable nature of an assimilated identity in the Austrian post-war milieu. Of further significance are the manifestations of *Heimat* incorporated into the episode, which, despite Lorenz's suggestion to the contrary, correspond largely to those which surface in traditional *Heimatliteratur*, manifesting themselves in the connection to the family and in the connection to the surrounding community. The post-war conditions and guilt generated by survival of the Holocaust are responsible for the severing of each of these connections, with Scheinowitz, as Fandler, firstly breaking off contact with the Jewish community in which he was assured a *Heimatrecht*, and, as a result of

his name-change, missing out on being reunited with his mother. The most important function of the first episode, however, is to link the inability to effectively traverse the boundaries between the in-group and the out-group with guilt, which goes on to play a major role in the question of Austrian/Jewish hybridity. Guilt constitutes simultaneously the only visible link between the two communities, and, as a result of each community's method of dealing with their guilt, the main barrier to the achievement of Austro-Jewish identity.

#### **4.4 The second post-Shoah generation – Kinder der Opfer/ Kinder der Täter**

The presentation of guilt in the remainder of the novel is contingent upon the alteration of the in-group/out-group boundaries which builds on various references contained within the first episode to the *Opfer/Täter* binary. The remainder of the novel concerns itself exclusively with the contrasts and similarities between characters that, based on their opinions, their actions or their generational decendancy can be characterised either as perpetrators or victims themselves, or as the descendants of perpetrators or victims. Consistent with the suggestion that the topography of the novel reflects the character of the borders between the various groups presented within it, however, Rabinovici continually blurs the boundaries between victim and perpetrator, and in doing so can be seen, as Bhabha suggests, to 'evoke and erase' the 'boundaries' which define Austrian national identity.<sup>29</sup> The remainder of the novel centres upon the development of two main protagonists, Fandler's son, Arie Arthur Fandler/Scheinowitz/Bein and Tonja's grandson Dani Morgenthau/Mulleman. The initial episodes focus upon the development of these members of the second post-Shoah generation, re-casting the official Austrian discourse of silence relating to the past, and examining a similar discourse with respect to the victims. In the process, Rabinovici references, and rejects, various manifestations of 'hybridity' between victim and perpetrator, appropriating the topos of generational 'transfer,' encountered for example within *Das Register* in order to expose the extent to which the official instance upon 'mystification' and 'continuation' referenced in the introduction have come to affect both Austrian Jews and non-Jewish Austrians. At the same time, Rabinovici continues to

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<sup>29</sup> Homi Bhabha, 'DissemiNation' in *Nation and Narration*, ed. By Homi Bhabha (London, Routledge, 1990), p. 300

appropriate various conventions relating to *Anti-Heimatliteratur*, using various events and relationships which occur on the local and familial level to reflect wider, state-determined hegemonies relating to the relationship between Austrians and Jews, and more specifically the manner in which each group deals with their experiences of the Holocaust.

This is best explained with reference to the treatment of the subject of guilt encountered within *Das Register*, to which the manifestation of guilt in *Suche nach M.* bears noticeable similarities. Perhaps the most obvious of these is the examination of familial and generational memory, the dynamics of which constitute a mirror image of those prevalent in *Das Register*. Whereas Vinzenz and Moritz grow up subject to an exaggerated 'communicative memory' referring to their descent from their industry magnate grandfather, which determines their father's reactions to them, and their own reactions to one another, the dynamics of generational communicative memory in *Suche nach M.* are the opposite, with Dani and Arie, each the children of Holocaust survivors, growing up in the shadow of their parents' experiences during the Holocaust, the details of which are never communicated to them comprehensively. As Rabinovici demonstrates, this breakdown in communicative memory causes acute psychological trauma within the children of the second generation, which, in various different ways, leads to an explicit obfuscation firstly of their personal identity and secondly of their identity as Jews.

For Dani, this psychological trauma finds its roots in the various different methods his parents use in order to (unsuccessfully) veil their experiences during the Holocaust, which they attempt to repress by means of an 'einmütiges Schweigen' (28). Here, Rabinovici largely follows the more contemporary studies into the question of Holocaust and memory, suggesting that the process of what we might refer to as 'conscious repression' cannot be completed by Dani's parents, since in actively attempting to forget their experiences, they are forced to remember them. As the narrator suggests 'Woran [Danis] Eltern nicht erinnern wollten, wovon zu reden sie mieden, konnten sie in aller Deutlichkeit nicht vergessen' (30). This 'vicious circle' of memory is summarised by Bernhard Schneider in his essay 'Ort, Objekt, Erinnerung' in which he maintains 'Wenn[...] Vergessen strategisch angewendet wird, um bestimmte Inhalt nicht

zu erinnern, dann ist dieses Vergessen zwangsläufig identisch mit erinnern, weil ja das zu Vergessende bewusst gemacht, also erinnert werden muss.<sup>30</sup> In addition to this, the 'forgotten' experience of the Holocaust is shown to actively affect Dani's family life, preventing him from wearing specific clothing, such as the leather jackets favoured by SS soldiers (30). Dani's grandmother, who, as a member of the older generation of survivors is demonstrated to have reached the age referred to by Assmann in which the 'Wunsch nach Weitergabe und Fixierung [eines Ereignisses][...]wächst'<sup>31</sup> is the only one who is willing to report her experiences of the Holocaust freely, but even then only communicates 'Episoden der Verfolgung' which have bearing on Dani's behavior. 'Er dürfe [...] keinesfalls, so sagte sie, seinem Vater zum Geburtstag jenes Pyjama schenken, fragte, ob er ihn wieder in gestreiftes Blau stecken [...] wolle' (30). These 'Episoden der Verfolgung' are complimented by Gitta Morgenthau's responses to the topic of the Holocaust, which constitute bare, decontextualised declaratives designed to stop Dani from burrowing further into her past (31.) Dani is thus forced to rely upon 'intuition and implication' in order to decipher the true nature of his parents' past, a past of which he is intuitively aware 'Es brauchte nur ein Blick der Mutter, damit er verstand, warum er keine Lederjacke tragen sollte'(30), but the details of which he is never made privy to.

Two further aspects of Dani's situation are particularly important for our purposes. The first of these is the manner in which his father copes with his questions regarding the Holocaust, which constantly elicit the same response, merely a dismissive wave, and the platitudinous statement 'Es gab einen kleinen Jungen, und der hieß Dani' (27). The story of his son is the only narrative that Moscha Morgenthau can bear to repeat, a narrative which, it is suggested, he appropriates in order to compensate for the horrors he was subjected to during the Holocaust, exalting his son to the position of 'redeemer,' who can, through his very existence provide an antidote for the trauma of his father's Holocaust experience. Here, once more, we see a variation on a theme encountered within *Das Register*, in which the second generation, represented by Moritz and Vinzenz, was expected, through their achievement of 'greatness' to compensate for the failings of their father, himself unable to 'live up to' the

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<sup>30</sup> Bernhard Schneider, 'Ort, Objekt, Erinnerung' in *Erinnern und Vergessen als Denkprinzipien*, ed. by Herbert Arlt (St. Ingbert: Röhrig, 2002) pp. 183-203 (p.185)

<sup>31</sup> Jan Assmann, *Das kulturelle Gedächtnis*, 14th edn. (Munich: Beck, 1999), p.52



standard set by his own heroic father. The expectations which Holocaust survivors place in their offspring, as exemplified in the case of Dani and his father, is similar: The principle of generational transfer of guilt remains, manifesting itself not only in Dani's father's treatment of him, but also in the constant comparisons made by his grandmother between himself and those who were unable to survive the Holocaust, whom she believes she can see resurrected in her grandson (36). It is worth mentioning that both Dani's apparently intuitive knowledge of his parents' experiences and also the imbuing of children of Holocaust victims with 'messianic' responsibility have been documented repeatedly in the field of psychoanalysis. The volume *Generations of the Holocaust* contains a chapter referring to a girl who was able to describe comprehensively various situations to which her father, who had survived Auschwitz, had been subjected to, despite her parents' decision to suppress this information.<sup>32</sup> The 'messianic' role of the second generation is referred to by Judith S. Kestenberg in her contribution to the same volume, in which she maintains that the child's need to justify its existence by means of 'bedeutende Taten' constitutes a 'recurring theme in Holocaust psychoanalysis'.<sup>33</sup> It is interesting to note that the 'bedeutende Taten' which Dani must perform mostly centre on the question of integration, with the child being encouraged by his family to keep up with, and outdo, his schoolmates in his proficiency in the German language, but at the same time to study Hebrew, and to prove to others 'seine Gleichwertigkeit und die der Juden schlechthin' (36). Dani's task, therefore, is to meld his Jewish identity with his Austrian identity, to become a hybrid without suppressing his Jewish identity as Scheinowitz did. However, once more, it proves impossible for Dani to achieve this goal, causing a rift between himself and his father similar to that encountered in the case of Moritz in *Das Register*:

Der berufliche Aufstieg des Vaters war mit der Enttäuschung, die sein Sohn ihm bereitete, eng verknüpft, denn je klarer die Mittelmäßigkeit des hageren Jungen hervorstach, um so vorsichtiger und bedachter ging das

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<sup>32</sup> Yolanda Gampel, 'Eine Tochter des Schweigens' in *Kinder der Opfer, Kinder der Täter*, ed. by Martin S. Bergmann and Milton E. Jucovy, trans. by Elisabeth Vorspohl (Frankfurt a.M.: Fischer, 1995) pp. 147-173

<sup>33</sup> Judith S. Kestenberg, 'Überlebende Eltern und ihre Kinder' in *Kinder der Opfer, Kinder der Täter* ed by Martin S. Bergmann and Milton E. Jucovy, trans. by Elisabeth Vorspohl (Frankfurt a.M.: Fischer, 1995) pp. 104-126, (p. 116)

Familienoberhaupt in jede Verhandlung, [...]und um so fremder wurde ihm Dani. (39)

The guilt that Dani feels at being unable to 'resurrect' his dead relatives, and at being unable to atone for their deaths is shared, in a different configuration, by Scheinowitz's son, Arie. The relationship between Arie and his father is slightly different from that of the Morgensterns, in that the disappointment Mosche displays towards his son is replaced in Scheinowitz's case by a superficially inexplicable 'Feindseligkeit' which automatically instills in Arie a 'geheimnisvolle Schuld.' (49). Later in the novel, it is revealed that the animosity that Arie perceives on the part of his father is bound up with the death of his daughter, Chava, during the Holocaust (57). Once more, such animosity has a basis in the findings of psychoanalysis. Kestenberg suggests that parents of children born after the Holocaust who lost a child as a result of the genocide unconsciously see in their post-Holocaust offspring the 'Wiedergeburten der Nazi-Unterdrucker.' The parents' unconscious hatred of their children is, once more, based on the child's inability to literally 'reproduce' the children they lost during the Holocaust.<sup>34</sup>

The psychological trauma that results from the unconscious transfer of guilt from the first to the second post-Shoah generation manifests itself in different ways in both Dani and Arie, but in each case has the effect of blurring the boundaries between victim and perpetrator, and of reproducing the discourse of generational inheritance which we encountered in Gstrein's work. At the same time, Rabinovici uses each of the sons' 'symptoms' as a method of exposing a particular aspect of Austria's treatment of the Jewish community which, once again, each constitute a comment on the unviability of true Austro-Jewish hybridity.

Arie's psychological response to the indeterminate guilt he feels as a result of his treatment by his family, combined with his father's constant attempts to break out of the role of 'victim' by forcing him to attend martial arts classes, manifests itself in the development of an intuitive ability to trace 'perpetrators' by taking on their characteristics. Superficially, this seems unproblematic, constituting the appropriation of a convention inherent in the detective novel with which *Suche nach M.* evinces certain parallels. The

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<sup>34</sup> Kestenberg, pp.116-117

significance of this for the particular *Opfer/Täter* binary associated with the Holocaust becomes apparent, however, in the section of Arie's narrative relating to Herwig Weinherr, a neo-Nazi whom Arie traces and kills in a retrospective attempt to discover his roots by standing up to what he refers to as the 'Erzfeinde seiner Abkunft' (48). In his efforts to trace Weinherr, Arie literally transforms into a neo-Nazi, adopting the appropriate style of dress and reading extreme right-wing publications (55-56). Whereas initially Arie's father sees these developments as a fulfillment of his wish that Arie should break out of the victim role, 'Besser mit Stiefeln als getreten werden [...] Wenn wer tritt, dann sind wir das' (56), Arie is, once more in a manner similar to Vinzenz and Moritz, repeating his father's actions. Just as Scheinowitz, in taking on Kruzki's identity, fulfilled his self-perception as an impostor in the Jewish community, so Arie, in taking on the characteristics of a neo-Nazi, has fulfilled his father's perception of him, and his own unconscious self-perception as 'Wiedergeburt der Nazi-Unterdrücker'.<sup>35</sup> This generational similarity goes even further, with Arie subsequently leaving Austria for Israel, joining the Israeli Secret Service and changing his surname to Bein. This identity shift is complicated by Arie's work, which intrinsically involves an assumption of a legion of different identities:

Bereits sein Vater hatte seinen Namen Scheinowitz verleugnet und sich hinter dem Pseudonym Fandler verborgen [...] [Er] war seit langem tot, doch sein Vermächtnis lebte fort, der Sohn wechselte die Namen öfter als sein Vater es je getan hatte [...] Nun hieß er Arie Arthur Bein, meinte, die Farce wäre damit überwunden, und merkte nicht, daß er mit dieser Entscheidung der Verwechslungskomödie des Vaters die Krone aufsetzte (159).

In addition, Arie's guilt, both that inherited from his father and that stemming from his actions within the Secret Service, causes him to neglect his daughter, for whom he, like his father, remains, ein Geheimnis: 'Du wiederholst an deinem Kind alles, was dir dein Vater antat [...] Sie weiss nicht, wer du bist' (152).

Arie's transition into the role of *Täter*, firstly through his assumption of a neo-Nazi identity and secondly in his murder of Herwig Weinherr, and his

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<sup>35</sup> Kestenberg, p. 116

subsequent role as 'Suchehund' in the Israeli secret service can further be seen as a covert comment on the shift in post-war identity politics triggered by the Waldheim affair during the 1980s, incidentally a period which coincided with the 'coming of age' of the second generation of post-Shoah Jewish intellectuals, of which Rabinovici himself was a leading member, as well as coinciding with the period that the initial 'episode' dealing with Ariele is apparently set. As we have already seen, the Jews of the immediate post-war period were largely excluded from the public sphere in order that the myth of Austrian victimhood could be preserved. The Waldheim affair, however, produced a re-enactment of the First victim thesis which involved a complete reversal of the *Opfer/Täter* binary. After his membership of the SA-Cavalry Corps during the Second World War, Waldheim's party, the ÖVP presented their candidate, whose exposure as what Uhl refers to as a 'paradigmatic Austrian Mitläufer'<sup>36</sup> ostensibly cast him in the role of the *Täter*, as the 'victim of a smear campaign instituted by the World Jewish Council. As Bunzl suggests:

To [the ÖVP], the "campaign" was carried out by "dishonourable cohorts of the WJC" who orchestrated a "manhunt" using "Mafia-like methods." In this manner, the "campaign" against Waldheim was readily constructed as a Jewish conspiracy. [...] [T]he ÖVP's ostensible concern that the WJC's "unreasonable attacks" might feed "emotions that none of us wanted" revealed a subtext that ascribed the origin of anti-Semitism to Jews rather than anti-Semites.<sup>37</sup>

Most importantly for our purposes, however, Ariele's transference from *Opfer* to *Täter* can also be seen as a veiled commentary on the notion of 'otherness,' in general, and, more specifically, on the folly of attempting to cross boundaries between in-group and out-group as discussed by Sander L. Gilman. It is important to note that, in the contemporary configuration of Vienna that Rabinovici creates, the neo-Nazi groups are cast as part of an Austrian 'in-group,' since they receive what can be termed 'special treatment' from the Austrian authorities who, again in accordance with the First victim thesis, do nothing to prevent or punish their antisocial and illegal behaviour:

[Ariele] wunderte nicht, wenn solche Gruppen [...] Verständnis und Fürsprache fanden bei Teilen der Justiz und der Polizei. [...] Schuldige

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<sup>36</sup> Uhl, p. 84

<sup>37</sup> Bunzl, p. 54

durften nicht zu finden sein in einem Land, das allgemeine Unbeflecktheit beanspruchte (47/)

Although Arie's reasons for attempting to infiltrate this 'Austrian in-group' are different from those of his father, Scheinowitz, his methods are essentially the same, based on his assumption of the characteristics of the group he wishes to infiltrate. However, as Gilman suggests the assumption of characteristics inherent in the in-group by the outsider necessarily includes the simultaneous assumption of the in-group's perception of the outsider themselves, with the result that the outsider comes to embody the otherness projected onto them by the in-group.<sup>38</sup> In attempting to embody the 'in-group' through the adoption of their characteristics, then, Arie reproduces the 'Jew as perpetrator' perception of the immediate post-Waldheim era, thus becoming an embodiment of the root of Jewish 'otherness.'<sup>39</sup>

In the narrative strand referring to Dani's psychological symptom, Rabinovici transfers the concept of continuity onto a national level, explicitly appropriating a modified version of the *Provinz als Modell* convention by using the dynamics of Dani's childhood friendship group in order to reflect a particular configuration of the relationship between 'Opfer' and 'Täter,' and thus, once more, implicitly equating these groups with the Jewish and Austrian communities respectively. During his childhood, Dani befriends Manfred and Peter Schauder, the mischievous sons of the *Hauswart*, who constantly play pranks on the various residents in their building. Dani discovers that he knows which prank the brothers are planning without having to be told, an exaggeration of his intuitive knowledge of his parents' past. At the same time, Dani's role within the group is to take upon himself the guilt for the Schauders' 'crimes.' It is important to note that, in this respect, Dani is referred to as 'ein Kompliz[e] [der] Schuld [der Brüder]' (33), a designation which constitutes a reference to a further, hugely negative form of hybridity, this time between the victims and perpetrators of the Holocaust, referred to by both Zygmunt Baumann and Rabinovici himself. During the Holocaust, the Jews themselves were forced to become, in Rabinovici's words, 'Agenten der eigenen Vernichtung'.<sup>40</sup> As Baumann suggests, it was the forced involvement of the

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<sup>38</sup> Gilman, p. 12

<sup>39</sup> Gilman, p. 22

<sup>40</sup> Doron Rabinovici, *Inszenen der Ohnmacht* (Frankfurt a.M.: Jüdischer Verlag, 2000), p.23

Jewish community in the Holocaust, motivated by the hope of survival, and the blurring of the boundaries between *Opfer* and *Täter* which it brought with it that differentiated the Holocaust from what he refers to as 'conventional' genocide:

Der normale Genozid zieht eine klare Trennungslinie zwischen Tätern und Opfern, [...] Im Holocaust war diese Trennung keineswegs so eindeutig. Die den Juden unter dem Druck der Herrschaftsverhältnisse zugewiesenen Aufgaben und Funktionen eröffneten einen scheinbaren Entscheidungsspielraum, der die Kooperation mit den Todfeinden und Mördern rational erschienen ließ. Die Juden [...] unterstützten den eigenen Untergang, während jede einzelne Handlung rational gesehen doch nur das Überleben sichern sollte.<sup>41</sup>

In the relationship between Dani Morgenthau and the Schaunders, Rabinovici reproduces this insidious manifestation of *Opfer/Täter* symbiosis, casting the Schaunders in the role of the *Täter*, 'die von keinem Gewissen geplagt, finsternen Gelüsten nachgingen,' (34), in which Dani firstly participates and secondly for which he takes the blame. In addition, this relationship can, once more, be seen as a commentary on the post-war situation in Vienna. In his examination of the Jewish co-operation in the Holocaust, entitled *Instanzen der Ohnmacht*, Rabinovici documents the case of Wilhelm Reisz, a Jew who was nominated by the *Israelitische Kultusgemeinde*, the representative body for the Viennese Jewish community, to act as one of the *Gruppenführer* responsible for the forcible 'evacuation' of Jewish apartments known as the *Aushebungen*. Despite Reisz's attempts to exploit his position in order to save lives, the enthusiasm with which he went about his duties, intended, as Rabinovici states, to make himself indispensable and thus avoid the concentration camps, caused the Viennese criminal court to sentence him to fifteen years in prison, justifying their decision with the following statement:

De[s] Angeklagte[n] Zugehörigkeit zur Ordnertruppe kann ihm [...] nicht zur Last gelegt werden. In dieser Beziehung befand er sich ja in einem Notstand. Dagegen hat er aber [...] Fleißaufgaben gemacht, für die er nun eintreten muss.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Zygmunt Bauman, *Dialektik der Ordnung: Die Moderne und der Holocaust*, trans. by Uwe Ahrens (Hamburg: Europäische Verlagsanstalt, 2002), p. 137

<sup>42</sup> Rabinovici, *Ohnmacht*, p.18

By treating the victims of the Holocaust (it must be noted that even those Jews, who, like Reisz, were active in the machinery of the Holocaust, were subject to constant anti-Semitic abuse and the ever-present threat of death) as perpetrators, the Austrian state continued to subject the Jewish community to the same treatment they had received during the Holocaust. Two aspects of this are of relevance for our purposes. Firstly, it is important to note the shift from the state-led 'leapfrogging' of the National Socialist past during the immediate war years, symbolised by the redecoration of Cafe Prückel. This is further manifest in the decisions of various of Scheinowitz's Jewish acquaintances to marry immediately after hostilities ceased in an effort to return to what Scheinowitz refers to as 'bürgerliche Normalität,' to a discourse of continuation amongst the second generation in which the children of Holocaust victims, through the generational transmission of *Überlebensschuld*, construct themselves as the 'perpetrators' that their parents' generation were forced to become. Secondly, in Rabinovici's presentation of this 'continuation' we can see a much more complex manifestation of a key characteristic of *Anti-Heimatliteratur*, namely the configuration of the *Anti-Heimat Provinz* as what she refers to as a 'Hort des Nationalsozialismus,' since the construction of the Jewish community as perpetrators of the Holocaust was, as we have seen, a feature specific to National Socialist 'philosophy.' In insisting that Dani witness their pranks and alleviate them of their guilt by confessing in their place, the Schaunders reproduce the basic foundations of this 'philosophy.'

During the initial episodes of *Suche nach M.*, then, Rabinovici can be seen to conform to Bhabha's conception of a minor literature, in that he adopts and manipulates the conventions of *Heimatliteratur*, in the form of the concept of 'generational continuity' and the border between in-group and out-group to 'evoke' and 'erase' the totalising boundaries of the Austrian state with reference to Austrian/Jewish identity construction. This is achieved initially through the demonstration of the expulsion of Jewish identity from the public sphere in the case of Scheinowitz, and secondly through the demonstration of a continued tendency to construct the Jewish community as perpetrators, which constituted one of the aspects of the Austrian post-war response to the Holocaust. In addition, both Arie's and Dani's experiences are indicative of the construction of Vienna as a hive of National Socialism, with Rabinovici placing responsibility

firstly for the continued prevalence of right wing groups, and secondly for the continued construction of the Jews as perpetrators, squarely in the hands of state-set responses to the Holocaust.

#### **4.5 Hybridity hindered: The second generation and Der ewige Jude**

Very little reference is made in the initial sections of *Suche nach M.* to non-Jewish Austrian characters of both the first and second post-Holocaust generations, who begin to play a role much later in the novel, and each of whom is subject to personality disturbances reminiscent of those from which both Ariele and Dani both suffer, and which manifest themselves in seemingly similar forms. Just as Ariele and Dani are subject to what might be seen as obsessive compulsive disorders, obtaining release from taking on the guilt of others, and searching out the guilty and secondly to taking on their characteristics, the various non-Jewish characters that Rabinovici includes within his novel also suffer from personality disturbances. These disorders range from the relatively harmless kleptomania of Sina Mohn to the fetishistic obsession with bandages and general disablement displayed by Otto Toot (and shared, to a certain extent, by Sina herself) and finally the most sinister of the three variants which manifests itself in the narrative strand concerning Helmuth Keysser, who strangles women to death and proceeds to penetrate them. Significantly, however, those psychological abnormalities displayed by the members of the Austrian community differ from those displayed by the 'Jewish' characters in that they are not overtly concerned with the issue of guilt as those observed within Rabinovici's second generation Jews, and, with the exception of Sina, are more explicitly sex-related (although it does become apparent later that Sina shares, to a lesser extent, Toot's fetish for bandages.) Freud defines obsessive neuroses or *Zwangsneurose*, as well as perversions such as Toot's as being predicated upon a developmental disturbance caused by a repressed event which occurs in the early stages of childhood.<sup>43</sup> Taking into account the observations made by Alexander and Margarete Mitscherlich in their examination of the psychoanalysis of the Holocaust, however, the various psychological disturbances that the members the Austrian community are

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<sup>43</sup> Cf. Sigmund Freud, *Studienausgabe*, ed. by Alexander Mitscherlich and others (Frankfurt a.M.: Fischer, 1989), VII: *Zwang, Paranoia und Perversion*



subject to can be seen as an exaggerated representation of a collective psychological condition predicated upon a repression of the 'trauma' of the Holocaust on the part of the *Täter*, which, through the continuing insistence on the first victim thesis on the state level, and the active attempts by the previous generation to suppress the realities of the past, have been implanted in the second generation. These attempts at repression are made explicit by Rabinovici in the passages dealing with the popular reaction to Mullemann, Dani's alter-ego, who, plagued by a psychosomatic skin-complaint which goes hand in hand with his compulsive need to admit to other people's crimes, wanders through the town covered in bandages, famous and feared as a result of the fact that his exposure of various crimes through the assumption of guilt forces the various perpetrators to acknowledge their participation<sup>44</sup>, a 'Stadtgespenst, ein Schuldphantom, von dem das ganze Land fiebert.' (173)

Einige Großväter widersprachen [...] Sollten all die Anstrengungen ihrer Generation vergeblich gewesen sein? Hatten sie nicht alle Spuren im Wiederaufbau verwischt, alle Erinnerungen mit verbissenem Schweigen ausgelöscht? Wer wisse[...] welche Gespenster der Vergangenheit unter den Stofflagen dieses Mannes steckten, welche Geheimnisse dieser Larve [...] noch entschlüpfen möchten. Abschieben, fortjagen, vertrieben musste man diesen Mullemann [...] raunten Großväter (182).

The reaction of the 'Großväter' to Mullemann's abilities explicitly places what the Mitscherlichs refer to as the 'Tabuisierung' of the past at the heart of Austrian identity. The effects of such 'Tabuisierung' which the psychoanalysts document are consistent with the various symptoms displayed by the non-Jewish characters in *Suche nach M.* which, when viewed in the context of repression, can each be defined as 'Ersatzbefriedigung':

Das Symptom (kollektiv) [...] steht anstelle der Einsicht in den tatsächlich wirkenden Zusammenhang. Ungeschlichteter Widerstreit verlangt nach Lösung, erzwingt – da diese nicht erreichbar ist – eine Ersatzbefriedigung. In diesem Wirkungskreis hat das Krankheitssymptom oder das Charaktersymptom seinen Platz. Der Endeffekt ist folgender: Je mehr sich

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<sup>44</sup> A particularly telling example of this occurs at the very end of the novel, when 'Mullemann' is locked in a cell with an American serial killer, whom he prevents from smothering him by driving him to distraction through the voicing of his own thoughts.

unter dem Zwang von Tabus [...] das kritische Ich zur Nachgiebigkeit gezwungen sieht, desto mehr muß [...] der Abwehr jener Triebwünsche geopfert werden, die in einer „unbewältigten Vergangenheit“ nicht zur Ruhe kommen.<sup>45</sup>

What we are presented with in *Suche nach M.*, then, are two communities whose only possible claim to hybridity is the shared feeling of guilt that they are subject to as a result of past events. At the same time, however, this guilt constitutes the greatest possible barrier to Austrian-Jewish hybridity as a result of the manner in which the perpetrators deal with their guilt, which involves both the continuation of the deflection of guilt onto the Jewish community through their construction as *Täter* and a simultaneous denigration of the Jewish identity through the perpetuation of the anti-Semitic image of the Wandering Jew. The importance of Toot's character to Rabinovici's exploration of the *Opfer/Täter* binary is betrayed immediately by his name, which is made up of the initial letters of the binary's two components. Toot is an art student whose masterpiece, an oil-painting depicting a mummy-like figure covered from head to toe in bandages, is displayed at an art exhibition attended by Sina Mohn, who becomes Mullemann's lover, and Navah Bein, whose husband, Arie, in an attempt to capture Mullemann, mimics his appearance. As a result of Arie's mimicry of Mullemann, which begins in the episode prior to this, a triangular relationship is generated between Arie, Mullemann/Dani and the painting itself. The significance of this three-way mimicry becomes obvious when the title of the painting, 'Ahasver' comes to light. 'Ahasver' refers, as Navah Bein suggests, to the legend of the Wandering Jew, in German 'der Ewige Jude,' which first appeared in concrete form in a German chapbook published in 1602, entitled *Kurtze Beschreibung und Erzehlung von einem Juden mit Namen Ahasver*,<sup>46</sup> the narrative of an encounter with a shoemaker who, having roused the crowds present at Jesus's sentencing by Pilate into shouting 'crucify him,' then refused to allow Jesus to take a rest in front of his home, and struck him. As a result, Ahasver was condemned to wander until the second coming. The introduction of this 'legend' into Rabinovici's novel effectively ties together the various

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<sup>45</sup> Alexander Mitscherlich and Margarete Mitscherlich, *Die Unfähigkeit zu trauern*, 18th edn. (Munich: Piper, 2004), p.133

<sup>46</sup> The facsimile of this chapbook is available online at <http://www.skramstad.no/folkebok/kurtze00.htm> [accessed 20/08/2006]

stands of the narrative relating to the *Opfer-Täter* binary, the question of Austro-Jewish hybridity and the Jewish concept of *Heimat*. Through its title, the painting firstly represents the Austrian state perception of the Jew, but reveals the national 'continuity' of the construction of the Jew as *Täter* to be merely a contemporary off-shoot of a more deep-rooted discourse indicative of an animosity between Christians and Jews which goes back centuries. Symbolically, this aspect of the painting is the only one which is never acknowledged by the Austrian characters who come into contact with it, who misinterpret the legend of Ahasver, perceiving the figure to constitute a 'jüdischer Gestalt der Reue' (206). As well as memorialising the 'Jew as perpetrator' discourse, Toot's painting can be seen to glorify and perpetuate a continuing anti-Semitism, a function which it shares, incidentally, with the memorial to Dr. Karl Lueger referenced at the very beginning of the novel. The legend of the Wandering Jew firstly reproduces the basis of Christian Anti-Semitism in blaming Ahasver, as a representative of the Jewish people, for Jesus's crucifixion, and was also appropriated as a component of National Socialist propaganda, most obviously in the film *Der Ewige Jude*.<sup>47</sup> In the painting of Ahasver, however, Rabinovici incorporates a further aspect of the image of the Jew which, until this point in the novel, remains merely implicit. What offends the 'israelische Staatsbürgerin' Navah Bein most about Toot's work is the manifestation of Jewish suffering which she sees manifest within it (203). In much the same way as the 'permanent regret' that Ahasver can be seen to represent, the representation of the 'Ewige Jude' in bandages suggests a permanent pre-disposition towards persecution and suffering on the part of the Jewish people, which Navah sees as glorified within the painting:

Der ewige Jude ist ihnen einer Ausstellung wert. Die Väter haben ihn als Untermensch hingerichtet, die Söhne richten ihn als Heiligen her' (203).

The fact that Toot's portrait combines the two aspects of the *Opfer/Täter* binary within it takes on further significance when Toot is asked to identify the 'Gestalt' under the bandages and says simply 'Ahasver ist Toot!...Will niemand verstehen? Mit dem Zitat der fremden das Gefühl eigener Schuld widerspiegeln... Sehen Sie doch, der Körper, der Nacken. Das bin ich. Toot war Ahasver... oder Mullemann... in Ewigkeit. Amen' (222). Whilst confirming that

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<sup>47</sup> *Der ewige Jude*. Dir. Fritz Hippler [n. distributor], 1940.

the manifestation of the Jewish people that Ahasver is thought to represent constitutes both *Täter* and *Opfer*, the fact that Toot, whose views on the Holocaust and denial of *Kollektivschuld* place him squarely in the category of *Täter*, takes on Ahasver's identity represents the zenith of Rabinovici's investigation of the *Opfer/Täter* binary, and demonstrates the reasons behind the inability of Jews to achieve effective, positive hybridity within the Austrian milieu. Essentially, in 'Ahasver,' Rabinovici shows that a hugely negative form of hybridity already exists between second generation Austrian Jews and non-Jewish Austrians, communities which are both 'victims' of their forebears' guilt whose atonement they have been forced to undertake as a result of the common attempt to repress the true realities of the past. The transfer of the guilt, however, rooted variously in involvement within the atrocities of the Holocaust, and the survival of those atrocities, automatically casts each community in the role of perpetrator. The problem occurs in the fact that the only opportunity the second generation of Austrians has to come to terms with its guilt, and thus to achieve the state of 'Trauer' that the Mitscherlichs suggest will lead to *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*, is to use the image of the Jewish other, the creation of which formed the basis of the previous generation's guilt for which they must now atone, as a 'mirror' in which their own guilt is reflected back at them. Logically, in order for this 'reflection' to be successful, the guilt of the Second Generation must first be projected onto the 'mirror' that the image of the Jewish other constitutes, leading to the implicit endowment of the Jewish other with 'Austrian' guilt, and thus to the oscillation between victim and perpetrator which Rabinovici reveals, through the narrative strands relating to both Ariele and Dani, to be at the centre of the identity of Austrian Jews. It is this contemporary form of one-sided Austrian-Jewish symbiosis, the latest in a series of historical manifestations of the phenomenon presented by Rabinovici within *Suche nach M.* which stands in the way of the achievement of the full recognition of Jewish identity upon which the achievement of a long-lasting and equal Austro-Jewish hybridity, and the full acceptance of Jews within Austrian society is contingent.

#### **4.6 Suche nach M. : A 'minor' *Heimatliteratur*?**

*Suche nach M.*, then, ostensibly corresponds to Bhabha's conception of the relationship between literature and nation, in that it constantly evokes the

'boundaries' by which Austria constitutes its post-war national identity through constant references to the *Opfer/Täter* binary upon which the first victim thesis is predicated. Significantly, however, Rabinovici's attempts to erase the boundaries between *Opfer* and *Täter*, and between the Austrian and Jewish communities are never completely successful; the attempts of the various characters to transcend the barriers between the two communities are usually either unsuccessful, or require the suppression of one identity through the superficial assumption of the other. Further, although Rabinovici can be seen to create a 'hybrid' Austro-Jewish character, in that the novel centres on the effects of the Austrian milieu upon the Jewish characters Arie and Dani, he constantly exposes the attainment of hybridity as impossible as a result of the continued dependence of the Austrian upon the Jewish community, demonstrated by means of the adoption and manipulation of the discourse of generational continuity encountered within modern *Anti-Heimatliteratur*, which intrinsically denigrates their collective identity..

For Rabinovici, the key to the removal of the negative symbiosis between Austrian Jews and non-Jewish Austrians is the removal of the ever-present *Opfer/Täter* binary which lies at the heart of the Austrian milieu he creates and which the various Austrian Jewish characters presented throughout the novel are apparently forced to maintain. The nation's totalising boundaries are thus presented as ultimately 'uneraseable', confirming the suggestion, intimated in the introduction, that *Suche nach M.* corresponds more readily to Menasse's criteria for *Nationalliteratur* than to Bhabha's assessment of the relationship between literature and nation. The fact that the nation's totalising boundaries cannot be broken down within the public sphere leads each of the main protagonists to seek retreat from the influence of the state in the private sphere: The conclusion of the novel sees Arie resign from his post within the Israeli secret service, in which he had perpetuated his oscillation between the roles of victim and perpetrator, and turning his back on the Diaspora once and for all and emigrating to Tel Aviv, the site of what Navah refers to as the 'israelisches Bewußtsein' (203) whereas Rabinovici hints that Mullemann literally overcomes the *Opfer/Täter* binary by reinstating his relationship with Sina Mohn. The novel's conclusion, then, effectively reinstates the validity of traditional *Heimat* conventions, demonstrating that both personal and group identity can only be

secure when distanced from the unbreakable influence of state-set hegemonies and localised within the private, more specifically the familial sphere.

## Conclusions

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This thesis set out with a two-fold goal. Firstly, insights gleaned from the case studies were intended to assess the validity of the dominant critical opinion regarding the contemporary role of *Anti-Heimatliteratur*. The secondary goal was to determine whether the instances of contemporary literature analysed within this thesis could be said to provide 'Leitbild[er] der [österreichischen] Nationalidentität'<sup>1</sup> and therefore constitute 'Nationalliteratur.' This final section of the thesis will treat each of these aspects separately.

### Contemporary literature and (Anti) Heimat

This thesis suggests that that the contemporary critical opinion regarding *Anti-Heimatliteratur*'s reduction in relevance and significance is inherently flawed. The case studies have demonstrated that contemporary authors largely follow the pattern set down by the conventional *Anti-Heimatliteratur* of the 1970s, manipulating and negativising conventions inherent in *Heimatliteratur*, and combining them with the thematics of repression and combative self-re-narration, and the ex-negativo provincial *Idylle*, in order to satirise various aspects of Austria's political and social culture. Close analysis of the novels has revealed a gradual modernisation of the *Anti-Heimatroman* beginning with the emergence of the *Fremden/Verkehr* trend at the beginning of the 1980s. As the examination of *Der Ackermann aus Kärnten* has demonstrated, the roots of this process were already visible in 'paradigmatic' *Anti-Heimatliteratur* at the end of the 1970s, with the strictly 'closed' province that had dominated the world of authors such as Innerhofer being penetrated, in Winkler, by manifestations of mass culture. In Gstrein's novel, mass culture is not only able to penetrate the province, but comes to govern its social structure, as well as the mentality of its inhabitants. It is important to note, however, that *Das Register*, written at the beginning of the 1990s, also signifies a modification of the *Fremden/Verkehr* trend itself, the conventional emphasis on the negative effects of the tourist industry upon the province constituting merely the core of a wider critical focus upon commercialism in general, which encompasses the detrimental influence

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<sup>1</sup> Menasse, pp. 115-116

of the phenomenon not only upon the provincial milieu, but also upon personal and national identity.

Perhaps the most significant findings, however, emanate from the topographical analyses of *Das Register*, *Wiener Passion* and *Suche nach M.*, in which a gradual obfuscation occurs of the governing binary of both *Heimat* – and *Anti-Heimatliteratur*, namely that between metropolis and province. In *Das Register*, Gstrein introduces various ‘metropolitan’ elements into the provincial milieu, perpetuating, but at the same time reversing, the typical good province/bad metropolis convention. Within the novel, the villages surrounding the *Bezirkshauptstadt* are implicitly endowed with an elevated status as the residence of the *Fremdenverkehrs-spioniere*, whose material wealth is set against the situation in the deprived and dilapidated town. At the same time, however, the village inhabitants are shown to be those most affected by the lure of commercialism, and thus deviate most from traditional *Heimat* values of community and family. Most importantly, however, it is the *Bezirkshauptstadt* which replaces the traditionally dominant narrated spaces of *Dorf* and *Hof* as the novel’s central setting. This obfuscation of the metropolis/province binary is taken one stage further by Lilian Faschinger, who configures her narrated contemporary Vienna as a milieu which is distinctly provincial in nature. The exploration of typically *Anti-Heimat* thematics, albeit in a modified form (the continued prevalence of National Socialist values and the rigid maintenance of in-group/out-group binaries, for example) against an ostensibly metropolitan background represents a partial breakdown in the metropolis/province binary, which nevertheless remains intact as a result of the author’s references to New York, which acts as the metropolis to Vienna’s province. The process of obfuscation, however, is taken to its logical conclusion within Doron Rabinovici’s *Suche nach M.*, in which the metropolis-province split is abandoned in favour of that between Vienna and the rest of the world. It is important to note that despite the obfuscation of (*Anti*) *Heimat*’s governing binary of metropolis and province, the authors continue to appropriate conventions and themes inherent in both *Heimatliteratur* and the traditional *Anti-Heimatroman*. On the basis of Rabinovici’s novel, then, it is legitimate to conclude that the *Anti-Heimat* genre is undergoing a similar modification to that represented by the emergence of the *Fremden/Verkehr* motif at the beginning of the 1980s. Firstly, Rabinovici’s



application of *Anti-Heimat* conventions, most obviously those of in-group and out-group, in a milieu which does not in any way purport to be provincial confirms the implications visible in both *Das Register* and *Wiener Passion*, which suggest that the applicability of such conventions is by no means restricted to the province, but is valid regardless of the milieu involved. More significantly, however, the fact that Rabinovici's novel operates on a geographical level which necessarily omits the metropolis/province binary also leads to an alteration in the mechanics of his milieu's function as a representation of Austrian society in general. Rabinovici no longer relies on the *Provinz als Modell* convention, but rather endows his narrated Vienna with a representational function by omitting direct references to Austria from his narrative, and by placing the narrated city in a supra-national context. This re-contextualisation of Vienna as part of an 'übernationale Geographie' which it shares with other nations, rather than with other cities, increasing the potency of its function as a milieu whose internal dynamics are intended to represent those of the Austrian nation as a whole.

### **Empirical Considerations.**

Having demonstrated throughout the thesis the mechanics of the relationship between the milieus narrated in each novel and the wider national situation, it is necessary to refer back to the sociological models set out in the introduction in order to investigate the extent to which the manifestations of contemporary *Anti-Heimatliteratur* can be seen to function as 'ein Leitbild der [österreichischen] Identität,' and thus as *Nationalliteratur*. Comparison with sociological models indicates that contemporary literature reflects unequivocally the various disparities inherent in Austrian identity manifest on both of Haller's levels of nationhood. This section will therefore concisely review the manner in which the various aspects of nationhood outlined in the introduction are treated within the texts discussed here.

As was suggested in the introduction the *Kulturnation* configuration of national identity is organised around the dual focus of religion and language as criteria for membership of a national community. The importance of language in this regard is reflected in each of the texts analysed, where inability to speak fluent German is exploited as a criterion for alienation (Winkler, Rabinovici), as well as a commodity which can be manipulated in order to fashion the perfect

'image' of national identity (Gstrein.) Manipulation of language in Gstrein's novel is also used as a means through which wider national allegiance can be pitted against regional identity, as is visible in the loss of Vinzenz's dialect at the hands of the national team's elocution expert. The role played by religion within the text corpus also largely corresponds to sociological findings regarding the institution's position in Austrian national identity. This is particularly true in *Wiener Passion*, where the configuration of *fin-de-siecle* Catholicism as a *Herrschaftsreligion* confirms Haller's assessment of the nature of religion in Austria during the nineteenth century. It is also worth mentioning that the role played by religion within *Ackermann* corresponds, as has been shown, to Reich's assessment of the institution's repressive influences under the auspices of the authoritarian family. At the same time, however, the role played by religion in Faschinger's contemporary milieu reflects the reduction in the importance of religion within the Austria of the later twentieth century. Faschinger's configuration of *Stephansdom* as constituting a tourist attraction corresponds with figures suggesting that the church was amongst the top twenty Viennese tourist attractions in 2005.<sup>2</sup>

The *Kulturation* configuration often intersects with the various presentations of Austria as *Ethnonation*. This intersection is evident in both *Wiener Passion* and *Suche nach M.* In the latter, religion and language intersect with ethnicity in Rabinovici's examination of the exclusionary group dynamics of Austrian Jews and non-Jewish Austrians. For Faschinger's Magnolia Brown, however, fluency not only in German but in *Wienerisch* proves insufficient grounds for her entry into the native Austrian community, from which she is excluded solely on the basis of her African American heritage. This is also the case for the Yugoslavian native briefly mentioned in *Ackermann*, whose exclusion from the village community is predicated not only upon his inability to speak German fluently, but also on his ethnic origins, on the basis of which he is nicknamed 'Tschusch.' The existence of this particular brand of 'ethnic' racism is also intimated heavily in *Das Register*.

Significantly, the configuration of Austria as *Ethnonation* also has a role to play in the presentation of the country's relationship to the German

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<sup>2</sup> Cf. 'Hitliste der Sehenswürdigkeiten in Wien, 2005' <<http://www.stadt-wien.at/index.php?id=sehenswuerdigkeiten-2005>> [Accessed 15 August, 2005]

*Kulturnation*. Winkler's demonstration of the province as a locus of National Socialist and Pan-German values corresponds to Albert Reiterer's contention, made in 1986, that allegiance to the German *Kulturnation* is a 'provinzielles Syndrom'.<sup>3</sup> Thus, the continued prevalence of such a mentality in Faschinger's 'provincialised' Vienna also has a basis in empirical research. At the same time, Faschinger's novel reflects the contemporary proliferation of right-wing political factions, most obviously manifest in the popularity of the FPÖ, which Pelinka characterises as occupying the middle ground between 'Rechtspopulismus' and 'Deutschnationalismus'.<sup>4</sup>

The second significant aspect of Austria's membership of the German *Kulturnation* is the question of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*. The manner in which this is dealt with in the text corpus is partly apparent from the presentation of continued allegiance to the German *Kulturnation* discussed above. However, a recurring theme within the text corpus is that of generational transfer of guilt, illustrated briefly in the introduction with reference to the emergence of Second Generation intellectuals who acknowledge Austria's involvement with National Socialism and thus 'atone' for the first generation's guilt. In addition, this phenomenon is verified by findings emanating from psychoanalysis, which show that second generation Jews and Germans/Austrians are often negatively affected by the guilt their parents feel, whether for their involvement in, or survival of, the events of the Holocaust. Thus, the emphasis on generational transfer of guilt visible in both *Das Register* and *Suche nach M.* reflects a key constituent of the second generation's identity.

On the basis of the above observations, it is possible to suggest that the contemporary *Anti-Heimatliteratur* analysed here largely reflects the national situation, providing a *Leitbild* for Austrian identity and thus fulfilling the criteria set down by Robert Menasse for a *Nationalliteratur*. This is not to suggest, however, that the texts examined provide a 'fictional' representation of the sociological findings outlined in the introduction. Each novel contains inconsistencies, hyperbole and vitriol, which could be seen to distort the

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<sup>3</sup> Albert Reiterer, *Nation und Nationalbewusstsein in Österreich* (Vienna: VWGÖ, 1996), p. 65

<sup>4</sup> Anton Pelinka, Die FPÖe [sic.] im internationalen Vergleich, *conflict & communication online*, 1 (2002), 1-12 (p.8) < [http://www.cco.regener-online.de/2002\\_1/pdf\\_2002\\_1/pelinka.pdf](http://www.cco.regener-online.de/2002_1/pdf_2002_1/pelinka.pdf) > [Accessed 21/08/2006]

credibility of the representations of national identity contained within them. Mecklenburg's observations regarding the *Provinz als Modell* convention, however, suggest that this should not be the case. The main goal of the convention is to use the microcosm to 'define the outlines of the macrocosm.' Hence, we can conclude that the role of literature is not to provide an exact replica of the national situation, but rather to reflect and respond to its most important aspects: As we have seen, despite the vitriol and hyperbole with which the national situation is presented, the definition of the macrocosm's outline contained within the novels analysed here are consistent with the findings of sociology in its portrayal of the Austrian nation and national identity, and thus the validity of the conclusions that they allow to be drawn with regard to these issues cannot be denied.

The one question still to be answered, however, is why the critical establishment refuses to acknowledge contemporary *Anti-Heimatliteratur* as *Nationalliteratur*, in spite of the fact that it appears to accurately reflect sociological findings regarding the perceptions of nation and national identity held by the Austrians themselves. There are three possible reasons for this. Firstly, the contemporary manifestations of *Anti-Heimatliteratur* contained within this thesis, despite their conformity to the conventions of the genre, are highly disparate in terms of their settings, content and thematics, which, as Kunne suggests, obfuscates our ability to accurately define 'unifying parameters' for the contemporary *Anti-Heimat* genre.<sup>5</sup> In addition, as we have seen, the criticism of Austrian society delivered by contemporary *Anti-Heimatliteratur* is combined with a profoundly negative portrayal of the nation itself. This can usefully be contrasted with the situation in Germany, where the work of authors such as Böll, Grass and Wolf was heralded as *Nationalliteratur* despite its critical stance: It is possible to hypothesise that their attainment of this status was due to the ability of these authors to represent the 'better Germany' within their literature, which allowed them to be embraced as writers of the nation in a way that the overtly negative presentations of Austria in the work of contemporary *Anti-Heimat* authors would preclude. Critic Karl Markus Gauß, however, suggests that the failure of the *Anti-Heimatroman* to attain the status of *Nationalliteratur* is bound up with a specific facet of its negative portrayal of

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<sup>5</sup> Kunne, p. 304

the Austrian nation. Gauß characterises *Anti-Heimatliteratur* as a major contributor to the 'panic' which characterises Austria's response to the concept of 'Provinzialismus,' which, he suggests, constitutes as a highly negative 'Universalkategorie' rooted within the Austrian consciousness:

Was für Kreisky [...] gesagt wurde, daß nämlich Österreich zu klein für ihn sei, das gilt mittlerweile für die Österreicher schon in der Talsohle ihres Selbstbewußtseins. Österreich ist einfach zu klein, als daß man hier ohne das schlechte Gewissen leben könnte, doch ein Provinzlöffel zu sein.<sup>6</sup>

Based upon these suggestions, it is possible to conclude that Austria's failure to acknowledge *Anti-Heimatliteratur* as *Nationalliteratur* is based upon its capacity to force the acknowledgement of the negative 'provincialism' inherent not only within Austrian society itself, but rooted in the collective consciousness of Austrian readership. As we have seen, however, this situation is changing, with *Anti-Heimatliteratur* responding to the social changes which, as Gauß suggests, have made 'Provinzialismus' itself an obsolete category:

'Die Differenz [...] von geistig aufgeklärter Großstadt und spießig[em] Land [...] verfehlt die Realität einer umfassend vernetzten, medial zusammengeschlossenen Gesellschaft aufs Lächerlichste. Daher ist es nicht Sinnvoll, von [...] Provinzialismus in anderem als historischem Sinne zu sprechen.'<sup>7</sup>

According to Gauß, then, contemporary *Anti-Heimatliteratur's* abandonment of the *Provinz als Modell* convention as a method of representing the Austrian nation can be seen as a further example of its ability to adapt to social change. More significantly, however, it is possible to suggest that the removal of *Anti-Heimat* from the province, and thus the removal of the 'provincial' from *Anti-Heimatliteratur* will endow the current and future variations of the genre with a new status and recognition amongst the Austrian readership and the critical establishment, since *Anti-Heimatliteratur* will no longer concern itself with provincialism at the root of the Austrian consciousness, and thus will cease to contribute to the 'panic' which it has incited. At the same time, however, the ability of *Anti-Heimatliteratur* to incite such panic by forcing Austria

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<sup>6</sup> Karl Markus Gauß, 'Provinz, Provinzialismus, Österreich', *Literatur und Kritik*, 255/256 (1991), 77-80 (p. 79)

<sup>7</sup> Gauß, p. 79

to reflect upon the provincialism inherent within its culture, social structures and collective psyche constitutes the core of its critical message, and thus of its significant contribution to Austrian culture. Should it become the norm in future *Anti-Heimatliteratur*, therefore, it is likely that the shift in critical focus away from the provincial milieu whose genesis is visible in the texts analysed here will impact negatively on the genre's socio-critical impact, resulting in the marginalisation of future configurations of the *Anti-Heimatroman*, and thus ultimately to the genre's demise.

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