

BETWEEN AUSTRIA AND GERMANY, HEIMAT AND ZUHAUSE: GERMAN-SPEAKING
REFUGEES AND THE POLITICS OF MEMORY IN AUSTRIA

A Dissertation
submitted to the Faculty of the
Graduate School of Arts and Sciences
of Georgetown University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
in German

By

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Washington, D.C.
August 14, 2020

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation explores the memory of postwar German-speaking refugees in Austria through an analysis of diverse media, cultural practices, and their reception. Part I of the dissertation examines postwar memorials and their reception in newspapers, as well as the role of pilgrimage, religious ritual, and public responses of defacement. Part II focuses on post-Waldheim literature and its reception, specifically examining the literary genres of novels and travelogues describing German-speaking refugees' trips to their former homes. In examining these memorials and literature as well as their reception, I show how static and marginalized the memory of German-speaking refugees has remained throughout the history of the Second Republic, even after the fragmentation of Austrian memory in the wake of the Waldheim affair. While Chapter 1 posits four reasons for this marginalization, the continuance of this marginalization into the present can be summed up by drawing on Oliver Marchart's concept of historical-political memory and by pointing to the politicization and tabooization of the memory as a far-right discourse. Identifying a gap between the vast cultural memory of German-speaking refugees on the one hand, and the dearth of scholarship dealing with the subject on the other, I argue that it is time for these memories to be taken seriously and not be dismissed as uncritical or otherwise problematic representations of the past. At the same time, however, they cannot be accepted as-is without placing them in the proper historical context. Consequently, an analysis of narrative strategies and the role of memory in making the past present is timely and important.

I would like to thank the entire Georgetown University German Department but especially Friederike Eigler, without whose tireless guidance, kindness, and support this dissertation would never have been possible. Thank you for believing in me. To my friends that I have neglected during this process: thank you for your patience. But especially to my wife, Stefcia: thank you for your care, love, and patience.

This dissertation is also indebted to the Austrian Studies Association for their support and feedback at the very collegial 2018 and 2019 conferences. I am particularly grateful for the feedback of Michael Boehringer from the University of Waterloo, Günter Bischof from the University of New Orleans, and Christian Karner from the University of Lincoln. Of course, my archival research and visiting of far-flung memorials across rural Austria would never have been possible without the support of the OeAD's Ernst Mach grant and my advisor at the University of Vienna, Stefan Krammer. Finally, to the Haus der Heimat in Wien for allowing me to access their archive and to Constantin Göttfert and Ilse Tielsch for kindly inviting me into their homes to discuss their work, many heartfelt thanks.

Josh Seale

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|--|-----|
| PREFACE: NOTE ON LANGUAGE USE | 1 |
| CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION | 2 |
| I. “Flight and Expulsion”: A National Memory?..... | 4 |
| II. Uncovering Memorial Traces of “Flight and Expulsion” in Austria..... | 6 |
| III. Locating Peripheral, Counter-Hegemonic Memory | 9 |
| IV. “Flight and Expulsion”: A Political Memory?..... | 13 |
| V. The Dynamics of Memory | 20 |
| VI. Memories of “Dismissal: “Flight and Expulsion” as an Existential Threat to Austrian Sovereignty | 26 |
| VII. Dissertation Outline | 41 |
| PART I: BETWEEN THE PALIMPSESTS AND HETEROTOPIAS OF MEMORY: GERMAN-SPEAKING REFUGEES IN MONUMENTS AND MEMORIALS IN AUSTRIA | |
| INTRODUCTION TO PART I | 43 |
| I. Theoretical Background: Definitions and Methodology | 45 |
| II. Data Set: Typology of Memorials and “Blank Spots”..... | 50 |
| CHAPTER 2: RELIGION AND NATION-BUILDING IN POSTWAR AUSTRIA: GERMAN- SPEAKING REFUGEE MONUMENTS AS PALIMPSEST..... | 55 |
| I. The Maria Taferl Pilgrimage Church and Lower Austrian Regional Memorial Site | 57 |
| II. The Carinthian Regional Memorial Site at the Kreuzbergkirche in Klagenfurt | 70 |
| CHAPTER 3: SEEING BEYOND THE BORDER: HEIMAT, PILGRIMAGE, AND GERMAN- SPEAKING REFUGEE MONUMENTS AS HETEROTOPIAS IN (POST-) COLD WAR AUSTRIA..... | 80 |
| I. Between Transnational Outreach and Domestic Politicization: German-Speaking Refugee Heterotopias in Post-Cold War Austria..... | 104 |
| II. Defacement and German-Speaking Refugee Heterotopias..... | 110 |
| PART II: THE MEMORY OF GERMAN-SPEAKING REFUGEES AND EXPELLEES IN AUSTRIAN LITERATURE AFTER WALDHEIM | |
| INTRODUCTION TO PART II..... | 124 |
| I. Austrian Memory Culture Since the Waldheim Affair: Fragmentation and Politicization of the Past..... | 125 |
| II. The Treatment of “Flight and Expulsion” in Postwar Austrian Literature | 129 |
| III. Outline to Part II | 135 |

| | |
|--|-----|
| CHAPTER 4: REMEMBERING “FLIGHT AND EXPULSION” IN CONTEMPORARY AUSTRIAN LITERATURE: NARRATING VICTIMHOOD, RESPONSIBILITY, AND BELONGING | 138 |
| I. Hanna Sukare: <i>Staubzunge</i> | 138 |
| II. Gabriele Vasak: <i>Den Dritten das Brot</i> | 143 |
| III. Ulrike Schmitzer: <i>Die gestohlene Erinnerung</i> | 149 |
| IV. Constantin Göttfert: <i>Steiners Geschichte</i> | 158 |
| V. Conclusion | 169 |
| | |
| CHAPTER 5: THE PRESENCE OF THE PAST: THE “REFUGEE/EXPELLEE GAZE” IN TRAVELOGUES BY ILSE TIELSCH AND KARL-MARKUS GAUß | 173 |
| I. Defining Literary Return Narratives or <i>Wiederbegegnungsliteratur</i> | 176 |
| II. Presence: Nostalgia’s Forgotten Visual Dimension Between Space and Time | 178 |
| III. The “Refugee/Expellee Gaze”: Experiencing the Past and Looking Past the Present | 180 |
| IV. Ilse Tielsch’s <i>Zerstörung der Bilder</i> (1991) and the “Refugee/Expellee Gaze” | 185 |
| V. The Second Generation: Karl-Markus Gauß | 196 |
| VI. Karl-Markus Gauß’ Approach to “Flight and Expulsion” | 201 |
| VII. Looking Past Familial Past: Karl-Markus Gauß and the Postmemorial Gaze | 207 |
| | |
| CONCLUSION | 213 |
| | |
| BIBLIOGRAPHY | 218 |

LIST OF FIGURES

| | |
|--|----|
| Figure 1. Landesgedächtnisstätte Kreuzbergkirche (Gate), Klagenfurt, Austria..... | 6 |
| Figure 2. Landesgedächtnisstätte Kreuzbergkirche, Klagenfurt, Austria..... | 7 |
| Figure 3. Flyer advertising German-speaking refugee exhibit showcasing their cultural contributions..... | 38 |
| Figure 4. Report on German-speaking refugee exhibit showcasing their cultural contributions..... | 40 |
| Figure 5. Map of postwar “expellee” pilgrimage sites, as per Georg Schroubek’s 1968 study..... | 51 |
| Figure 6. Topographical plotting of German-speaking refugee monuments (excluding museums and Heimatstuben), as per the VLÖ’s 2006 published list | 51 |
| Figure 7. Copy of the Maria Trost Madonna in the Schöneben Heimatvertriebenenkirche..... | 53 |
| Figure 8. Label describing the history of the painting in Figure 7..... | 53 |
| Figure 9. Protestant church of the Transylvanian Saxon community in Seewalchen a. A. / Rosenau, Austria..... | 53 |
| Figure 10. Stained glass window depicting “flight and expulsion” in Protestant church in Figure 9..... | 53 |
| Figure 11. The Pieta in the Maria Taferl pilgrimage church, copper plate, 1850..... | 58 |
| Figure 12. The first station with the steps along the path of repentance [Bußweg] to Maria Taferl..... | 58 |
| Figure 13. The interior of the <i>Landesehrenmal</i> at Maria Taferl, or the fifth station (Stabat Mater)..... | 60 |
| Figure 14. The Second Station of the Seven Sorrows of Mary in Maria Taferl | 65 |
| Figure 15. “Nimm das Knäblein und seine Mutter, fliehe nach Ägypten ‘Matth. 2, 13’ ” | 65 |
| Figure 16. The exterior of the <i>Landesehrenmal</i> at Maria Taferl, or the fifth station (Stabat Mater)..... | 68 |

| | |
|--|----|
| Figure 17. Dedication plaques with the coat of arms of Austrian military, law enforcement, Austrian Red Cross and the town of Maria Taferl..... | 68 |
| Figure 18. Dedication plaques with the Fifth Station of the <i>Seven Sorrows</i> or <i>Stabat Mater</i> | 68 |
| Figure 19. Station I: “Den Unschuldigen zum Tode Verurteilten” | 72 |
| Figure 20. Extra Station at Gethsemane: “Den Verratenen und Enttäuschten” | 72 |
| Figure 21. Station 10: Jesus is Stripped of His Garments | 76 |
| Figure 22. Station 11: Jesus is Nailed to the Cross | 76 |
| Figure 23. Memorial chapel with dedication: “1914-1919, 1939-1945. Ehrung den Toten, Mahnung den Lebenden” | 77 |
| Figure 24. Altar in memorial chapel with Totenbuch and mosaic of the risen Christ as extra Station | 77 |
| Figure 25. Anterior entrance to Kreuzbergl regional memorial site | 78 |
| Figure 26. Crucified Christ at summit of Calvary hill behind the Kreuzberglkirche..... | 78 |
| Figure 27. Plaque dedicated in memory of the “expellee” pilgrimages of the Southern Moravians to Maria Dreieichen | 85 |
| Figure 28. Maria Dreieichen pilgrimage church, near Horn, Lower Austria | 85 |
| Figure 29. Adolf Günther, Untitled 1963 | 88 |
| Figure 30. Crown of Thorns made of barbed wire with the Austrian and Hohenfurth colors... | 88 |
| Figure 31. Stairs leading down to the Hohenfurth Madonna “Maria Rast am Stein” | 88 |
| Figure 32. Copy of the Hohenfurth Madonna at the former pilgrimage site “Maria Rast am Stein” | 88 |
| Figure 33. Photo of the 100th Anniversary of Maria Rast am Stein in 1988 | 89 |
| Figure 34. Former pilgrimage site “Maria Rast am Stein” by Hohenfurth..... | 90 |
| Figure 35. Photos (3) of the 100th Anniversary of Maria Rast am Stein in 1988..... | 90 |
| Figure 36. Neu Maria Schnee Shrine on Hiltchnerberg with “Blick in die Heimat” and arrow directing viewer towards Maria Schnee..... | 93 |

| | |
|--|-----|
| Figure 37. Seating for mass and mediation by the Maria Schnee Madonna | 93 |
| Figure 38. Copy of Maria Schnee Madonna at Neu Maria Schnee on Hiltzschnenberg, Leopoldschlag..... | 93 |
| Figure 39. Maria Schnee Neu pilgrimage church | 94 |
| Figure 40. Votive offerings surrounding the German-speaking refugees’ copy of the “Holy Stone” (Heliger Stein/Svatý Kámen)..... | 94 |
| Figure 41. The original Heliger Stein/Svatý Kámen with new, post-Cold War votive offerings | 95 |
| Figure 42. Close up of Madonna in Figure 41 | 95 |
| Figure 43. Klemensgemeinde’s 1956 dedication ceremony of their pilgrimage site and memorial at Mandelstein | 101 |
| Figure 44. Klemensgemeinde’s 1956 dedication ceremony of their pilgrimage site and memorial at Mandelstein, including “Blick in die Heimat” | 101 |
| Figure 45. Klemensgemeinde’s 1956 dedication ceremony of their pilgrimage site and memorial at Mandelstein, including Catholic mass and political rally | 101 |
| Figure 46. The renovated, post-Cold War Mandelstein memorial..... | 107 |
| Figure 47. The memorial chapel at Mandelstein in 2019 | 108 |
| Figure 48. EU funded signage at Mandelstein | 108 |
| Figure 49. Viewing platform with “Blick in die Heimat” | 108 |
| Figure 50. Kleinschweinbarth German-speaking refugee memorial..... | 109 |
| Figure 51. “Blick in die Heimat” with signage | 109 |
| Figure 52. Path to main altar at Kleinschweinbarth | 109 |
| Figure 53. Seating below the altar at Kleinschweinbarth | 109 |
| Figure 54. Cleaning of the Braunsberg memorial, 1989 | 111 |
| Figure 55. Top of the Braunsberg memorial in 2019 | 111 |
| Figure 56. Braunsberg memorial (rear) | 111 |

| | |
|---|-----|
| Figure 57. Braunsberg memorial (front)..... | 111 |
| Figure 58. Braunsberg memorial at distance | 111 |
| Figure 59. “Blick in die Heimat” from Braunsberg memorial..... | 111 |
| Figure 60. Broken German-speaking refugee memorial in Linz, May 2010..... | 113 |
| Figure 61. Defaced German-speaking refugee memorial in Linz, October 2013..... | 113 |
| Figure 62. Vandalized German-speaking refugee memorial in Linz, September 2018 | 113 |
| Figure 63. The memorial on the Linzer Nebelungenbrücke during my visit in May 2019..... | 113 |
| Figure 64. Deutsch-Untersteirer memorial at Graz castle with southwardly view of the Untersteiermark | 117 |
| Figure 65. Flyer advertising Hans Naderer’s 1949 play, “Volk am Kreuz”..... | 130 |

LIST OF TABLES

| | |
|---|----|
| Table 1. Stations of the Cross at the Kreuzbergkirche in Klagenfurt | 75 |
|---|----|

PREFACE: NOTE ON LANGUAGE USE

This dissertation examines the memory of German-speaking refugees and expellees in postwar Austria. These German-speaking refugees either (1) were resettled into Austria by the Third Reich, (2) fled from their homes at the war's close, or (3) were expelled to Austria following the Second World War from the various interwar nation states carved out of the remains of the Hapsburg Monarchy after the First World War. The regions from which these German speakers hailed were historically multilingual and multiethnic. Writing about these German speakers in a way that does not privilege a nationalist frame of reference or does not essentialize their race or ethnicity unfortunately lends itself to unwieldy formulations. While the postwar Austrian government simply referred to these refugees as “Volksdeutsche” (ethnic Germans)—in contrast to those they called “Reichsdeutsche” (i.e. those from the territory of Germany living in Austria)—many of these refugees did not identify primarily as German. Some even rejected the term, recasting themselves instead as “Altösterreicher” (Old Austrians) or preferring a more local designation such as Böhmerwälder (Bohemian Forest dwellers), Danube Swabians, or even Apatiner (a Danube Swabian town). Referring to these people collectively as expellees, as is common in the German and English language scholarship, would also be historically inaccurate and arguably problematic. Instead, I refer to these peoples as German-speaking refugees or German-speaking Altösterreicher. Even though this cumbersome practice still conceals and exoticizes multilingualism, I agree with Pieter Judson, historian of Hapsburg Austria, that this practice is the best route as it challenges normative assumptions that people have authentic national or ethnic identities.¹

¹ See Judson, “When Is a Diaspora Not a Diaspora?”. Cf. Judson’s introduction to his monograph *Guardians of the Nation: Activists on the Language Frontiers of Imperial Austria*.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

At the end of the Second World War about 600,000 German-speaking refugees and expellees, hailing mostly from neighboring countries in Southeastern Europe, found refuge in the territory of Austria. While some were repatriated to Germany, others continued to arrive throughout the late 1940s, particularly from Yugoslavia. When the Allies stopped repatriating these so-called “ethnic Germans” (Volksdeutsche) to Germany and closed the border in October 1946, some 300,000 to 400,000 remained in Austria, making up about five percent of Austria’s postwar population.² Although these numbers pale in comparison to the 8 million German-speaking refugees from Eastern Europe in West Germany (about 16 percent of the postwar population there) and the 4 million in East Germany (about 25 percent of the local postwar population),³ the lesser-told story of the Austrian case provides insight into the Second Republic’s relationship to its Nazi and Austro-Hungarian past as well as the nature of Austrian national identity and belonging to the Austrian body politic.⁴

Today, nearly 75 years since these events took place, the historical facts of “flight and expulsion” are hardly common knowledge in Austria. Nonetheless, this dissertation seeks to investigate the extent to which memories of “flight and expulsion” are embedded in Austrian cultural memory. Even if not a mainstream or hegemonic discourse, where can memorial traces be found and in which medial carriers? To that end, this introductory chapter will begin by staking out the bounds of the memory of German-speaking refugees and expellees in Austria. It

² See Radspieler, 55.

³ See Stickler, 418-420.

⁴ In this sense, I concur with American historian Tara Zahra’s assessment that “...the lesser told story of reception of German expellees in postwar Austria sits at the juncture of several critical debates about the nature of Austrian and German nationalism, the relationship of Austrians and Volksdeutsche to the Nazi and Austro-Hungarian past, and emerging regimes of human rights, migration, and citizenship in postwar Europe.” See Zahra, ““Prisoners of the Postwar.”” 192.

will thus demonstrate that this memory is not a mainstream discourse and does not belong to Austrian national memory (in contrast to the situation in Germany). Despite the relatively marginalized position of the discourse, I argue that the reception and treatment of “flight and expulsion” in Austria reveals much about not only the German-speaking refugees and expellees but also about mainstream Austrian memory culture. Indeed, analyzing the interconnections between marginalized and hegemonic Austrian memory vis-à-vis German-speaking refugees and expellees is central to my approach in each of the four main chapters of this dissertation.

The examination of memorials and literature in Chapters 2-5 show how relatively marginalized the memory of “flight and expulsion” has remained throughout the history of the Second Republic. This introductory chapter provides crucial theoretical and historical background for those case studies. It begins with a theoretical discussion of approaches to memory studies with an emphasis on notions of political memory and the dynamics of memory. Drawing on Austrian political scientist Oliver Marchart’s concept of historical-political memory, I show how the memory of German-speaking refugees and expellees in Austria can be thought of as a “memory of dismissal” and an existential threat to Austrian sovereignty. The final section of the introduction provides the historical background of German-speaking refugees in Austria and posits four main reasons why the memory of “flight and expulsion” never gained currency in Austria as it did in Germany.⁵ In sum, the introduction’s brief historiography of the scholarship⁶ reveals the gap between the vast cultural memory of the German-speaking refugees and expellees in Austria on the one hand, and the dearth of scholarship dealing with the subject on the other. This dissertation sees itself as an attempt to bridge that gap by drawing attention to the

⁵ See pages 26-41.

⁶ See pages 9-10.

politically constructed nature of this divide and by deconstructing the myth of the successful integration of German-speaking refugees and expellees in Austria.

I. “Flight and Expulsion”: A National Memory?

French historian Pierre Nora’s concept of “lieux de mémoire” (sites of remembrance) has provided the field of memory studies an influential methodology for thinking about the “...crystallization points of collective memory and identity, outlasting generations.”⁷ These sites of memory are not necessarily places but may also refer to objects or concepts that hold significance for collective memory. As such, they represent a sort of symbolic national history. Yet, in doing so, Nora’s approach has been criticized for essentially establishing a national canon of memory and “functionalizing memory for the purpose of establishing national identity.”⁸ This critique reveals the tension between the attempt, on the one hand, to identify supposedly preexisting national sites of memory with the effect, on the other, of thereby constructing a national canon that excludes marginalized or non-hegemonic memories.⁹ Nonetheless, the approach has proven itself effective and has been exported to Germany, the Netherlands, Spain, Italy, Austria, etc.¹⁰

For instance, in the 2001 German edition, *Deutsche Erinnerungsorte*, Eva and Hans Henning Hahn argue that “hardly any other collective memory has been tended to and cared for as ‘flight and expulsion’ ... ‘flight and expulsion’ can be documented in German postwar history

⁷ See Francois and Schulze, 18. Cf. Nora, 7.

⁸ Csaky, Moritz 2002 as cited in Uhl 2010, 83.

⁹ One solution to the nationalizing critique is the innovative application of the methodology to transnational memory, as in the massive five-volume *Deutsch-Polnische Erinnerungsorte* project, edited by Hans Henning Hahn and Robert Traba.

¹⁰ For a comparison of the application of the approaches in different countries and languages see Boer, “Loci Memoriae - Lieux de Mémoire.”

as a lieux de mémoire par excellence...”¹¹ And indeed, leaning on the Assmanns’ conception of cultural memory, in 2015 the historians Stephan Scholz, Maren Röger and Bill Niven edited a handbook of medial carriers and cultural practices detailing the memory of “flight and expulsion” in media varying from literature to stamps and memorials.

In Austria on the other hand, there is no mention of “flight and expulsion” or German-speaking refugees at all in *Memoria Austriae*, the Austrian version of Pierra Nora’s sites of memory. In fact, in a 2005 article Austrian historian Heidemarie Uhl argued that unlike in Germany there has been no post-Cold War return of the discourse in Austria and she considers the discourse of “flight and expulsion” in Austria to exist only on the far right.¹² Similarly, in Austria’s newly opened national museum, *Haus der Geschichte Österreich: 1918-2018*, the history of “flight and expulsion” has been reduced to a sentence in a pull-out drawer and can be easily missed entirely.¹³ At the end of a paragraph describing the Nazi “Heim ins Reich” program whereby “ethnic Germans” were resettled to (primarily) newly conquered territories during the Second World War, one reads the sentence: “Towards the end of the Second World War, many [“ethnic Germans”] fled the advance of the Red Army or were driven out – along with the prewar German speaking population.” No numbers or further context for the situation in Austria is provided. Indeed, the memory of “flight and expulsion” of the about 300,000-400,000 German-speaking refugees that remained in Austria is allotted much less discursive space and is

¹¹ See François and Schulze, *Deutsche Erinnerungsorte*. 335.

¹² See Uhl, “Der gegenwärtige Ort von ‘Flucht und Vertreibung’ im deutschen und österreichischen Gedächtnisdiskurs,” 166. “Im Unterschied zur deutschen Erinnerungskultur ist allerdings in Österreich kein entsprechendes Äquivalent zur ‚Rückkehr der Erinnerung‘ festzustellen...Im ‚Kampf um die Erinnerung‘ ist der Hinweis auf die ‚eigenen Opfer‘ bzw. auf die Verbrechen der ‚anderen‘ (und damit auf ‚Flucht und Vertreibung‘) ebenso wie in Deutschland ein geschichtspolitisches Thema, es ist aber ein Randthema geblieben, das vor allem für den ‚rechten‘ Aufrechnungsdiskurs charakteristisch ist.“

¹³ In fact, on my first visit to the *Haus der Geschichte Österreich*, I was unable to find any mention of the “flight and expulsion” of German-speaking refugees in Austria – despite the fact that I was looking for it. Only after combing through the exhibit in more detail on my second and third visits was I able to find the brief mention.

less visible than the 180,000 Hungarian refugees in 1956/57 which later became a mythic symbol for Austrian neutrality and altruism vis-à-vis refugees.¹⁴ Clearly then, as these examples illustrate, the memory of “flight and expulsion” is not a discourse that belongs to Austrian national memory as is the case in Germany.



Figure 1. Landesgedächtnisstätte Kreuzbergkirche (Gate), Klagenfurt, Austria. Photo from Wikipedia.

II. Uncovering Memorial Traces of “Flight and Expulsion” in Austria

Built between 1954 and 1959, the Carinthian provincial memorial site (Landesgedächtnisstätte) in Klagenfurt is located on a hill overlooking the region’s capital city. On the gates to the memorial site are the words “provincial-mem-ory-site” (one word: “Landes-

¹⁴ For the myth of successful Austrian refugee politics see Volf, “Der Politische Flüchtling als Symbol der Zweiten Republik: Zur Asyl- und Flüchtlingspolitik seit 1945.”

Gedächtnisstätte” in German) split into their bisyllabic morphemes on four iron frames.¹⁵ The outer frame with the words “provincial” and “site” are grounded and immobile, whereas the inner two gates with the word “memory” swings outward upon opening. This construction is an apt metaphor for the state of Austria’s ambivalent, contradictory and divided memory culture in the late 1950s and early 1960s, which was the heyday of the populist counternarrative to Austria’s official narrative as the “first victim of Hitlerite aggression.” This memorial, like the regional memorial sites in Styria and Lower Austria analyzed by Heidemarie Uhl,¹⁶ depicts the Austrian body politic as victim of the Second World War (specifically, the war against Nazism) but in this case in the form of a passion narrative with various groups, including German-speaking refugees and expellees, representing different stations of the cross.¹⁷



Figure 2. Landesgedächtnisstätte Kreuzbergkirche, Klagenfurt, Austria. Photo from Wikipedia.

¹⁵ The exact distribution of the letters varies depending on which gate you enter. Whereas the main gate is as described above - “Landes-gedächtnis-stätte” - some of the other side gates include the “s” in the second syllable, i.e. “Landes-gedächtnis.stätte” as shown in Figure 1.

¹⁶ See Uhl, “Of Heroes and Victims: World War II in Austrian Memory.”

¹⁷ This memorial will be analyzed in more detail in Chapter 1.

Arguably, the bifurcation of the word “memory” on the gates reflects the “double speak”¹⁸ of Austrian national politicians at the time, who would proclaim Austria’s status as victim of National Socialism on the international stage and then, at the same time, pay lip service to the Austrian (Nazi) soldier heroes at the unveiling ceremonies of memorials. Moreover, the gates’ physicality and need for engagement before opening portray the necessary and constant medial (re)actualization of memory, while the fact that the word “memory” moves at all points to the dynamics of memory and the ability of one discursive construction of the past to overlap with or move past another and become hegemonic. While studies of collective memory often focus on the dominant, hegemonic discourse, some of the most insightful investigate the relationships, ambivalences, and contradictions between competing discourses or counternarratives to the hegemonic conception of the past and thereby highlight the contingent nature of collective memory. The structural reasons why they failed tell us much about the path taken. Indeed, in the context of Austrian memorial culture, Viennese political scientist Oliver Marchart has argued that in order to understand a certain memory, one cannot view it in isolation, but must analyze the larger strategic field, in which it intervenes.¹⁹ In this manner, and following in the tradition of Heidemarie Uhl’s seminal study of Austrian memory culture, the following dissertation focuses on an understudied, alternative discourse to the mainstream, namely the memory of the “flight and expulsion” of German-speaking refugees from Southeastern Europe in Austria.

¹⁸ See Uhl, “From Victim Myth to Co-Responsibility Thesis: Nazi Rule, World War II, and the Holocaust in Austrian Memory,” 53.

¹⁹ “Um einen bestimmten Text zu verstehen, kann man ihn nicht in Isolation betrachten (oder in Bezug auf angebliche Realereignisse), sondern muss das breitere strategische Feld analysieren, in das er interviiert.“ See Marchart, “Das historisch-politische Gedächtnis: für eine politische Theorie kollektiver Erinnerung,” 67.

III. Locating Peripheral, Counter-Hegemonic Memory

In her annotated bibliography of the scholarship dealing with “the refugee and expellee problem in Germany, Austria and Switzerland” published in 1989, Gertrud Krallert-Sattler lists over 4000 titles, from multivolume works to short articles, reports and dissertations. In contrast to the well over 3000 works that deal with the situation in Germany, she references only seven studies that provide an overview of the situation in Austria [Gesamtdarstellungen],²⁰ as well as an additional three overviews of the specific situation of the “ethnic Germans” in Austria.²¹ Beyond this are a few dozen sources that deal with specific themes and topics that she organizes into the following subsections: legal status and law, statistics, the role of the Church and other voluntary aid organizations, the organization of the “ethnic Germans,” and their cultural life, as well as titles that concentrate on specific regional ethnic groups.²²

Looking at the English and German language scholarship from 1945 until the present, about 18 chapters, articles or books have been published that deal with postwar German-speaking refugees in Austria holistically. The distribution of about two per decade since the 1950s has been fairly consistent. The vast majority of scholarship on the subject has been written in German with the only published work in English being Tony Radspieler’s 1955 published dissertation *The Ethnic German Refugee in Austria: 1945-1955*.²³ In contrast to this small number of published works there are more than two dozen unpublished theses and dissertations

²⁰ Krallert-Sattler, *Kommentierte Bibliographie zum Flüchtlings- und Vertriebenenproblem in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, in Österreich und in der Schweiz.*, 757-761.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 768-769.

²² Among the specific regional ethnic groups in Austria that receive academic treatment, Krallert-Sattler lists the Südtiroler, Kanaltaler, Gottscheer, Bukowina, Donauschwaben, Siebenburger Sachsen and Sudetendeutschen. 798-822.

²³ This is excluding two more recent articles by historians Tara Zahra and Robert Knight that deal with ethnic German refugees in the larger context of postwar displaced persons in Austria, national construction and “hierarchies of empathy.” See Zahra “ ‘Prisoners of the Postwar.’ ” Cf. Knight, “National Construction Work and Hierarchies of Empathy in Postwar Austria.”

from the University of Vienna alone that deal with the subject,²⁴ indicating more interest in the topic than published research suggests.

In terms of published research,²⁵ publications during the 1950s and 1960s tend to view the “problem” of German-speaking refugees in Austria as an ongoing crisis in need of solving, whereas by the 1970s even works published by the refugees themselves²⁶ were declaring that the “Austrian refugee problem” had been “solved.”²⁷ Only in the 1980s and 90s did the scholarship turn to questions of integration beyond legal and economic hardship and investigate the social and psychological implications of “flight and expulsion.” In fact, only Scheuringer’s 1983 published postdoctoral thesis (Habilitation) focused on the social and psychological consequences, whereas sociologist Gabrielle Stieber’s work still foregrounds economics and frames the issue as a “problem solved,” contributing to the myth of successful integration. Since the turn of the century, the limited English language scholarship has tended to examine German-speaking refugees in Austria not in isolation, but within the larger context of displaced persons in postwar Austria, pointing out that despite discrimination at the hands of locals, “ethnic Germans” were still at the top of a “hierarchy of empathy” of displaced persons, which also included Jews and forced laborers. However, this approach is hardly novel and quite typical of analyses of the “Austrian refugee problem” by international scholars during the 1950s and 60s.²⁸

²⁴ Although most dissertations are publicly available, theses are usually not. Moreover, older dissertations and theses are typically not digitalized and often only exist as a single copy in the university archive or library, limiting their impact beyond that University.

²⁵ This excludes specialized studies that deal with specific questions, ethnic groups or subsets of the overall situation.

²⁶ See above all the *Donauschwäbische Beiträge* edited and coordinated by the A.K Gauß Stiftung in Salzburg.

²⁷ Common examples of “solving the crisis” referred to in this scholarship are, for example: the legal right to work in Austria, the opportunity to declare Austrian citizenship (i.e. 1954 Optionsgesetz), and the “Raus aus den Baracken” programs of the 1960s that provided the German-speaking refugees with financial support in finding a permanent residence.

²⁸ See, for example, Stedingk, *Die Organisation des Flüchtlingswesens in Österreich seit dem Zweiten Weltkrieg*. Frings, *Das internationale Flüchtlingsproblem 1919-1950*. Schließleder, “Das Österreichische Flüchtlingsproblem (Versuch eines Überblicks).” But above all see the publications of the European Association for Study of Refugee Problems headquartered in Vaduz.

In contrast to the limited scholarship on the subject, are the experiences, memories, and medial carriers of the over 300,000 German-speaking refugees and their descendants who have recorded, passed down, and inscribed their memories and postmemories into the fabric of Austria's cultural memory, however marginally situated vis-à-vis Austrian national memory. At this critical juncture of the passing of communicative memory to cultural memory,²⁹ the particular memory of German-speaking refugees in Austria exists in a variety of medial forms. As part of this dissertation, I have identified over 100 local monuments and memorials in addition to works of literature from both German-speaking refugees themselves as well as their descendants. These memorial traces of the memory of "flight and expulsion" exist in the public sphere but are often overlooked, marginalized and peripheral or limited in their reception. Examining the discursive and narrative strategies of these works and how they position issues of identity, belonging, victimhood, and responsibility vis-à-vis the Second World War, the Nazi and Austro-Hungarian past and the Second Republic is the major aim of this dissertation. Moreover, analyzing the reception and discursive actualization of these works of memory is the second critical step of the dissertation and serves to better understand the place of these works of memory in Austria's larger memory culture.

By identifying the medial carriers of the memory of "flight and expulsion" in the forms of monuments and works of literature that exist in the public sphere, this dissertation seems, at first glance, to provide physical evidence that refutes the claim made by the prominent Austrian journalist Barbara Coudenhove-Kalergi regarding the tabooization of the memory.³⁰ Indeed,

²⁹ Communicative memory refers to lived memory that can still be discussed orally and usually lasts about 3 or 4 generations or 90 years. Cultural memory on the other hand, refers to memory that has been retained in storage media. See Assmann, *Shadows of Trauma*.

³⁰ In a conference publication dealing with the question of the Beneš Decrees, Barbara Coudenhove-Kalergi argues that the topic was taboo in Austria as it was an embarrassing reminder of a shared past with Nazi Germany that was only discussed by the Sudetendeutsche Landmannschaft in Austria. See Coudenhove-Kalergi, *Die Beneš-Dekrete*.

similar claims regarding tabooization were made by journalists in Germany, particularly in the reception of Günter Grass' novel *Im Krebsgang* (2002), which was seen as breaking a taboo on highlighting German (“expellee”) victimhood. Likewise, German media also declared historian Andreas Kossert's *Kalte Heimat* (2008) to be taboo-breaking, although his book only claimed the memory of “flight and expulsion” to be taboo in East Germany.³¹ The polemical and slipshod use of the term “taboo” has been perhaps useful for the media in gaining attention and marketing books on the topic, but it is also vague and misleading. Some scholars have made sloppy use of the term as well, although the scholarship on the subject is actually in agreement over relative shifts of the discourse in and out of the mainstream.³² Even pointedly titled works such as that of Manfred Kittel's *Vertreibung der Vertriebenen?* only ever observed a shift in the discourse of “flight and expulsion” from the mainstream during the Adenauer era to its displacement by the Holocaust discourse during the era of Ostpolitik in the 1960s and 70s. Still, despite the lack of scholarly argument to the contrary, some scholars felt compelled to disprove the taboo claim by drawing on myriad examples of medial carriers of cultural memory. Stephan Scholz, for example, has repeatedly argued that the over 1500 local “expellee” monuments in Germany prove that the memory of “flight and expulsion” was anything but taboo, yet does so without ever defining the meaning of the term “taboo.” Rather than add clarity, this non-debate belies an undertheorized conceptualization of the intersection of politics and culture in memory studies, in which key terms such as “tabooization”, “politics of memory” (Erinnerungs- bzw.

³¹ See Mathias Beer's review of Kossert's book. Beer, Review of *Kalte Heimat. Die Geschichte der deutschen Vertriebenen nach 1945*, by Kossert, Andreas. *H-Soz-Kult.*, February 20, 2009. <http://www.hsozkult.de/publicationreview/id/rezbuecher-10718>.

³² See Lotz, *Die Deutung des Verlusts*. “Nun wird niemand ernsthaft bestreiten, dass Flucht und Vertreibung ebenso wie die Geschichte der Ostgebiete in Ost und West verschieden sowie im Verlauf der Zeit mit unterschiedlicher Intensität behandelt wurden. Ebenso ist sich die Forschung einig, dass das Thema Vertreibung kontrovers in und zwischen Ost und West debattiert wurde (und wird). Es gilt also differenziert herauszuarbeiten, was genau, zu welcher Zeit, wie thematisiert wurde und wie sich Gegnerschaften in den Kontroversen entwickelten,” 14.

Geschichtspolitik), “political instrumentalization”, “repression” (Verdrängung), and censorship are often used interchangeably or in a poorly defined manner. In this way, some scholars have missed the opportunity for more theoretical rigor and instead debated past one another.³³

IV. “Flight and Expulsion”: A Political Memory?

The Austrian political scientist Oliver Marchart has developed an approach to memory studies he has branded “historical-political memory.” He describes his novel approach as an attempt to bridge the gap between Anglo-American Cultural Studies approaches to memory studies that “...provide ways of thinking, strategies for survival, and resources for resistance of the marginalized” on the one hand and German Kulturwissenschaften approaches, on the other, that “...cool rather than ignite, ward off rather than encourage political action.”³⁴ More concretely in the context of this dissertation, Marchart’s approach can also be used to: (1) assist in providing a theoretical framework to ground what I have termed the “non-debate” on tabooization of the memory of “flight and expulsion” while simultaneously (2) also helping to resolve the tension that I have identified in the Austrian case between the plethora of primary sources (or medial carriers of the particular memory of “flight and expulsion,” such as monuments, literature and film) on the one hand, and the dearth of scholarship dealing with “flight and expulsion” in Austria on the other. According to Marchart:

[W]as manchmal ‘Tabuisierung’ genannt wird, ist Funktionsmoment jedes politischen Diskurses, der seine hegemoniale Stellung nur über die zeitweise Relegierung anderer Diskurse ins Udenkbare erringen kann. In diesem Sinn können tatsächlich Diskurse ebenso wie bislang Tabuisiertes wechselseitig aufeinander wirken, da das Tabuisierte nämlich selbst ebenfalls ein Diskurs ist, wenn auch ein effektiv marginalisierter.³⁵

³³ For a more detailed discussion of the “tabooization” debate and an example of scholars debating past one another, see pgs. 46-49.

³⁴ Marchart, “Das historisch-politische Gedächtnis: für eine politische Theorie kollektiver Erinnerung.” 43-44.

³⁵ Ibid., 55.

In other words, the tabooization of memory is not the complete banning of a discourse from the public sphere, but rather its relative marginalization vis-à-vis the hegemonic discourse. This process can occur, according to Marchart, through three differing discursive strategies of negation: (1) repression [Verdrängung], (2) denial or disavowal [Verleugnung], (3) dismissal [Verwerfung]. While denial or disavowal (Verleugnung) calls out the tabooed discourse by name (even if coding it as non-existent) and thus maintains the discourse in the public sphere (and potentially in collective memory), repression (Verdrängung) may not even respond to the competing, tabooed discourse or it may overwrite it with a “discourse of silence.”³⁶ As such, during the process of repression, another unrelated discursive construction replaces that which is the object of the repression. This can occur through the ritualized repetition of “distraction discourses” (Ablenkungsdiskurse) or by simply withholding any reaction whatsoever. In this manner, Marchart argues that the negating discursive strategies of repression and denial can have an implicit dialectical relationship with discourses that offer a declaration of commitment (Bekanntnisdiskurse). For instance, the declaration of commitment to a heroic moment of the national past can serve to repress a competing discourse of national or social critique.³⁷ Finally, the third strategy of dismissal is actually “neither negative, nor a strategy” as nothing is actively negated but rather the subject sees its own existence as existentially threatened by the tabooed discourse.³⁸ “In contrast to repression and denial, dismissal does not refer to specific discursive content but rather the existential conditions of a discourse, society or identity itself. In other words, that which is removed from view by a certain hegemonic formation through dismissal are

³⁶ Ibid., 56.

³⁷ One such example in contemporary US politics (not mentioned by Marchart) could be President Trump’s insistence on the demonstration of national pride by standing (rather than kneeling) within the context of the debate over NFL players kneeling (instead of standing) during the playing of the national anthem.

³⁸ Marchart, 60-61.

the existential conditions of the hegemonic discourse's own position."³⁹ Thus, dismissal does not repress any specific content but rather another discourse upon whose absence the hegemonic discourse itself relies.⁴⁰

Marchart's framework of historical-political memory and description of three discursive strategies of tabooization help in analyzing the dynamics of collective memory vis-à-vis the memory of "flight and expulsion" in Austria. Especially when describing the reception of a relatively marginalized memory, Marchart's framework allows for a more nuanced description of the dynamics of collective memory, the relationship between minority and hegemonic memories and their functionalization as rhetorical strategies of tabooization. In fact, the final section of this chapter will demonstrate how Marchart's rhetorical strategy of "dismissal" can be effectively applied to the case of German-speaking refugees in postwar Austria.

Marchart takes a Gramscian approach to collective memory, describing his theory of collective memory as political discourses that compete for hegemony. Drawing on a spatial metaphor from plate tectonics, Marchart defines the collective memory of a society as "the sedimentary ensemble of hegemonic discourses of the past, whose contingent source as a political construction act has been forgotten but can be reactivated at any moment."⁴¹ For Marchart, all collective memory is inherently political.⁴² Thus what is typically referred to as the politicization of memory in the context of crises or scandals is actually the moment of

³⁹ Ibid., 61. Translation mine.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 61. For example, the memory of German-speaking refugees represented one such memory that had to be "dismissed" in postwar Austria in order for the official victim myth to remain viable, in that German-speaking refugees undermined the distinction with Germany and reminded Austrians of their own culpability. This argument will be further developed in the final section of this chapter.

⁴¹ Ibid., 47. "Das kollektive Gedächtnis einer Gemeinschaft kann aus Sicht dieser Konzeption somit definiert werden: als das sedimentierte Ensemble hegemonialer und damit allgemein weitgehend abrufbarer Vergangenheitsdiskurse, deren kontingenter Ursprung aus einem politischen Konstruktionsakt zwar vergessen wurde, aber jederzeit (qua Antagonisierung) reaktivierbar ist."

⁴² Ibid., 48-49.

“reactivation” or realization of the contingent, political and constructed nature of the memorial discourse.⁴³

For Aleida Assmann, in contrast, political memory is a specific form of collective memory which she associates with the nation and alternatively terms national or political memory.⁴⁴ Although she is perhaps best known for her distinction between social and cultural memory, Assmann also posits the nature of “political/national” memory as distinct from social and cultural memory. Social memory, in Assmann’s framework, refers to biologically mediated memories transmitted via social communication and are limited to the “living” memory of about three generations or 90 years. Cultural memory, in contrast, has no set expiry date as it is symbolically mediated and relies on the material carriers of storage memory supports such as archives, museums, literature and film. Like cultural memory, Assmann considers political memory to be symbolically mediated and not confined to the strictures of living, social memory. Yet, the distinction between political and cultural memory seems much more tenuous and reliant on how the memories are reproduced or functionalized. Assmann argues:

Like national memory, the task of cultural memory is to transmit experiences and knowledge over generations, thereby developing a long-term social memory. However, these different memory formations are distinguished from one another on the basis of how they are reproduced. While political memory achieves its stability through its radically restricted content, its powerful symbolism, its collective rituals, and its normative obligations, cultural memory is dependent upon the formal diversity of texts, images and three-dimensional artefacts....For political memory, these means of acquisition are best celebrated collectively, while individual engagement is crucial for the acquisition of cultural memory....whereas political memory tends toward unity and instrumentalization, cultural memory resists such reductionism due to its media-oriented and material character.⁴⁵

⁴³ Ibid., 49.

⁴⁴ Assmann, *Shadows of Trauma*. 23, 41.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 41.

This distinction between political and cultural memory seems dubious for a number of reasons. Firstly, Assmann herself points out that both political and cultural memory are reliant on storage media and a diversity of material symbolic carriers, such as images, books and museums. Does political memory really use less diverse medial forms than cultural memory? Secondly, Assmann seems to ignore what Marchart terms taboo or marginalized political memory and thereby underestimates the diverse competing political discourses, memories and conceptions of the past that constitute political memory, instead focusing on the push for homogenization and homogeneity within the field of political memory. Thirdly, the tendency of political memory to be actualized collectively in contradistinction to the individual actualization of cultural memory appears highly suspect. Religious rituals, for example, are almost exclusively actualized collectively and are certainly a form of cultural memory but not necessarily national or political. Conversely, political or national memory is not only actualized at collective events like political rallies but could also be actualized on the individual level through reading political literature or propaganda, for example. In sum, Assmann seems to insinuate that cultural memory is more diverse and authentic than political memory, which she associates with myth and homogenization.

I would argue, on the other hand, that political and cultural memory have more in common than Assmann concedes and are in fact not two distinct forms of collective memory. Rather, I see political and cultural memory as overlapping fields of memory and recognize national memory as a uniquely located subset of cultural memory. For the purposes of this dissertation, I define state or national memory as the institutionalized, top-down memory of elites in the mainstream public sphere. In contrast to Assmann's characterization of

“national/political memory” as uniquely mythical,⁴⁶ I contend that all functionalizations of latent storage memory are negotiations between one’s present self and the prevailing zeitgeist on the one hand, and a narrative of the past or an appropriation of history on the other. At least on a personal level, historical narratives of the past are always, in my estimation, appropriated by individuals when latent storage memories are functionalized. On the level of the nation, Marchart describes this mythic appropriation of history, the moment a latent sedimentary memory or narrative of the past is recognized as contingent and political, as the politicization of memory.⁴⁷

Finally, Assmann’s characterization of “national/political” memory as primarily associated with myth and homogenization processes seems to be a dated model of national memory based on the nineteenth-century tradition of nation building. Benedict Anderson has shown how technological advances in print capitalism and the dissemination of ideas through newspapers were crucial to the construction of “imagined communities” and the nation.⁴⁸

Similarly, Alison Landsberg has convincingly demonstrated how the technological advances of the mass media and mass culture in late capitalism has made possible a new form of public cultural memory that she terms “prosthetic memory.”⁴⁹ Prosthetic memories do not belong to a particular group; rather, though the technologies of mass culture, they are readily transportable

⁴⁶ In describing the mythic dimension of “political memory”, Assmann writes: “...in collective memory, mental images turn icons and stories into myths whose most important characteristics are their persuasiveness and their affective force,” 26. Moreover, beyond the falsification of historical facts, Assmann argues myth can, “also mean the form in which history is seen through the lens of identity...myth denotes the affective appropriation of one’s own history...appropriating history in this way can often involve a falsification of that history, but that is not necessarily the case,” 26. Similarly, Marchart recognizes the relationship between identity, myth, and collective memory in his definition of cultural memory as the “construction of the identity of society along its discursive timeline [Zeitachse].”, 46.

⁴⁷ See Marchart, 49. Interestingly, Aleida Assmann also describes the functionalization of cultural memory in geological terms. “We can also speak of such a return when certain elements of an inheritance that have become sedimented in storage memory are illuminated in new ways by present modes of awareness...the conservation or upkeep of the collection is thus only one side of cultural memory. The other side involves rigid criteria of selection, active appraisal, and personal appropriation.” *Shadows of Trauma*, 39.

⁴⁸ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*.

⁴⁹ Landsberg, *Prosthetic Memory*.

and can be acquired by anyone, thereby challenging claims of authenticity or “natural ownership.” In contrast to the nineteenth-century memorial tradition that unified people by constructing a common national identity, prosthetic memories begin from a position of difference and alterity; they do not erase differences or construct common origins. Instead, Landsberg argues, “prosthetic memory creates the conditions for ethical thinking precisely by encouraging people to feel connected to, while recognizing the alterity of, the ‘other.’”⁵⁰ While still inhibited by the “gatekeepers” of memory, prosthetic memory seems to engender the possibility of a postnational memory culture based on respect for difference and responsibility that Assmann’s concept of national/political memory seems not to account for. Assmann’s framework of collective memory is useful for describing the structure of cultural and social memory but less effective in locating national memory or taking into account the role of mass media or the potential of postnational memory.

In conclusion, this discussion of differing conceptions of national and political memory provides theoretical scaffolding for the examination of the marginalized memory of “flight and expulsion” in Austria. It also provides the theoretical tools for effectively describing the rhetorical strategies of its reception. These rhetorical strategies will be further analyzed in the next section dealing with the “dynamics of memory.” Here I draw particularly on Alison Landsberg’s concept of prosthetic memory to consider the ways in which the marginalized and othered memory of German-speaking refugees in Austria can be discursively reframed (particularly in the post-Waldheim era) to promote ethical thinking.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 9.

V. The Dynamics of Memory

Alison Landsberg argues that, broadly speaking, memory has always been about negotiating a relationship to the past. In terms of the dynamics of cultural memory and the construction of a relationship to the past on an individual level, there seem to be at least two modes of acquiring and constructing collective memory. On the one hand are the inherited transgenerational memories⁵¹ or postmemories⁵² that have been handed down in the familial sphere. These postmemories tend to be more private than other forms of collective memory and are transmitted through both “biologically” mediated social memory (i.e. familial memory) and the material supports of cultural memory, such as family photographs or other keepsakes and heirlooms imbued with symbolic meaning. Landsberg argues that this organic, “biological” or hereditary model of memory found its heyday in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, was marked by a fascination with origins and was motivated by some of the same forces driving nationalism.⁵³ On the other hand, there are the more public forms of collective memory, from monuments to museums, literature and magazines to name a few. These medial carriers of cultural memory are newly interpreted and internalized by individuals, but their content has often already been curated by elites: from editors to scholars and politicians. These gatekeepers of memory institutionalize, canonize and safeguard cultural memory from falsification.⁵⁴ More democratic forms of cultural memory, from the local monument of a particular interest group to

⁵¹ See Schwab, *Haunting Legacies*.

⁵² Marianna Hirsch has introduced the term “postmemory” to describe how the memory of the Holocaust generation was passed down to their children. “‘Postmemory’ describes the relationship that the ‘generation after’ bears to the personal, collective, and cultural trauma of those who came before— to experiences they ‘remember’ only by means of the stories, images, and behaviors among which they grew up. But these experiences were transmitted to them so deeply and affectively as to *seem* to constitute memories in their own right. Postmemory’s connection to the past is thus actually mediated not by recall but by imaginative investment, projection, and creation.” See Hirsch, *Generation of Postmemory: Writing and Visual Culture After the Holocaust*, 5.

⁵³ See Landsberg, *Prosthetic Memory*, 7.

⁵⁴ On the other hand, the gatekeepers of memory also play an agenda setting role that excludes certain groups and memories. This could also result in the appropriation of memory for political or other ends.

popular videos on YouTube may allow for a greater diversity of perspectives, but since they have often not been curated or “fact-checked” by elites or institutions, they may also falsify history, spread “fake-news” or present decontextualized, even hateful perspectives.

Among this latter, more public method of constructing cultural memory is Landsberg’s “prosthetic memory.” While in the early twentieth century the Frankfurt School was very concerned with the role of new media in society, current research dealing specifically with new technologies of mass media and digital memory hold a curiously small place in the field of memory studies today. According to the International Memory Studies Association website, of the ongoing research projects at over 60 University centers for memory studies, only one at the University of Leuven in Belgium deals with “digital memory.”⁵⁵ An exception to this general trend, however, is Alison Landsberg’s focus on the technologies of mass culture in late capitalism that permit the dissemination of memories outside the realm of the experience of our ingroup, affording the possibility of counterhegemonic public spheres marked by empathy and understanding. Landsberg takes the cynicism of the Frankfurt School regarding mass media to task, offering a utopian vision, rather than the dystopia of the culture industry. Still, Landsberg is not blind to the pitfalls of mass culture and its atomizing or apoliticizing potential. Instead, she maintains that we must recognize the power of mass cultural technologies. Rather than disdain or ignore mass media for their negative potential, Landsberg chooses to focus on the potential of prosthetic memory for generating empathy and ethical thinking and politics.⁵⁶ Similarly, this

⁵⁵ See <https://www.memorystudiesassociation.org/centers-and-projects/>

⁵⁶ It should be noted that Alison Landsberg published *Prosthetic Memory* in 2004, at a cultural moment when the Internet was still in its infancy and before the network effects of internet giants such as Google and Facebook faced intense criticism for their role in creating echo chambers and widely disseminating “fake news” as in the controversy and investigation into Russian meddling in the 2016 US Presidential election. Rather than focus on the democratizing effects of the internet and mass culture, the emphasis of mainstream reporting and congressional investigations has recently been on the negative effects of network giants on the internet (e.g. their role in destabilizing democracy and the democratic process).

dissertation foregrounds the diverse media of the marginalized, German-speaking refugee memory in Austria. Rather than focus on canonical literature, for example, I argue for the importance of popular literature and its potential to promote ethical thinking through the building of counterhegemonic public spheres that problematize and challenge dominant narratives of the past.

In terms of the adoption of “prosthetic memories” on the individual level, Landsberg argues that mass media construct what she terms “transferential spaces,” where people can enter experiential relationships with events through which they did not live and gain knowledge that would otherwise be difficult to obtain through mere cognitive means. In her analysis of the US Holocaust Memorial Museum, Landsberg argues that it is precisely the affective component of the experience that makes prosthetic memory so powerful:

Certain aspects of the Holocaust are brought into relief by having our agency threatened. For the event to become meaningful enough to retain as a part of our intellectual and emotional archive – the archive on which our future actions might be based – it must be significant on a cognitive level and palpable in an individual, affective way.⁵⁷

Indeed, prosthetic memory can be so powerful in promoting ethical thinking precisely because of these two aspects, namely: the emotive connection and its reflective moment. Along similar lines, in *The Future of Nostalgia*, Svetlana Boym has shown how the emotional connection to the past that nostalgia provides can have both reconstructionist and reflective tendencies and thus be instrumentalized for revisionist political ends on the one hand, while also encouraging empathy and understanding on the other. She terms this latter manifestation of nostalgia “reflective nostalgia,” a form of nostalgia that combines longing and critical thinking.⁵⁸ These observations

⁵⁷ Landsberg, 138.

⁵⁸ Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia*, 55. In her dissertation, “Geopolitical Transformation and Nostalgia: Literary Return Visits to Former East Prussian Homes” Meghan O’Dea has shown how in the “expellee literature” of German-speaking refugees from former East Prussia, these two dimensions of nostalgia do not necessarily exist on a

are of particular relevance for part II of the dissertation that deals with literature and narrative constructions of victimhood and responsibility during the Second World War. In analyzing narrative constructions of the past, the emotive connection and reflective stance of literature is critical in creating “transferential spaces,” generating empathy and understanding, and promoting ethical thinking.

Postmemories inherited by the children of traumatized parents stand in contrast to the critical and reflective stance characteristic of prosthetic memory and reflective nostalgia. Gabriele Schwab describes postmemories as, “fragmentary and shot through with holes and gaps...these children need to patch a history together they have never lived by using whatever props they can find – photographs and stories or letters but also, I would add, silences, grief, rage, despair, or sudden shifts in moods handed down to them by those who bring them up.”⁵⁹ It is then incumbent upon these children to reflect upon and sort through fragmentary and perhaps contradictory postmemories. In this context, literature can play an important and meaningful role as a form of prosthetic memory in creating transferential spaces that challenge and complicate inherited postmemories.

Like Marchart’s three negative discursive strategies of tabooization of collective memory in the public sphere, Assmann highlights five similar strategies of repression that tend to take place in the more private sphere of social memory. While I have been critical of Assmann’s concept of “national memory” and her distinction with cultural memory, I find the discursive strategies of repression that she identifies more productive. Although Germany (unlike Austria) has been forced by the international community to internalize and take responsibility for the

continuum but intersect in complex ways. She argues that, “literary return narratives invite an opportunity to reflect upon the complexity of nostalgia as having multiple potentials: in some cases problematic, but in others as encouraging empathy and understanding,” vi.

⁵⁹ Schwab, *Haunting Legacies*, 14.

Second World War and the Holocaust at the level of politics and collective memory, Assmann argues that five strategies of repression in the more private sphere of social memory help Germans “ease the burden” of taking political responsibility but thus lead to “asymmetries of German memory.”⁶⁰ Indeed, Assmann notes how social memory and familial memory in particular is a highly malleable affair, serving the needs of the moment. “The falsification of personal history takes place under the pressure to adapt to new moral standards...it [social memory] is not very good at reliably transmitting experiences, but it is good at conforming to the constantly changing frameworks of memory.”⁶¹ Aside from falsification, the four remaining strategies of repression that Assmann points to are: silence, erasure, externalization, and offsetting.⁶² Offsetting seems to presume a limited and finite amount of discursive space and a competitive memory framework following the logic of a zero-sum game. In this manner, the strategy of offsetting simply changes the focus from guilt to victimhood as if to “balance the scales” of responsibility. Externalization, on the other hand, refers to the disassociation and displacement of guilt or responsibility from oneself onto another. Rainer Lepsius has shown how at the level of official state politics and collective memory East Germany and Austria externalized German guilt for the Second World War to West Germany. At the individual level or the level of social memory, externalization would mean simply denying responsibility and pointing to others as responsible. Thus, one acknowledges guilt but does not assume personal responsibility. Penultimately, erasure refers to subconscious blind spots (caused perhaps by racism or other prejudice) that lead to errors at the level of perception. Thus, a witness has not

⁶⁰ As already hinted at in the title of the oral history project, “*Opa war kein Nazi*” *Nationalsozialismus und Holocaust im Familiengedächtnis*. two thirds of Germans of the second and third generation privilege familial stories of heroism or victimhood and avoid critical reflections of guilt. The paradox ensues when, at the same time, Germans assume collective responsibility for the Holocaust but deny any personal association or familial legacy of guilt.

⁶¹ Assmann, *Shadows of Trauma*, 152.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 141-51.

necessarily forgotten the mistreatment of his/her neighbor but never noticed or registered it as noteworthy. Finally, silence refers to a complete avoidance of a topic.

Assmann argues that underlying all of these strategies is a desire to dispose of a problematic past.⁶³ Over the course of my dissertation I will ask: do literature or memorials that deal with the memory of “flight and expulsion” of German-speaking refugees in Austria employ these techniques? How are these memories situated in the broader context of Austrian collective memory and how do they negotiate guilt, complicity, and responsibility with victimhood and traumatic loss? To what extent do these media serve as transference spaces for Austrians to gain a better understanding of the Austrian body politic through the lens of a minority perspective? Or do these texts and memorials employ strategies of repression to avoid guilt and complicity, even perhaps inculcating radical perspectives or drawing on restorative nostalgia? How is the memory constructed and how is it received in reviews?

In pursuing answers to these questions, each chapter of this dissertation will focus on differing media and the strategies they employ in negotiating the relationship between guilt and complicity on the one hand and victimhood and innocence on the other. Yet, why focus on the ethical states of guilt and innocence or perpetration and victimhood? It is not the contention of this dissertation that these states are mutually exclusive binaries or even exist on a continuum. Rather, I view discrete scenarios of victimhood or perpetration as existing on a scatter plot of events that makes up an individual’s life experiences. Nonetheless, this scatter plot exists in and is structured by linear time as well as the logic of cause and effect. Thus, to tell the story of “flight and expulsion” in isolation is to only tell half of the story and deny the causal link with the events that preceded it (i.e. the Nazi invasion of Eastern Europe, the Holocaust and Austrian

⁶³ Ibid., 141.

complicity). In this way, I argue that Michael Rothberg's model of multidirectional memory,⁶⁴ in which differing memories of victimhood work together productively through negotiation, cross-referencing, and borrowing, rather than competitively through relative marginalization, is not an appropriate model within the context of the Second World War and the "flight and expulsion" of German-speaking refugees. Unlike the very different contexts of the discrete spatial and temporal events of slavery, colonization and the Holocaust to which Rothberg refers and which can indeed work together productively, "flight and expulsion" maintains a dialectical relationship with the Nazi crimes that preceded it. While on the level of individual experience a Danube Swabian victim of "flight and expulsion" may indeed feel like a victim – and probably more so than his Austrian neighbor – as a European and citizen of the Second Republic, I argue that his or her story should be told within the greater context of Austrian and Danube Swabian complicity with Nazi crimes. Otherwise one runs the risk of being understood as an apologist seeking to offset responsibility and complicity.⁶⁵

VI. Memories of "Dismissal": "Flight and Expulsion" as an Existential Threat to Austrian Sovereignty

As I have shown, Marchart describes "dismissal" in the context of memory discourses as a method of dealing with a tabooed discursive construction of the past that threatens the very existence of the hegemonic discourse. The following section will show how the memory of German-speaking refugees in Austria threatened the postwar consensus that relied on the legalistic definition of Austria as the first victim of Hitlerite aggression. Despite being othered as

⁶⁴ See Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory*.

⁶⁵ Other scholars have also made this point on the question of how to responsibly narrate German victimhood and stories of "flight and expulsion" in the wake of the Holocaust and German responsibility (and Austrian complicity) in the Second World War. See for example, Traba and Żurek, "'Expulsion' or 'Forced Resettlement'? The Polish-German Dispute about Notions and Memory." Bill Niven and Friederike Eigler have also made similar arguments.

Nazi German perpetrators, the claiming of Austrianness (i.e. the designation “Altösterreicher”) by some German-speaking refugees undermined Austria’s distinction from Germany and reminded Austrians of their own complicity. Moreover, the differing domestic and foreign policy contexts of the Cold War in Austria meant that accepting the German-speaking refugees as “expellees” threatened Austria’s path to sovereignty through neutrality. The following section will lay the historical groundwork for the dissertation and explore why “flight and expulsion” has remained a marginalized discourse that has been tabooized and labeled as far-right since the early days of the Second Republic (and even into the present). While this section of the introduction focuses on the history of German-speaking refugees in Austria in the postwar period more generally, the introduction to Part II of the dissertation examines the memory of these events after the Waldheim affair and into the present in more detail.

At a conference in Vienna in 1993, the American historian Norman Naimark declared that, “the history of the expulsion has until today largely been the domain of politics.” He then continued to lament the lack of historical research on the topic and conjecture why there was such a supposed dearth of scholarship on the topic.⁶⁶ While his concern for the lack of research on the subject given the actual mass of scholarship (at least in the German case) may seem misplaced, the connection to politics is certainly not. “Flight and expulsion” has – in a historical sense – always been political, both in Germany and Austria. In fact, Mathias Beer has shown how the German government of the 1950s funded and attempted to politically instrumentalize history to serve foreign policy goals. The Schieder Commission’s enormous project *Dokumentation der Vertreibung* was meant to relativize German guilt through its exclusive focus

⁶⁶ Naimark grounds his reasoning in the difficulty in overcoming the victim/perpetrator dichotomy. Specifically, he points to the difficulty Germans had to think of themselves as victims as well as perpetrators, as well as, according to Naimark, the difficulty Poles and Czechs had to consider themselves perpetrators in addition to victims. As quoted in Streibel, *Flucht und Vertreibung*, 9.

on the “expulsions” of ethnic Germans in order to broker a better peace deal (similar to the way history served politics after the First World War and Versailles).⁶⁷ Indeed, even the term “expellee” itself is a Cold War construct, invented by the US occupying forces in Germany to signify the finality of the expulsions and morally discredit the “expeller states” on the other side of the iron curtain, thereby binding the “expellees” to West Germany and expediting their integration.⁶⁸ Only during the late 1940s following governmental cuing did German-speaking refugees in Germany begin to refer to themselves as “expellees.”

In Austria, on the other hand, there was hardly ever any consensus on what to call the unwanted refugees. At first, the Austrian government insisted on emphasizing their Germanness in order to legitimize their deportation to Germany. While the Austrian Interior Ministry used the term *Volksdeutsche* to differentiate them from the German citizens living in Austria, who were referred to as *Reichsdeutsche*, the German-speaking refugees began to create new labels for themselves to legitimize their stay. Those that chose to emphasize their historic and cultural ties to the former Hapsburg empire referred to themselves as *Altösterreicher*. However, that term also seemed to imply the inclusion of non-German speaking former citizens of the Hapsburg empire (e.g. Czechs, Slovaks, Slovenes, Poles, Hungarians, Romanians, Ukrainians, etc), so other German-speaking refugees preferred the verbose “Altösterreicher deutscher Zunge”, in order to both emphasize their Austrianness and deemphasize their Germanness while still stylizing themselves as native speakers of the local language. Still others such as Austrian Foreign Minister Dr. Lujo Tomic-Sorinj pushed the term *Volksösterreicher* for certain groups of

⁶⁷ “Mit Blick auf die Außenpolitik sollte es einen Beitrag zur deutschen Schuldrelativierung und damit der Schuldminimierung leisten. Mit strenger wissenschaftlicher Objektivität und der ausschließlichen Konzentration auf des Vertreibungsgeschehen glaubte man den völkerrechtlichen Prozeß und damit auch den Friedensvertrag beeinflussen zu können,” 387. Still, Beer argues that the political goals were not completely realized in the end as they were met with resistance from the Schieder Commission. See Beer, “Im Spannungsfeld von Politik Und Zeitgeschichte. Das Großforschungsprojekt ‘Dokumentation der Vertreibung der Deutschen aus Ost-Mitteleuropa’ ”

⁶⁸ See Stickler, *Ostdeutsch heißt Gesamtdeutsch*, 10-11.

ethnic Germans hailing from regions closer to the Austrian border (Untersteirer, Böhmerwälder, Südmährer and Ostburgenländer), that allegedly had closer ties to Austria and were supposedly more ethnically Austrian.⁶⁹ According to advocates of the term *Volksösterreicher* these groups of ethnic Germans were to be prioritized for naturalization over the more distant and German “Volksdeutschen.”⁷⁰ While the term *Volksösterreicher* never gained traction, in reality many of these groups (particularly the “Sudetendeutsche”) did in fact profit from closer familial and political ties to Lower Austria and Vienna and were naturalized more quickly than other groups (such as the Danube Swabians or Transylvanian Saxons).

Despite the problematic history of the term “flight and expulsion,” many scholars, particularly in the German context, continue to use it.⁷¹ In Austria, however, this conceptual inertia has not hung over the limited scholarship on the subject and has thus not led scholars to resign themselves to using historically misleading and politically laden terminology. Taking this opportunity, I will refer to German-speaking refugees⁷² and expellees and only use the term “flight and expulsion” in quotation marks to highlight its problematic history and distinguish it from the more historically accurate four phases of the removal of German-speaking refugees from Eastern Europe during and following the Second World War: resettlement (under the Nazi “Heim ins Reich” program), flight (ahead of the advancing Soviet armies or partisans), expulsion

⁶⁹ See Gauß, A.K. *Wege und Irrwege*. 93-4. See also Tonic-Sorinj, “Volksdeutsche und Volksösterreicher.”

⁷⁰ The reasoning here was that the Volksdeutschen settled the region of their former homes in the much more distant past (e.g. Transylvanian Saxons settled about 800 years ago vs. about 200 for the Danube Swabians), whereas the so-called Volksösterreicher had closer geographic and temporal ties to the Second Austrian Republic.

⁷¹ Friederike Eigler points this out in her review of the scholarship on the subject. She contends, “The term ‘Flucht und Vertreibung’ (flight and expulsion) continues to be widely used in German public and academic discourses as shorthand for a broad and heterogeneous set of historical events.” See Eigler, “Post/Memories of Forced Migration at the End of the Second World War: Novels by Walter Kempowski and Ulrike Draesner,” 170.

⁷² Even the term “ethnic German” is very misleading. A translation from the German “Volksdeutsche,” it references a mythical biological pan-Germanism. Since some of these so-called “ethnic Germans” were originally colonists from Austria (rather than Germany) and many lived in multiethnic, multilingual communities, a better descriptor would be “German-speaking.” See Judson, *Guardians of the Nation*.

(the so-called “wild expulsions” in the German scholarship), and deportation (the more orderly removal of “ethnic Germans” following the Potsdam agreements in August 1945).⁷³

These differences in terminology between Austria and Germany are directly related to differing political conditions and developments in the two countries. Whereas German-speaking refugees were unwanted and unwelcome initially in both countries, in Germany they were politically useful, whereas in Austria they were politically dangerous in their threat to Austrian sovereignty. Does this explain why the issue was massively thematized in Germany, while that was not at all the case in Austria? Answering this question requires a look back at the early days of the Second Republic and could be the subject of comparative historical study. But even in the absence of such research,⁷⁴ at least four reasons stand out to me as relevant background for this project.

The first two reasons lie at the intersection of foreign and domestic policymaking in Austria. In the first decade following the Second World War, both Austria and Germany were divided into four occupation zones by the Allies. Rolf Steininger has shown how the Austrian question was directly tied to the German question on the level of international politics in the developing Cold War.⁷⁵ Until the Austrian State treaty in 1955, foreign and domestic politics were particularly intertwined. Firstly, differing foreign policy concerns in the developing Cold War context dictated the state response to the “ethnic German refugee problem.” While emphasizing the victimhood of “expellees” in West Germany had the stabilizing effect of binding the new republic closer to the Western Allies, it had the opposite effect in Austria. In the fledgling Second Republic, the pan-German nationalist position of accepting “ethnic Germans”

⁷³ See Beer, *Flucht und Vertreibung der Deutschen* and Ther, *Deutsche und polnische Vertriebene*.

⁷⁴ Matthias Stickler has published a book chapter that does provide a brief comparison of the situation in Austria, West- and East Germany. See Stickler, “Vertriebenenintegration in Österreich und Deutschland - ein Vergleich.”

⁷⁵ See Steininger, *Der Staatsvertrag*.

as Austrians (as put forth by the VdU) undermined the distinction with Germany and the official state narrative as “first victim of Nazi aggression.” Indeed, in realpolitik terms accepting responsibility for the German-speaking refugees would either mean (1) accusing the Eastern neighbor states of being “expeller states,” harming relations with them and possibly jeopardizing the path to statehood through neutrality; or (2) accepting (partial) responsibility for the Second World War as the catalyst of the expulsions, which would undermine the distinction with Germany, the official state narrative and the externalization of Nazism to Germany while also implying that the Second Republic was a successor state to the Third Reich. Indeed, various discussions during the cabinet meetings of Karl Renner’s provisional government in the immediate aftermath of the war testify to these foreign policy concerns and, at least in the case of Karl Renner, the hypocritical and strategic Othering of the ethnic Germans as non-Austrian.⁷⁶

The case of Südtirol may shed more light on the foreign policy implications of the “ethnic German question” in the developing Cold War context while also highlight an asymmetry of Austrian memory. The postwar Austrian government was willing to fight for Südtirol⁷⁷ but distanced itself from other groups of “ethnic Germans” whose former homes bordered on the territory of Austria, from the Untersteiermark to Südmähren. Did angering Italy over the Südtirol question represent an easier and less dangerous foreign policy move that was less likely to anger the occupying Allies? While no comparative analysis exists, Rolf Steiniger

⁷⁶ See Enderle-Burcel et al., *Protokolle des Kabinettsrates der Provisorischen Regierung Karl Renner 1945. Volumes I – III*. Following the First World War, Renner, a delegate in the Austrian parliament, professed an eternal connection to the Sudetenland as integral parts of Austria. Less than 30 years later, in 1945 he described the expelled and refugees as a threat and mass criminal invasion. For example, in a cabinet meeting he argued, “Unser Land ist im Augenblick von zwei Seiten bedroht – man kann es nicht anders sagen: vom Südmähren und Südböhmen werden die dortigen Deutschen ausgewiesen. Erst jetzt soll wieder Benesch erklärt haben, er werde sich nicht hindern lassen, alle Deutsche und Magyaren aus der Tschechoslowakei auszuweisen. Es fliehen unzählige tschechoslowakische Staatsbürger deutscher Zunge über unsere Grenze,” 205.

⁷⁷ See Steiniger, Rolf. “1945/46: Südtirol und der Kalte Krieg.” In *Der Staatsvertrag: Österreich im Schatten von deutscher Frage und Kaltem Krieg: 1938-1955*, 63-87.

has argued that no topic since 1945 (with the possible exception of the State Treaty) has moved the Austrians as much as the demand for the return of Südtirol.⁷⁸ Even today, Südtirol remains central to Austrian cultural identity, while the memory of other “ethnic German” groups remains marginalized. Almost every Austrian town has a Südtirolerplatz, whereas attempts to rename parks or squares after other “ethnic German” groups like the “Sudeten Germans” or Danube Swabians are still met with skepticism or outright denied.⁷⁹ In a 1998 survey done in preparation for *Memoria Austriae*, pollsters asked a representative sample of 1000 Austrians, what previously Austrian territories or cities they associate with Austria.⁸⁰ 43 percent of respondents answered Südtirol specifically, 24 percent cited Hungary, and 16 percent Czechia. Other towns such as Trieste were referenced but none of the specific territories from which other “ethnic Germans” hail (aside from Südtirol) were even mentioned.

The connection between foreign and domestic politics with regard to the role of the German-speaking refugees in Austria is perhaps best summed up by Austrian Interior Minister Dr. Alfons Just. At the Conference for Refugee Questions of the Ecumenical Council of Churches [Konferenz für Flüchtlingsfragen des Ökumenischen Rates der Kirchen] at the

⁷⁸ Ibid., 63. “Wohl niemals wieder nach 1945 hat nämlich ein Thema die Österreicher so bewegt – vielleicht mit Ausnahme des Staatsvertrages – wie die Forderung nach Rückkehr Südtirols. Nirgends wird auch so deutlich, welche Rolle der beginnende Kalte Krieg in dieser Frage spielte. Südtirol wurde das erste Opfer dieses Krieges.”

⁷⁹ In 2001, the Wiener Schwabenverein applied for a permit to name an unnamed park on the outskirts of Vienna as Donauschwabenpark. The idea was met with skepticism by the local city leadership due to the “closeness of the Donauschwaben to Hitler Germany” and the project was delayed. Eventually, in 2013 the park opened as Donauschwabenpark but without a monument like the Wiener Schwabenverein had hoped for. “Leider zeichnete sich jedoch kein konstruktiver Fortschritt ab, da die Bezirksvertretung aufgrund der angeblichen Nähe der Donauschwaben zu Hitlerdeutschland Bedenken äußerte...Infolge wurde Arch. DI Franz Englerth mit der Gestaltung und Ausführung der Erinnerungsstätte betraut, der den Bezirksvorsteher Ing. Heinz Lehner überzeugen konnte, dass die ungerechtfertigten Anschuldigungen die Donauschwaben betreffend nur in den Fantasien einiger ewig Gestriger existieren.” See the article on the website of the Donauschwäbischer Arbeitsdienst: http://www.donauschwaben.at/PA2013-16_Eroeffnung%20der%20Erinnerungsstaette%20Donauschwabenpark.html

⁸⁰ “Die österreichischen Grenzen haben sich in der Vergangenheit oft verändert, einige früher österreichische Gebiete/Städte liegen heute außerhalb Österreichs. Gibt es solche Gebiete/Städte außerhalb Österreichs, die Sie persönlich mit Österreich verbinden?” See Brix, Bruckmüller, and Stekl, *Memoria Austriae. Band 1: Menschen, Mythen, Zeiten*, 12-17.

University of Salzburg in January 1950, then Austrian Interior Minister Dr. Just gave a speech entitled, “Austria’s Problems.” In the speech, Dr. Just describes the difficult and unclear situation of the refugees and the Austrian government with regards to the German-speaking refugee situation at the time. Only the Polish, Czechoslovakian and Hungarian “Germans” were legally permitted under the Potsdam Agreement to be transported to Germany. But the British occupying authorities blocked the transport of the German-speaking refugees from Poland into their zone and then the American authorities “temporarily” closed the border, halting the transport of “ethnic Germans” from Czechoslovakia and Hungary in October 1946, so that during that year only 80,000 were transported to Bavaria, due to overcrowding in the American occupation zone there.⁸¹ Then, in the hope that the closing of the border was indeed temporary and that the refugees would simply leave, the Austrian government pursued what A.K. Gauß has described as “waiting-room politics” [Wartesaalpolitik], whereby the refugees were not given citizenship, political rights, or the right to work. Hailing often from rural communities, many worked under the table when possible or attempted to leave the country or sneak across the border to Germany. As a result of the Austrian government’s “waiting-room politics,” the refugees were primarily housed in Nazi-era barracks until the 1960s.

Finding its start in one of these barracks was the Danube Swabian newspaper *Neuland*, established and run by German-speaking refugees such as A.K. Gauß. The newspaper had a particular focus on the Danube Swabian refugees but provided all German-speaking refugees with information, legal help, assistance in finding lost or separated family members, many of which were stuck on the other side of the border in Germany after being deported from Yugoslavia to labor camps in the Soviet Union, as well as emigration destinations in as faraway

⁸¹ Just, Alfons, Min. Rat. Dr. “Die Probleme Österreichs.” *Salzburger Bericht*, 18.

places as the Danube Swabian settlement in Entre Rios, Brazil.⁸² The government's "waiting room" politics also had long term institutional implications for the ability of German-speaking refugees to form a united political front. These institutional implications are the third reason the memory of German-speaking refugees and "flight and expulsion" never gained currency in Austria as it did in Germany.

Learning from the example of West Germany and the formation of the party of expellees (Block der Heimatvertriebenen und Entrechteten - BHE), the two major postwar political parties in Austria, the Socialists (SPÖ) and the Austrian People's Party (ÖVP) only naturalized "ethnic Germans" according to the Proporz system, fearing a swing in the balance of power if they were to be naturalized en bloc.⁸³ Similarly and also following the Proporz procedure, the Zentralberatungstelle der Volksdeutschen, which was formed by the SPÖ and ÖVP to represent the interests of the German-speaking refugees and expellees to the Austrian government, consisted of four "ethnic German" Socialist and four "ethnic German" Conservative appointees. This antidemocratic process took place much to chagrin of other German-speaking refugee circles, who formed their own "ethnic German" parliament in Linz in protest.⁸⁴ As a result of the division of the German-speaking refugees among the political parties, no party aside from the

⁸² Frotscher, Méri. "A Lost Homeland, a Reinvented Homeland: Diaspora and the 'Culture of Memory' in the Colony of Danube Swabians of Entre Rios." 439–61.

⁸³ "It has been commonly acknowledged, at least unofficially, that naturalization of the ethnic Germans and other refugees in Austria has been carried out following the so-called *Proporz System*. The theory behind the Proporz procedure is that both parties are able to gain an equal amount of new voting strength. Because the GVP and SPG are extraordinarily equally balanced, the one capable of styming the other, an unofficial compromise solution seems to have worked out in the *Proporz System* whereby an equal number of naturalizations are sponsored by both major parties. During the early post-war years when it was assumed that the refugees would leave Austria, neither large political party exhibited much interest in refugee naturalization. Later however, it became obvious that the ethnic German refugees and, for that matter, a large number of the non-German-speaking refugees would be forced to stay in Austria. It was assumed that sooner or later the more politically conscious elements would obtain naturalization and, if left to themselves, the refugee vote might gravitate to the political extremes." See Radspieler, Tony. *The Ethnic German Refugee in Austria: 1945 to 1954*, 170-1.

⁸⁴ See Gauß, Adalbert Karl. *Wege und Irrwege unter Rot-Weiß-Rot. Zeitgeschichtliches und Interviews mit Bundeskanzler Dr. Kreisky (u.a.)*, 5-13; 21-27.

far-right VdU (later FPÖ) put particular focus on the “ethnic German” issue. The pan-German VdU/FPÖ thus appropriated the discourse and the “ethnic German” issue was in turn largely viewed as a far-right discourse.

Alfons Just’s aforementioned 1950 speech in Salzburg made Austria’s objections to the German-speaking refugees clear and pointed directly to the government’s domestic and foreign policy concerns. In his speech, Interior Minister Just described the importance of the State Treaty and the goal of Austrian independence as well as the negative foreign policy implications of appearing to help the supposedly fascist “ethnic Germans”:

Sie dürfen nun nicht etwa glauben, dass es Mangel an gutem Willen ist, was Österreich abhält, jenen unausgesprochenen Wünschen zu will fahren. Vor allem können wir dem künftigen Staatsvertrag nicht vorgreifen. Wir haben aber noch andere triftige Gründe, keine solche Verpflichtung zu übernehmen: Es ist kein Geheimnis, dass die Volksdeutschen von den Staaten, aus denen sie ausgewiesen wurden, des Irredentismus und Faschismus beschuldigt werden, wobei die Unbestimmtheit des letzteren es denen, die ihn handhaben, ermöglicht, ihn je nach Belieben bald enger bald weiter zu fassen. Gegenwärtig werden, glaube ich, nur die Mitglieder der sogenannten ‘Zentralberatungsstelle der Volksdeutschen’ von gewisser Seite als Faschisten bezeichnet. Aber ich erinnere mich noch, wie vor einigen Jahren eine kleine Publikation einer Salzburger Wochenschrift genügte, um heftige Demarchen der Nachbarstaaten gegen alle Volksdeutschen in Österreich hervorzurufen. ...Und auch in den folgenden Jahren haben Veranstaltungen der Volksdeutschen wiederholt heftige Angriffe in der oppositionellen Presse Österreichs veranlasst. Außer diesen politischen Gründen spielen noch wirtschaftliche mit...⁸⁵

Despite Just’s reference to the state treaty as the reason for the government’s handling of the German-speaking refugees, even after its signing in 1955 foreign policy concerns still led to the censorship of planned German-speaking refugee events by the Austrian Interior Ministry in some cases. For example, during the Tag der Donauschwaben in Salzburg in 1959, Johannes Weidenheim, a Danube Swabian refugee and member of the Gruppe 47, was scheduled to have his didactic play [Lehrstück] *Wann ist der Krieg zu Ende?* performed as the grand finale of the

⁸⁵ Just, Alfons, Min. Rat. Dr. “Die Probleme Österreichs.” *Salzburger Bericht*, 19.

evening. The play was intended to “contribute to reconciliation between ‘expellees’ and Serbs” but its performance was cancelled at the last minute by the Austrian Interior Ministry, citing foreign policy concerns and a direct request of the Yugoslav state. Similarly, the Austrian Interior Ministry prevented a Sudeten German rally from taking place on July 7, 1963, in the small village of Klein Schweinbarth, directly on the border to Czechoslovakia. The rally was planned to take place following the dedication ceremony of a memorial on a hilltop that overlooked the refugees’ former home in Czechoslovakia. Given the visibility of the location from Czechoslovakia, the Austrian Interior Ministry again cited foreign policy concerns, stating that the rally could be interpreted as a provocation and harm relations with Czechoslovakia.⁸⁶

Finally, beyond the domestic policy (1), the foreign policy (2) and the institutional (3) implications, the fourth and final reason why the memory of “flight and expulsion never gained traction in Austria is that the Austrian state of the early Second Republic viewed the German-speaking refugees as an economic burden and not an Austrian responsibility. Citing the Potsdam Agreement that all “ethnic Germans” from Czechoslovakia and Hungary were to be resettled in Germany, both Karl Renner’s provisional government and Leopold Figl’s successor government pushed for the deportations to continue, even after the occupying American authorities halted the deportations in September 1946. Given that food and housing were scarce and that the 1.6 million DPs in 1945 Austria represented 27.6 percent of the population (6 million locals), the foreigners were often viewed as a threat to the locals. But even before the end of the war, the German-speaking refugees or resettlers (from the Nazi Heim ins Reich program) were easily

⁸⁶ See Matejka, “Die Eingliederung Der Sudeten- Und Karpathendeutschen in Österreich Nach 1945.” However, in other cases, the Austrian government permitted and even defended major events such as the Tag der Sudetendeutschen in Vienna in 1959 and 1979, despite a flurry of demarches from Czechoslovakia denouncing the event as revanchist rally of fascists. This was likely due to the influence of Germany and the German “expellees” that also participated in and helped organize these events.

distinguished from the locals by their clothing and dialect. A.K. Gauß describes the situation as follows: “Die Bevölkerung, durch das Kriegsgeschehen ernüchtert, bedachte die Vorboten der bevorstehenden Götterdämmerung oft genug hämisch als ungebetene Kriegsverlängerer oder sprach abfällig von Beutegermanen.”⁸⁷ Bruno Oberläuter makes a similar argument, contending that the local animosity was rooted in the NS period, as resettlers were considered “Kriegsverlängerer.”⁸⁸ As evidence Oberläuter quotes a newsletter by the local leadership of the NSDAP-Hollabrunn from October 27, 1944:

Die Deutschen aus dem Banat sind eine der besten deutschen Volksgruppen...der Gau Niederdonau und insbesondere der Kreis Hollabrunn sind auf Befehl des Gauleiters angewiesen, Tausende von Menschen aufzunehmen und im Sinne des alten germanischen Gastrechts zu beherbergen. Ich habe in den letzten Stunden festgestellt, dass sich in verschiedenen Gemeinden unseres Kreises katastrophale Zustände beim Empfang der Flüchtlinge ergeben haben....Tatsache ist, dass in einzelnen Fällen Volksdeutsche aus dem Banat stundenlang auf den Straßen bei strömenden Regen in Tränen gesessen haben, weil sie eine sture Bewohnerschaft unseres Kreises nicht in den Hof hineingelassen hat. Ich stelle weiter fest, dass in einzelnen Ortschaften sich Aussprüche getan haben, die ihre Spitze darin fanden, dass unverständliche Kreise den Banater Deutschen erklärt haben, es wäre besser gewesen, man hätte sie ‘dort unten erschossen.’⁸⁹

While Andreas Kossert has shown how this “cold” reception of “expellees” was also commonplace in Germany, “expellees” in Austria could be further externalized as Nazi-German scapegoats that were responsible for the war. At the same time, however, they also reminded local Austrians of their own culpability and could for this reason not be tolerated. Of course, the economic scarcity of the immediate postwar period did nothing to revise these prejudices. Dvorak-Stocker’s analysis of the Viennese press’ coverage of the “ethnic German question” shows that at least in Vienna, neither did the fifth estate. According to Dvorak-Stocker,

⁸⁷ Gauß, A.K. *Wege und Irrwege*, 5.

⁸⁸ *Das Zweite Dach*, 24. “Man wird nicht fehl gehen, wenn die Ursachen dieser Animosität noch in die Zeit vor der Kapitulation zurückgeführt werden, als etwa die Banater Trecks, sozusagen unter nationalsozialistischen Vorzeichen, in die Dörfer einbrachen und die Flüchtlinge als ungebetene ‘Kriegsverlängerer’ empfunden wurden.”

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 24.

journalists of the time generally contributed to the preexisting ill will towards German-speaking refugees. He recognizes a shift only in 1949 as economic conditions improved and scarcity was no longer such an issue.⁹⁰



Figure 3. Flyer advertising German-speaking refugee exhibit showcasing their cultural contributions. *Neue Heimat. Unabhängiges Wochenblatt für alle, welche die europäische Krise entwurzelt hat* 6 March 1949, 21 May 1949.

At the state level, Austrian authorities in the late 1940s acted under the assumption that all ethnic Germans (as well as other DPs) were only temporarily in Austria and would be repatriated or would emigrate abroad. Only as the economic situation improved and the finality

⁹⁰ See Dvorak-Stocker, “Schicksal und Integration der Volksdeutschen Heimatvertriebenen im Spiegel der Wiener Tagespresse 1945-50.”

of the German border closing set in, did the Austrian government's perspective change. Around this time, the German-speaking refugees were able to effectively market themselves as an economic and cultural good and began to be seen less as a burden and more of an easily assimilable workforce to replace those lost during the war. The German-speaking refugees put on exhibits all over Austria to showcase their cultural products, prove their usefulness, and legitimize their stay. Slowly, the government began to focus less on the social and economic costs of supporting the refugees and more on the economic opportunity they offered as a workforce. Moreover, the government began to fear that if they did not work to improve the legal situation of the German-speaking refugees, the desirable workforce would emigrate and Austria would only be left with the unwanted social burden of "invalids and retirees." Scheuringer points out that the Austrian government was unwilling to provide financially for the refugees and would only focus on the economic cost but not their economic contribution.⁹¹

In sum, there seem to be at least four main reasons why the memory of German-speaking refugees and "flight and expulsion" never gained currency in Austria as it did in Germany. Firstly, the foreign policy implications in the Cold War context represented an existential threat to Austrian sovereignty and the State Treaty. Secondly (and related to the foreign policy implications) was the domestic political focus on the State Treaty and the emphasis on maintaining political parity between the two major parties in naturalizing German-speaking

⁹¹ Scheuringer, Brunhilde. *Dreißig Jahre danach: die Eingliederung der volksdeutschen Flüchtlinge und Vertriebenen in Österreich*. Braumüller, 1983. 78-79. "Die österreichische Regierung schien Anfang der 50er Jahre nur wenig bereit, größere finanzielle Anstrengungen zugunsten der Flüchtlinge zu machen und begründete dies einmal damit, daß die wirtschaftliche und finanzielle Situation des Landes dies nicht erlauben würde, zum anderen damit, daß die Flüchtlinge ohnehin schon über viele Jahre aus öffentlichen Geldern unterstützt würden, insbesondere was die soziale Fürsorge und die Erhaltung und den Betrieb der Lager anbelangte." Moreover, according to Scheuringer, the Austrian budget for refugee assistance reached its peak in 1949 when it reached 3.4 percent of the overall budget and 0.5 percent of GDP. By 1951, however, the assistance decreased to 1.1 percent of the overall budget and 0.2 percent of GDP. At that time, the German-speaking refugees contributed to about 7 percent of the national income. *Ibid.*, 79

refugees. Thirdly, this in turn had repercussions for the institutional structures of the “ethnic Germans” and ultimately resulted in radicalization of the discourse by marginalizing it to the far right and VdU/FPÖ. Fourthly, the Austrian government initially viewed the German-speaking refugees as an unwanted economic burden and provided them with very limited social or economic support.



Figure 4. Report on German-speaking refugee exhibit showcasing their cultural contributions. *Neue Heimat. Unabhängiges Wochenblatt für alle, welche die europäische Krise entwurzelt hat* 6 March 1949, 21 May 1949.

Ultimately, the resulting belated economic integration of the German-speaking refugees was seen nonetheless as a national patriotic success story. Reference to this myth of the successful economic integration (or rather assimilation) of German-speaking refugees can be

found in the preface to Eduard Stanek's *Verfolgt, Verjagt, Vertrieben*. In the preface, the former Austrian chancellor Bruno Kreisky contributes to the myth:

Hofrat E. Stanek hat ein verdienstvolles Buch geschrieben über die Leistungen, die Österreich nach den schwersten Zeiten auf dem Gebiet des Flüchtlingswesens vollbracht hat. Fast zwei Millionen Menschen sind über Österreich in die freie Welt gelangt, und so haben wir unter den kenntnisreichen Menschen in der Welt als ein Land mit offenen Grenzen eine Geltung erlangt. Es ist so, dass, ähnlich wie die Schweiz durch die Identifizierung mit dem Roten Kreuz Weltgeltung erlangt hat, wir durch unsere Flüchtlingspolitik heute eine besondere Position einnehmen.⁹²

My analysis of the memories and stories of ethnic Germans in their various medial forms, rather than dismissing them as noncanonical or even far right, will assist in deconstructing the myth that Kreisky, among many others, upholds.

VII. Dissertation Outline

The dissertation is divided into two main parts. Each part begins with an introduction that lays the theoretical groundwork for the methodological approaches of the chapters that follow. Part I examines the memory of German-speaking refugees and expellees through the medium of the monument and associated cultural practices. Chapter 2 analyzes two postwar Austrian regional memorial sites and the role of religion and pilgrimage in the German-speaking refugee memory at these sites. Chapter 3 turns from regional sites to more remote sites of German-speaking refugee memory in monuments across rural Austria. This chapter moves beyond the postwar period and into the present and also examines cultural responses to these sites (such as defacement).

Part II turns to the medium of literature and analyzes narrative constructions of the past between victimhood and responsibility. Part II also focuses exclusively on the post-Cold War era

⁹² Stanek, *Verfolgt, verjagt, vertrieben.*, 9.

of Austrian memory culture. Chapter 4 analyzes four novels published between 2014 and 2016 by Austrian authors of second and third generation German-speaking refugee families. This chapter examines the novels' differing approaches to the past with particular emphasis on their reception. Chapter 5, on the other hand, analyzes post-Cold War era travelogues by the Austrian authors Ilse Tielsch and Karl-Markus Gauß. Part II is followed by a conclusion that summarizes the dissertation's findings.

PART I: BETWEEN THE PALIMPSESTS AND HETEROTOPIAS OF MEMORY: GERMAN-SPEAKING REFUGEES IN MONUMENTS AND MEMORIALS IN AUSTRIA

INTRODUCTION TO PART I

Turning to the medium of the monument or memorial, the following two chapters aim to investigate how the memory of “flight and expulsion”⁹³ and the “lost home” is emplotted in the geographic space of the territory of Austria.⁹⁴ In doing so, these chapters examine the particular memory of German-speaking refugees and expellees through the medium of the memorial, the accompanying commemorative practices, and their reception, whenever possible. This dissertation examines the memory of “flight and expulsion” in Austria and how Austrians position themselves and their national memory culture vis-à-vis the relatively marginalized memory of German-speaking refugees in Austria. To that end, maintaining the focus on the marginalized discourse of the German-speaking refugee monument in Austria is instrumental as it speaks to the local and national memory culture.⁹⁵

⁹³ Despite my earlier remarks in the preface, I sometimes use the problematic terms “flight and expulsion” or “expellees.” I only do so because it has become standard practice in the German and English scholarship; however, I always use quotation marks around the terms to highlight their problematic nature. Moreover, I only do so when it makes sense linguistically and it is too cumbersome to do otherwise.

⁹⁴ In an increasingly post-national era of transnational monuments and memories, this nationally-bounded geographic restriction could be considered an arbitrary distinction or perhaps even a nationally constructivist one. To these valid objections, I offer two justifications for my approach – one practical and the other methodological. Firstly, even though my analysis could gain from an exploration of memorials in the “former home” (i.e. Czechia, Serbia, etc), the scope of such a research project is beyond that of one dissertation chapter. Secondly, my project is interested in Austrian memory culture and the memory of *Altösterreicher* in Austria (and not necessarily in Czechia, Serbia, etc.).

⁹⁵ Moreover, it is unclear how many so-called “native” Austrians would be aware of or participate in the commemorative practices of transnational German-speaking refugee monuments. While other media, such as newspapers or television, may bring temporary awareness of these transnational initiatives into their daily lives, transnational monuments do not live among “native” Austrians or shape the landscape of their local surroundings, as do the German-speaking refugee memorials in Austria that must either be seen or ignored.

Part I of the dissertation will draw on evidence both quantitative and qualitative to demonstrate that the memory of “flight and expulsion” is, at least in its material, memorial incarnation, indeed both marginalized and peripheral. The quantitative overview of German-speaking refugee memorials in Austria will be brief and limited to this introduction. Following a discussion of terminology, methodology and the theoretical concepts employed, the introduction will also present my data set of memorials in Austria from which I construct a typology of memorials and identify “blank spots” in the data.

Chapters 2 and 3 take a qualitative approach that builds on the typology of memorials outlined in the introduction. Chapter 2 examines two regional memorial sites and serves to locate the relative marginalization of German-speaking refugee memory vis-à-vis the more hegemonic paradigms of Austrian cultural memory at work at these regional memorials. Since these two regional memorials have centuries-long religious traditions upon which the new postwar Austrian memories are inscribed, I refer to this section as the palimpsests of memory. In contrast to these much longer, palimpsestic memorial traditions analyzed in Chapter 2 are the newer, postwar groundings of the strictly German-speaking refugee memorials examined in Chapter 3. Thus, Chapter 2 draws on the metaphor of the palimpsest, an apt symbol for the sedimentary ensemble of layered memories at these regional and national sites with centuries-old memorial traditions. In contrast, I refer to the “new” German-speaking refugee memorial sites in Chapter 3 as heterotopias.⁹⁶ Here, I draw on Foucault’s concept of heterotopia as a fitting spatial description for the simultaneously real and imaginary contestations of space that occur at German-speaking refugee and expellee memorial sites. In fact, the most common form of

⁹⁶ With “new” I do not refer to both the temporal dimension of the site as being erected after 1945 as well as the coinciding of its postwar erection with its sole purpose as a place of German-speaking refugee memory.

German-speaking refugee memorial⁹⁷ – the monument in the cemetery – is explicitly mentioned by Foucault as a form of heterotopia.⁹⁸ Some German-speaking refugee heterotopias are capable, much like Foucault’s theater, of juxtaposing several imaginary spaces into one real space; most are linked to unique heterochronies or slices in time, exposing a distinct ambivalence to space and time. The concept of heterotopia and its application to German-speaking refugee memorials in Austria will be further explored in Chapter 3.

I. Theoretical Background: Definitions and Methodology

Thus far, I have been using the terms “monument” and “memorial” interchangeably. Yet, in a chapter dealing with sites of memory, a more rigorous definition of terms is in order. In his seminal monograph *The Texture of Memory*, James Young points out that memorials are often understood to recall only tragic events as places to mourn, whereas monuments are typically considered celebratory markers of triumph and heroism.⁹⁹ He then immediately deconstructs this functionalist description to then argue that a statue, for example, can be both a monument to heroism and a memorial to tragic loss. “Insofar as the same object can perform both functions, there may be nothing intrinsic to historical markers that makes them either a monument or memorial.”¹⁰⁰ Instead, Young contends that memorials are a larger category that includes any number of memorializing media (from books to sculptures or even days), and that monuments

⁹⁷ See Scholz, *Vertriebenenendenkmäler*, 61. Stephan Scholz’ analysis of the Bund der Vertriebenen (BdV)’s list of over 1400 “expellee” monuments in Germany found that 39% of all “expellee” monuments were located in cemeteries. In Austria, the percentage of such memorial sites is likely similar. For example, all of the “expellee” memorials linking Vienna with the Czech border mark the graves of the dead along the path taken of the so called Brünner Todesmarsch. Every November on All Souls’ Day, the Bruna “expellee” group recreates this path in reverse and visits each memorial grave along the way.

⁹⁸ Foucault, Michel. “Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias.”

⁹⁹ Young, James. *The Texture of Memory: Holocaust Memorials and Meaning*.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid*, 3.

are a material subset of memorials that, as objects, memorialize a person or thing.¹⁰¹ For the purposes of this chapter, I will refer to monuments as material objects of memory but define memorials more narrowly than Young as the larger site of meaning-making. In other words, my definition of memorial excludes other media but includes those processual aspects of culture associated with the monument, i.e. commemoration ceremonies, rituals, pilgrimages, defacement, protests, etc. While Pierre Nora has referred to sites or places of memory (*lieux de mémoire*) in the broader sense of Young's definition of memorial as any place, object or concept that bears significance in collective memory, the memorials that I describe in this chapter all exist in geographic space and must not meet any standard of significance for national collective memory. Any memorial landscape or topographical matrix of meaning-making that holds significance for a group, however marginalized, is in my definition a memorial site.

This more inclusive definition of memorial site does not presume to imply, however, that the degree of marginalization vis-à-vis the larger collective memory is unimportant. In contrast, I contend that the degree of relative marginalization is fundamental to determining the acceptedness of the discourse and whether the memory is in fact "taboo." In the case of Germany, some scholars have used the existence of "expellee" monuments in the public sphere as proof that the memory of "flight and expulsion" was never taboo in Germany.¹⁰² But this argument begs the question what "taboo" in this context means in practical terms. What would,

¹⁰¹ Ibid, 4.

¹⁰² In his dissertation, the entirety of which is dedicated to the analysis of the 1400 local "expellee" monuments on the BdV's list, Jeffery Luppé has made this very argument. "First, I will show that local 'expellee' monuments debunk the thesis that German wartime suffering was taboo as a subject of postwar discussion and commemoration, at least in the sense that discussion on the topic was not permitted or nonexistent." Luppé, "To Our Dead: Local Expellee Monuments and the Contestation of German Postwar Memory," 8. Similarly, in his published postdoctoral thesis (*Habilitationschrift*), Stephan Scholz has followed the same line of argumentation in his analysis of the same BdV data set. "Wie die Analyse dieser deutschen Erinnerungstopographie zeigt, war die öffentliche Erinnerung an Flucht und Vertreibung in der Bundesrepublik alles andere als ein Tabu. Sie besaß vielmehr in Form von Denkmälern, Gedenksteinen und -tafeln immer eine große Präsenz in öffentlichen Raum." Scholz, *Vertriebenen Denkmäler: Topographie einer deutschen Erinnerungslandschaft*, 361.

according to Luppés or Scholz's argument, a taboo memory look like? Their argument seems to imply that a taboo memory would be completely invisible and banned from the public sphere. I contend on the other hand, that such a definition is unreasonable in a democratic public sphere and more akin to censorship. Indeed, Scholz' own study points to the peripheral nature of the memory, as Manfred Kittel has argued in his review of Scholz' work:

Wenngleich es für das ganze oder halbe Scheitern vieler Initiativen im einzelnen unterschiedliche Gründe gab, gute wie schlechte, so zeigen doch alle, wie relativ der Stellenwert des historischen 'deutschen Ostens' in der Gesellschaft der Bundesrepublik aufs Ganze gesehen war und dass es wohl, anders als die Studie argumentiert, auch nicht bloß einer seit jeher föderalen deutschen Denkmaltradition geschuldet war, wenn man sich jahrzehntelang nicht auf einen großen zentralen Erinnerungs-ort einigen konnte....Fast 40 Prozent dieser Klein-Denkmäler wurden auf Friedhöfen errichtet, weitere 10 Prozent an oder in Kirchen, an Orten mithin, die dem öffentlichen Raum nicht nur 'durch ihren sakralen Charakter [...] ein Stück weit entzogen sind,' sondern vor allem auch durch ihre oft periphere Lage.¹⁰³

I concur with Kittel that even in Germany, the network of local "expellee" monuments is in fact marginally situated in rural and often remote areas. Moreover, in contradistinction to Luppés and Scholz' implicit definition of taboo memory as invisible or nonexistent, I draw on Oliver Marchart's concept of "historical-political" memory to argue that this relatively marginalized position is in fact the definition of taboo memory. As discussed in the introductory chapter, Marchart describes the tabooization of memory not as the complete banning of a discourse from the public sphere, but rather as its relative marginalization vis-à-vis the hegemonic discourse.¹⁰⁴ Moreover, reviews of Scholz' study reveal an undertheorized conceptualization at the intersection of politics and culture in memory studies, in which the key term of "tabooization" has gone undefined. Consequently, prominent scholars such as Mathias Beer and Andrew Demshuk came to the opposite conclusion from Manfred Kittel and have been

¹⁰³ Kittel, Manfred. Review of *Vertriebenen Denkmäler. Topographie Einer Deutschen Erinnerungslandschaft*, by Stephan Scholz. *Historische Zeitschrift*, vol. 303, no. 3, 2016: 923-25.

¹⁰⁴ Marchart, 43-44.

able to adopt Scholz' argument wholesale, without ever defining what taboo memory actually means. As mentioned in the introduction, I hope to add more theoretical rigor and clarity to the scholarship by introducing Marchart's definition of the "tabooization" of memory.

Scholz' conclusion notwithstanding, his study provides an informative, detailed quantitative overview of the over 1,400 documented "expellee" monuments in Germany. Unfortunately, however, it does suffer from some serious methodological issues, particularly source bias. Like Lupp's dissertation, Scholz' monograph relies solely on the data from a list of monuments compiled by the Bund der Vertriebenen (BdV), a political organization that claims to represent all "ethnic German expellees" but whose membership numbers are actually quite small. It thus overemphasizes the role of national political organization and ignores the work and monuments of more local or religious German-speaking refugee groupings, such as the Catholic Ackermann Gemeinde or the Social Democratic Seliger Gemeinde, of which the BdV is not necessarily aware.

Moreover, Scholz' study also excludes all monuments outside of Germany and thus ignores the significant shifts since 1990, when transnational monuments began to be built abroad in the "authentic place" of the former home. While my study faces this same methodological challenge, I do not claim to investigate "expellee" memory culture per se, but rather Austrian memory culture from the perspective of a marginalized discourse. A further methodological limitation that both my study and Scholz' face is the near invisibility of monuments that were planned but ultimately failed to be erected. In other words, the BdV list as well as the list of their Austrian equivalent, Verband der Landsmannschaften Österreichs (VLÖ), only include monuments that were in fact successfully erected. These lists of monuments or data sets do not include those monuments that could, for whatever financial, political or other reason, not be

built. In fact, to bolster his argument against tabooization Scholz argues that in a democratic society, the erection of a monument requires the consent and approval of the local populace. Even if we simply accept that argument and do not consider political apathy or indifference, then a balanced and comprehensive analysis would also consider all the instances in which German-speaking refugees attempted to build a monument but were denied the required permits. Indeed, in the course of my research (and scanning of German-speaking refugee newspapers), I have come across at least two such instances, whereby German-speaking refugees were denied local magistrate approval to build a monument for explicitly political reasons.¹⁰⁵

It is thus my contention that a quantitative study of German-speaking refugee monuments must not rely on the data set of a singular organization with one or another political or religious affiliation. Instead a balanced study requires that the researcher build his/her own data set from the bottom-up, ideally from local German-speaking refugee newspapers, which is likely the only source that also covers failed attempts to erect a monument. Since such an enterprise is beyond the scope of these two chapters, I will point to the methodological limitations of my source bias¹⁰⁶ and refrain from a quantitative analysis of the data. Instead, I will attempt to construct a typology of German-speaking refugee monuments in Austria. I will then proceed to qualitatively analyze an example of each type in Chapters 2 and 3.

¹⁰⁵ This point also applies to other media and products of cultural memory but is particularly important when trying to “measure” the degree of marginalization or acceptance of a discourse (as Scholz does in the context of tabooization.) My larger point here, however, is that, particularly in the case of marginalized discourses, there is a bias towards “visible” memory. Even in media like local monuments (which are often constructed from the bottom up), the gatekeepers of memory tend to be elites, whether that be politicians, editors, or publishing houses. These gatekeepers wield significant “agenda setting” power and can completely obscure what might be a litany of attempts by a marginalized group to memorialize.

¹⁰⁶ A large portion of my data set comes from a list published by the Verband der Österreichischen Landsmannschaften (VLÖ) in 2006. VLÖ. *Museen und Gedenkstätten der Sudetendeutschen, Donauschwaben, Siebenbürger Sachsen, Deutsch-Untersteirer, Banater Schwaben, Gottscheer, Karpatendeutschen, Buchenlanddeutschen, Beskidenlanddeutschen in Österreich*. Edited by Schiel Gerhard, Ertl-Druck, 2006. The rest of my data set comes from Georg Schroubek’s documentation of postwar “expellee” pilgrimage sites in Austria.

II. Data Set: Typology of Memorials and “Blank Spots”

The maps generated below are based on two differing data sets. The first data set draws on Georg Schroubek’s 1968 documentation and analysis of postwar “expellee” pilgrimage sites in Austria and Germany.¹⁰⁷ The second draws on a list compiled by the VLÖ in 2006 that focuses on monuments and museums. In plotting the data, I have excluded the museums as they are without exception “Heimatstuben” and are generally not open to the public, except upon request or one Sunday per month.

Although these data sets are certainly imperfect, I would like to point out a few common types of memorial that they do include. One, of course, is that of the “expellee” pilgrimage site, which itself is divisible into entirely new post 1945 sites on the one hand, and those already existing with longer religious traditions, on the other. Another is the wall of memorials, often located on hills or mountaintops along the Austrian border, that were built with the intention to “look into” the former, lost home. A third type are the series of monuments visible on the map below that link Vienna to the Austria border. These monuments are memorial grave sites that mark the path of the “Brünner Todesmarsch,” which is ritually traversed each November by German-speaking refugees and expellees.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁷ This data set is of course quite dated. It does not include, for example, the “expellee” pilgrimage sites that were later established at the Maria Schnee church in Leopoldschlag, Upper Austria and the Bründlkirche in Bad Leonfelden, Upper Austria in the 1980s.

¹⁰⁸ The Brünner Todesmarsch or Brno Death March represents one of the most violent expulsions of “ethnic Germans” from Czechia. On May 30, 1945, the German-speaking inhabitants of Brünn/Brno were expelled from their homes and forced to march the approximately 34 miles to the Austrian border. The Soviet authorities rejected the unauthorized transfer, however, and the Austrian government also refused to accept the non-Austrian citizens. As a result, thousands of “ethnic Germans” remained in the abandoned concentration camp Pohofelice near the border. Although estimates vary widely, the most recent research from the 1990s indicates that about 5000 “ethnic Germans” died during and immediately after the Brno Death March, plus an additional 1000 in Austria. Of the approximately 1000 deaths that occurred in Austria along the road between the border and Vienna, a number of memorials mark the mass graves. Each year on November 1, the “Bruna,” a grouping of German-speaking refugees living in Vienna but hailing originally from Brünn, rent a charter bus and visit all the memorial graves between Vienna and the Czech-Austrian border. Since 2015, the city council of Brno has also organized a memorial walk between Brno and the border and invited German and Austrian expellees to participate.

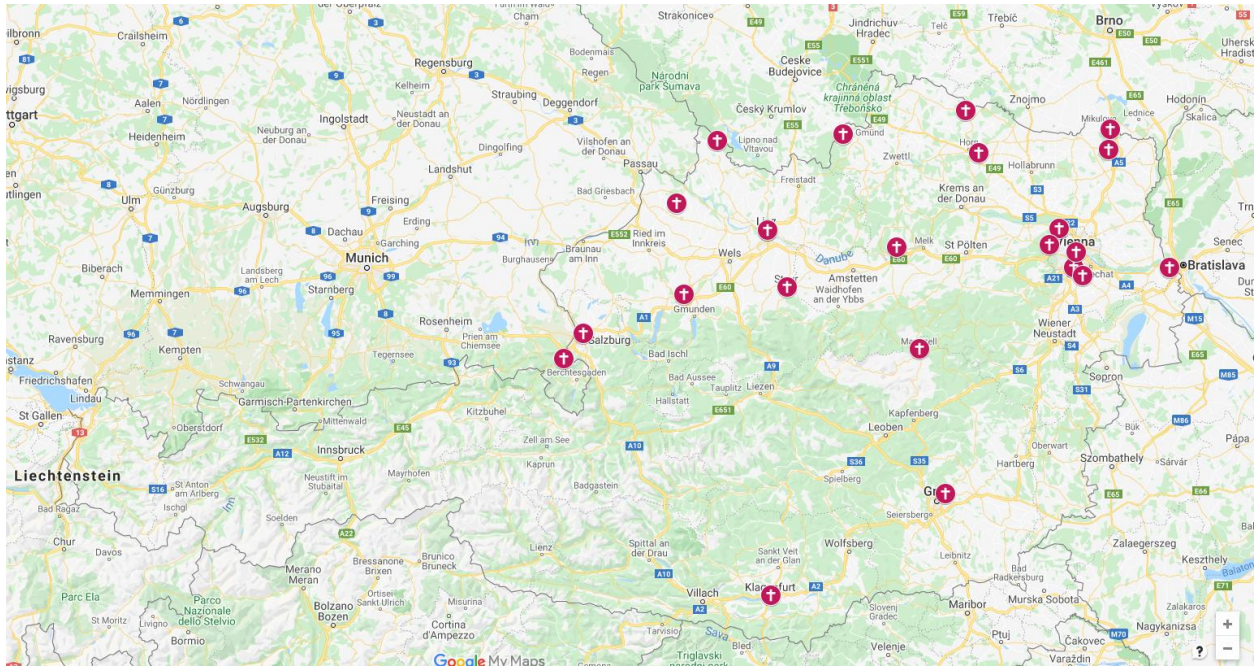


Figure 5. Map of postwar “expellee” pilgrimage sites, as per Georg Schroubek’s 1968 study.

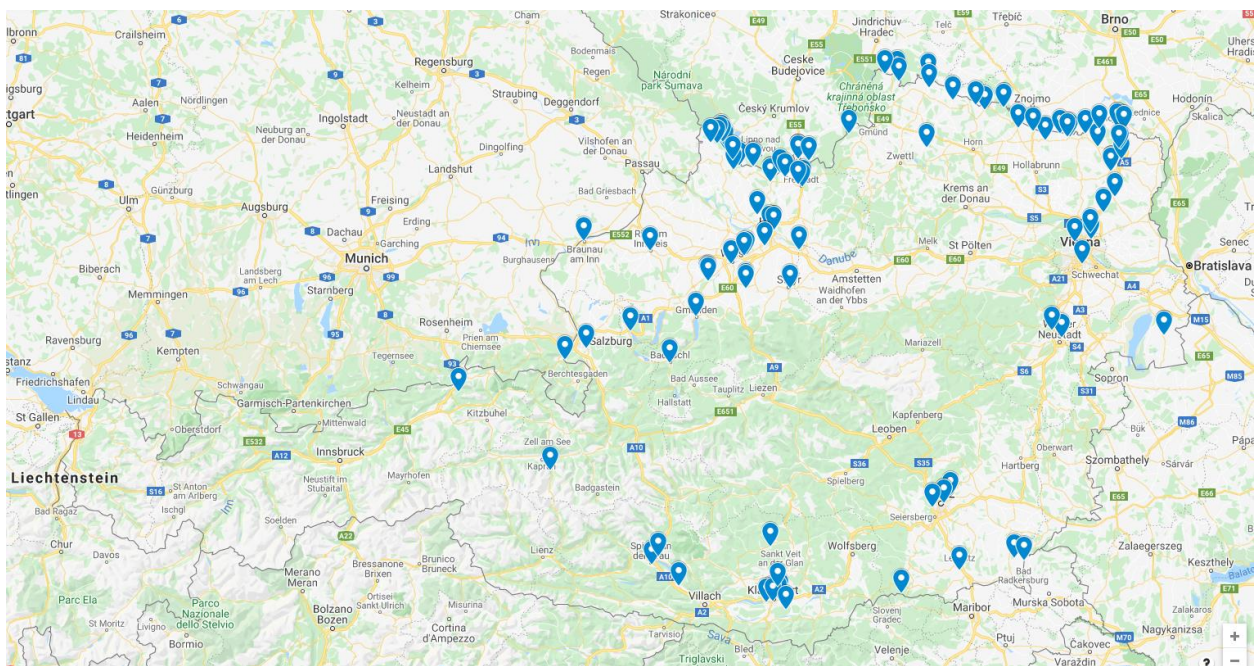


Figure 6. Topographical plotting of German-speaking refugee monuments (excluding museums and Heimatstuben), as per the VLÖ’s 2006 published list.

At least two types of memorial sites that I consider typical of the Austrian German-speaking refugee memorial landscape are not included in these data sets. First, there are the Protestant churches built by Transylvanian Saxon refugees and expellees in Catholic Austria in

order to serve the religious needs of their community. These churches, like the evangelical parish of Rosenau, are built in the architectural style of churches in their former home and include artwork or memorials to their former homes. Aside from a brief overview published by Transylvanian Saxon refugee and Salzburger intellectual Otto Folberth, no detailed documentation of these places of memory exists.¹⁰⁹ As far as I can tell, my dissertation is the first to discuss them in this context.

A second type of memorial and “blank spot” in my typology of Austrian “expellee” memorials are the various memorial vestiges of German-speaking refugee war barrack communities. These communities built their own churches, schools, and memorials. One such example is the Neue Heimat district of Linz, Austria;¹¹⁰ the German-speaking refugees there were initially housed in barracks hastily built by the Nazis, where they remained until other housing options became available in the 1960s.¹¹¹ The *Guter Hirte* church there was built at the time and has since been modernized, but still serves the remainder of the German-speaking Altösterreicher community. Until the opening of the Czech-Austrian border in 1990, it also housed one of three documented copies of the popular pilgrimage devotional image of Maria Trost by Strobnitz, which was lost behind the iron curtain at the end of the war.

¹⁰⁹ Folberth, Otto. “Sächsische Siedlungen und Kirchenbauten in Österreich.”

¹¹⁰ Another example is the village of Neu-Feffernitz in Carinthia, the origin of which goes back directly to the postwar German-speaking refugee camp located there. See Köferle, Bettina. “Das Schicksal der Volksdeutschen im Flüchtlingslager Feffernitz vor dem Hintergrund der Flüchtlingssituation in Österreich nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg.”

¹¹¹ See Grün, Helene. *Volkskunde der heimatvertriebenen Deutschen im Raum von Linz mit 54 Abbildungen*.



Figure 7. Copy of the Maria Trost Madonna in the Schöneben Heimatvertriebenenkirche. Photo by author.



Figure 8. Label describing the history of the painting in Figure 7. Photo by author.



Figure 9. Protestant church of the Transylvanian Saxon community in Seewalchen a. A. / Rosenau, Austria. Photo from <http://www.evangel-rosenau.at/>.



Figure 10. Stained glass window depicting “flight and expulsion” in Protestant church in Figure 9. Photo from <http://www.evangel-rosenau.at/>.

Finally, the data also makes clear that there are hardly any German-speaking refugee monuments in cities. Those in Vienna are all either contained in cemeteries or inside churches. Innsbruck and Salzburg are also not home to any German-speaking refugee memorials. The few that are prominently located in cities or tourist destinations, such as in Linz and Hainburg, have been repeatedly defaced and broken. An important exception is the relatively prominently located memorial in Graz. An exploration of why such a difference in reception occurs at the memorial in Graz is the subject of the final section of Chapter 3, dealing with defacement.

CHAPTER 2: RELIGION AND NATION-BUILDING IN POSTWAR AUSTRIA: GERMAN-SPEAKING REFUGEE MONUMENTS AS PALIMPSEST

This chapter will demonstrate how two different, centuries-old Austrian religious sites that were dedicated to two distinct Roman Catholic devotional rituals (*The Seven Sorrows of Mary* and the *Stations of the Cross*) were appropriated to nationalist ends during their renovation as regional memorial sites after the Second World War. In doing so, I will emphasize the centrality of the trope of sacrifice and the integrative power of religious nationalism in nation-building the Second Republic. I will also pay particular attention to the differing ways German-speaking refugees and expellees negotiate their experiences at these sites. In the example of the Maria Taferl pilgrimage church and Lower Austrian Regional Memorial, German-speaking refugees are forced to assimilate to the existing memorial infrastructure in a way that leaves behind no explicit references and few visible traces. At the Carinthian Regional Memorial in Klagenfurt's Kreuzbergkirche, on the other hand, German-speaking refugees and expellees play a more active role in codetermining the site's memorial landscape and are able to have their memory directly referenced. I begin the chapter, however, with a brief summary of Austrian historian Heidemarie Uhl's analysis of Austrian regional memorials and postwar memory culture.

In her seminal study of Austria's postwar memory culture, Uhl revealed Austria's ambivalent memory culture of the 50s, 60s and 70s. In her analysis, Austria's memory culture of this time period externalized Nazism and propagated the victim thesis (Austria as the first victim of Nazism) at the state level while simultaneously maintaining a populist counternarrative of heroism, in which Austrian soldiers were victims of the war *against* Nazism, as documented in local and regional war memorials. This latter model, according to Uhl, was highly integrationist

and permitted the rehabilitation of former Nazis into Austrian society, while the state's narrative of resistance to Nazism led to heated debates and fractured society along partisan lines. Uhl's study draws on examples from regional memorial sites (*Landesehrungen*) erected at the time with particular emphasis on a case study of the Lower Austrian regional memorial site at the pilgrimage church Maria Taferl.

Interestingly, Uhl's discourse analytical approach focuses on the reception of the regional memory site but does not investigate why the site was chosen or its multilayered history. While she points to the importance of the "official consensus of the regional government, political parties, church and military" that imbued the site with self-evident authority to represent both the *Heimat* and society at large, she does not reflect on or even mention the site's much longer religious history, symbolism or the implications of embedding the memorial in the framework of a larger religious site. I contend, however, that peeling back the site's layers of meaning and memory to understand the larger context of meaning-making is critical in interpreting the memorial's significance. That the Lower Austrian *Landesehrenmal* is only the fifth of seven stations of the *Seven Sorrows of Mary* at Maria Taferl is, in my estimation, crucial context for understanding the memorial's implications.

In this chapter, I aim to make visible the all too often ignored history and memory of German-speaking refugees in Austria and the critical role of religion in these monuments. By digging a bit deeper into the example analyzed in Uhl's classic essay, *Of Heroes and Victims: World War II in Austrian Memory*, I show how widespread, even in academia, the silence surrounding these topics is. After unveiling the prominent role religion plays in the monument, I will outline the less visible role of German-speaking refugees at the site, before moving on to an analysis of another similar regional memorial site in Klagenfurt, in which the memory of "flight

and expulsion” and German-speaking refugees plays a larger and more visible role. In doing so, I do not intend to undercut Uhl’s argument regarding Austria’s ambivalent memory culture but rather to contribute another perspective that has important implications for Austrian national identity and nation-building in the Second Republic.

This chapter’s focus on the palimpsests of memory at regional memorial sites will lay the broader foundations of Austrian cultural memory that will also inform Chapter 3. The dissertation will thus move chronologically from an analysis of Austrian cultural memory during the postwar period until Waldheim (the subject of this chapter) to a greater focus on post-Cold War memory in Chapter 3. This chronological progression will be paralleled by a thematic shift as well from regional memorial sites (and the memory of German-speaking refugees at these sites) to more local German-speaking refugee memorial sites.

I. The Maria Taferl Pilgrimage Church and Lower Austrian Regional Memorial Site

The Lower Austrian *Landesehrenmal* at the Maria Taferl pilgrimage church was designed by Heribert Rath in 1962 as the fifth station of the Roman Catholic Marian devotion, *The Seven Sorrows of Mary* (*Die Sieben Schmerzen Mariens*) along the renovated “path of repentance” (*Bußweg*) to the pilgrimage church, which is itself dedicated to the *Mater Dolorosa* (*the Sorrowful Mother*). Similar to the fourteen *Stations of the Cross*, which focus on Christ’s passion, *The Seven Sorrows of Mary* is another Roman Catholic liturgical devotion that concentrates on seven sorrowful events or stations in the life of Mary, the mother of Jesus. It includes:

- (1) the prophecy of Simeon,
- (2) the flight into Egypt,
- (3) the loss of the child Jesus in the Temple of Jerusalem,
- (4) Mary’s encounter with Jesus during his Passion,

- (5) the Crucifixion of Jesus on Mount Calvary,
- (6) Jesus' descent from the cross, and
- (7) the burial of Jesus.

In the case of Maria Taferl, the stations along the path of repentance begin by the docks in the village of Marbach, where shipborne pilgrims would historically arrive. The next three stations dot the path as it slowly ascends the hill, upon which the pilgrimage church is located. The *Landesehrenmal*, or fifth station, is located at the summit of the hill, a symbolic Mount Calvary. But the main attraction for pilgrims is likely the sixth station. Prominently displayed in the church, the sixth station is the relic in the main altarpiece, a seventeenth century wooden Pieta carved from an oak tree that, according to tradition, held miraculous healing powers. The final station is an altar in the church square that overlooks the Danube and the Alps.



Figure 11. The Pieta in the Maria Taferl pilgrimage church, copper plate, 1850. Photo from Wikipedia.

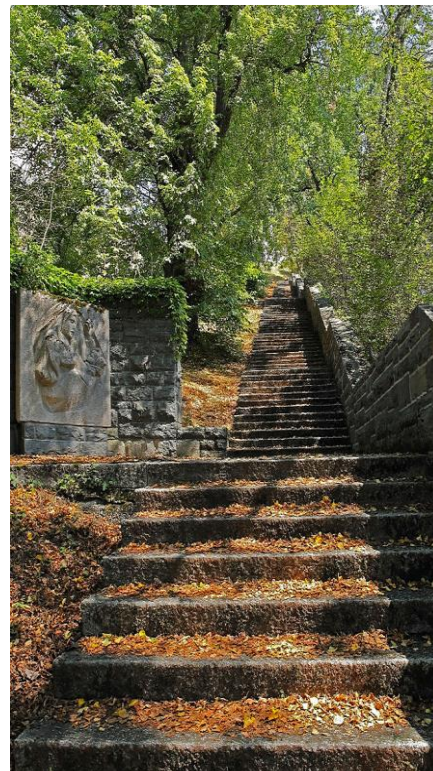


Figure 12. The first station with the steps along the path of repentance [Bußweg] to Maria Taferl. Photo from Wikipedia.

The Seven Sorrows of Mary represent some of the most iconic scenes in Christian art, putting local Austrian artist Heribert Rath's stone relief sculptures in implicit dialogue with historic representations and interpretations. Yet, for this analysis, the *Stabat Mater* (the fifth station and *Landesehrenmal*) will remain the main focus. In Rath's portrayal, Mary stands, in accordance with tradition, on the right of the crucified Jesus with the Apostle John on Jesus' left. But she neither weeps with downturned head, nor looks up anxiously at her son. Instead, in an astonishing departure from tradition, her back is turned to her son, as she stares directly at the viewer, her gaze drifting over the altar dedicated to "UNSEREN TOTEN HELDEN."

Yet, Mary's gaze could also be interpreted as directed towards her son, symbolized in the surrogate Christ figures of the dead soldiers and visiting veterans. In this reading, the soldiers' state sanctioned violence (or even war crimes) is transformed into martyrdom for the nation. Christ-like in the sacrifice of their lives for the nation, the soldiers are symbolized by the altar dedicated to "Our Dead Heroes." The sanctifying, symbolic connection between the soldiers and the altar can be read on at least two levels. Firstly, in its resemblance to a coffin, the altar itself represents the final resting place of the soldiers.¹¹² Indeed, consecrated Catholic altars traditionally hold within them an altar stone, i.e. a bone or relic of a saint. In this case, the soldiers symbolically occupy that holy space and in that role are made holy. Secondly, the altar's ancient function as a place of sacrifice also symbolizes the soldiers' cross. The altar's horizontal plane indicates that the soldiers' cross is the battlefield upon which they are slain. In thus sanctifying the battlefield, the war is made a holy war.

¹¹² Moreover, both the interior and exterior of the *Ehrenmal* itself is remarkably reminiscent of a tomb.



Figure 13. The interior of the *Landesehrenmal* at Maria Taferl, or the fifth station (Stabat Mater). Photo from Wikipedia.

As the viewer enters the space, simultaneously war memorial and Marian devotional site, his/her gaze is mirrored by that of Mary. Rath's Mary sees her son in "Our Dead Heroes" while the viewer sees the crucified Christ through the sacrifice of the nation's sons. In a religious sense, this refraction appears appropriate for the contemporary postwar moment of the Marian devotional site, for the religious pilgrim is indeed encouraged to meditate both on the life of Mary and her sorrows as well as how those sorrows are realized and made present in his/her own life. In this way, the focus is not on Mary or Jesus per se, but rather on the relationship between Mary as the mother of God bearing witness to her son's sacrifice, on the one hand, and the life experiences of the religious pilgrim on the other, who, in this case, bears witness to the fallen

Lower Austrian soldiers. Mary's suffering is actualized in the pilgrims' visualization of and emotional mediation on the death of their neighbors or family members. Yet, in doing so, the viewer takes on a distinctly Marian and thereby maternal perspective (in contrast to the Stations of the Cross) that casts the Lower Austrian Heimat (and by extension the Austrian nation) as a feminine witness to the death and sacrifice of her sons.

Moreover, the viewer's gaze is not merely mirrored by that of Mary but drawn to it as the focal point of the room. The *Stabat Mater* is located at the visual intersection of the vertical line drawn between the crucified Christ, the altar and the viewer pilgrim on the one hand, and the parallel horizontal lines drawn by both the altar as a battlefield and the stone reliefs depicting soldiers from various wars central to Austrian memory and identity, on the other. In this moment, time collapses. Places of memory, namely scenes from major Austrian and European conflicts dating back to the 30 Years' War,¹¹³ are depicted neither chronologically nor teleologically but instead as simultaneously collapsing in the eternal and universal truth of Christ's passion. Here, as Sarah Lenzi has argued in the *The Stations of the Cross: Placelessness of Medieval Christian Piety*, liturgical time flows nonlinearly. The chronology of procession inherent in the ritual of the *Seven Sorrows of Mary* is juxtaposed with the historicity of an iconic moment that is repeatedly made present in the life of the pilgrim. "History, eternity and the present moment can coexist, as we see in Savonarola's tractate, and these can be brought together by ritual or meditative action."¹¹⁴

These time-bending properties of liturgy have the power, according to Lenzi, to bring devotional pilgrims out of both place and time and/or teleport them elsewhere/when. "Liturgy

¹¹³ The scenes include the following dates: 1618-1648 (30 Years' War), 1683 (Battle of Vienna), 1716-1718 (Austro-Turkish War), 1756-1763 (Seven Years' War), 1809 and 1813-1814 (Napolonic Wars), 1914-1918 (World War I), and 1939-1945 (World War II).

¹¹⁴ Lenzi, Sarah. *The Stations of the Cross*, 197.

works to erase time and transport participants to another time. In so doing, the liturgy also transports them to a different place: anywhere can be holy, if one or two gather and there enact a liturgy that brings them out of time, out of place.”¹¹⁵ This relative ambivalence in Christian liturgy towards both space/place and time has significant, underexplored implications for those yearning for a lost place or time, such as postwar refugees and expellees. Indeed, in his landmark 1968 study *Wallfahrt und Heimatverlust: Ein Beitrag zur religiösen Volkskunde der Gegenwart*, Georg Schroubek has documented over 200 pilgrimage sites in Germany and Austria, including the Maria Taferl pilgrimage site, that were suddenly being visited by thousands of German-speaking refugees and expellees in the aftermath of the Second World War. Aside from assiduously documenting the hundreds of sites, Schroubek also analyzes the phenomenon of the “expellee pilgrimage” [Heimatvertriebenenwallfahrt] from historical, sociological and psychological perspectives. But rather than consider the role of ritual in space and place, Schroubek sees the sudden boom in folk religious devotion among postwar “expellees” as a transportable aspect of Heimat. “Mit dem Verlust des räumlichen werden die anderen, bis zu einem gewissen Grade transplantierbaren Komponenten von ‘Heimat’ oft überhaupt bewusst oder bekommen jedenfalls eine stärkere Bedeutung.”¹¹⁶ In other words, rather than consider the ways in which ritual may work to transport “expellees” to another place or time, Schroubek argues that the pilgrimage ritual of the newly devout “expellees” was itself a transplantable component of their lost home that they brought with them to their new home. In fact, Schroubek contends that these pilgrimages have a primarily ersatz character that serves to compensate for loss and provide psychological relief.¹¹⁷ “Die Funktion der landsmannschaftlich gebundenen

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 190.

¹¹⁶ Schroubek, “Der Exulant Als Peregrinus: Zum Religiösen Verhalten Katholischer Immigrantengruppen,” 147.

¹¹⁷ This “ersatz” character includes the newly created copies of relics and holy images that were lost to the other side of the iron curtain and which feature prominently in the German-speaking refugee pilgrimages.

HV-en Wallfahrt ist also ganz deutlich die temporäre Schaffung von Heimat und damit, bewußt oder nicht, ein Heilmittel gegen das Heimweh.”¹¹⁸ While copies of devotional images lost behind the iron curtain certainly proliferated, I argue against Schroubek’s substitutional thinking that views these copies and the pilgrimage ritual itself as a kind of temporary surrogate for the lost Heimat, whose primary function is the recreation of the lost home as a sort of antidote to homesickness. Instead, the endurance of this form of pilgrimage to the present day suggests that these images have taken on lives of their own, perhaps even becoming more real and meaningful to German than the now accessible originals in the former home.

Clearly then, the phenomenon of the “expellee” pilgrimage is a complex one, involving a variety of media, from the visual image to music and liturgical ritual. Rather than stone witnesses, testifying to an unchanging past, these memorial sites evolve dynamically both in terms of their use and their form. Moreover, the fact that these rituals take place in specific sites – from German-speaking refugee memorials and monuments to prominent pilgrimage churches with much longer religious traditions - points to the palimpsestic nature of these memorials. These layers of memory, in turn, may sometimes contribute to the invisibility of “expellee” memory at sites like Maria Taferl.

For example, the city of Maria Taferl’s website describes the Landesgedenkstätte as being intended for “...all those that did not return from various wars, a place of thanks for those that could happily see the Heimat once more, and finally a warning reminder [Mahnmal] for the many tens of thousands that were expelled from their homes.”¹¹⁹ Such a description of the Lower

¹¹⁸ Schroubek, *Wallfahrt und Heimatverlust*, 341.

¹¹⁹ “Diese am westlichen Ende des Kirchenplatzes errichtete Bastion ist eine Gedenkstätte für alle diejenigen, die aus den verschiedenen Kriegen nicht mehr zurückgekehrt sind, eine Dankesstätte die glücklich die Heimat wieder sehen konnten [sic] und schließlich ein Mahnmal für die vielen Zehntausenden, welche von ihrer Heimat vertrieben wurden.” <http://www.maria-taferl.gv.at/Sehenswuerdigkeiten/Landesehrenmal>

Austrian regional memorial would suggest that German-speaking refugees are also meant to be included; but if not directly referenced in the memorial complex itself, where can the visitor find traces of the “expellee” pilgrimage? Unlike the Lower Austrian Maria Dreieichen pilgrimage site, where German-speaking refugees are directly referenced in the stations of the cross and in a prominent plaque dedicated to the memory of the many “expellee” pilgrimages, in Maria Taferl the German-speaking refugees and expellees remembered their harrowing experience and their lost home in more subtle ways. For the German-speaking refugee pilgrim, the second station of the *Seven Sorrows of Mary*, i.e. the flight of the Holy Family to Egypt, is of particular importance. Schroubek has shown how in countless examples across Germany and Austria, churches or new pilgrimage sites were dedicated to the Holy Family’s flight to Egypt and direct parallels were drawn between the experience of the Holy Family and that of the postwar German-speaking refugee. Within the context of the Seven Sorrows of Mary, pilgrims meditated upon these parallels, for example, in newly composed songs for “expellee” pilgrimages:

Auf Flüchtlingsstraßen, Frau von der Heimat,
eilst nach Ägypten fliehend dahin;
erlebtest selber, was wir erlitten,
als wir der Heimat mußten entfliehn.

Im Lande Ägypten, Frau von der Heimat,
hast du der Rückkehr gläubig geharrt.
Im Heimatsehnen sei du uns Vorbild,
stets erst zu suchen Heimat in Gott.¹²⁰

¹²⁰ Schroubek, *Wallfahrt und Heimatverlust*, 296.



Figure 14. The Second Station of the Seven Sorrows of Mary in Maria Taferl. Photo by author.



Figure 15. "Nimm das Knäblein und seine Mutter, fliehe nach Ägypten 'Matth. 2, 13.'" Dedicated to the pilgrims. Photo by author.

Similarly unassuming, the plaques and stained glass window dedicated to Klemens Maria Hofbauer in the basilica of Maria Taferl were another main attraction for the German-speaking refugees (from Southern Moravia, in particular).¹²¹ Hofbauer was revered as a Catholic priest and saint from Taßwitz in Southern Moravia and is also the patron saint of Vienna. Moreover, Hofbauer was himself expelled from his parish in Warsaw for political reasons in 1807 and returned to Vienna to spend the remainder of his life there. Consequently, Hofbauer became a highly symbolic figure for the postwar “expellees” from Southern Moravia and their self-proclaimed patron saint. In fact, the first “expellee” organization to form in postwar Vienna, the Catholic Klemensgemeinde, was named after him.

In sum, despite documented evidence of “expellee” pilgrimages to Maria Taferl,¹²² German-speaking refugees and expellees did not leave a visible mark on the memorial landscape of Maria Taferl. Instead, they placed particular focus on a saint who is traditionally not particularly revered at the Maria Taferl pilgrimage church, and who is only referenced in small plaques and a window above a side altar. By emphasizing Hofbauer and the second station of the *Seven Sorrows of Mary*, German-speaking refugees and expellees imbued the existing memorial infrastructure with meaning relevant to their unique life experiences. As such, they were not excluded from the integrationist narrative of the regional memorial site, but they were not directly referenced either. Rather than have their unique experiences recognized and codetermine the memorial landscape, they adapted to it, assimilating in a manner that left no explicit visible traces.

While the fifth station (or *Landesehrenmal*) did not hold particular significance for German-speaking refugees and expellees, it is important to consider why this station in particular

¹²¹ *Glaube und Heimat: Rundbrief der Klemensgemeinde*. March 1976, pg. 3.

¹²² Schroubek. *Wallfahrt und Heimatverlust*, 133.

was chosen as the regional memorial site (or, alternatively, not all the stations of *Seven Sorrows*). In this context, the role of the Kameradschaftsbund (a far-right leaning veterans' group in Austria) as one of the initiators of the regional memorial site is significant. The liturgical devotion of the *Seven Sorrows of Mary* provided a framework that both German-speaking refugees and the far-right veteran's group, the Kameradschaftsbund, used to give meaning to their wartime experiences. By designating the deaths of Lower Austrian WWII soldiers as a sacrifice for the Lower Austrian Heimat, comparable to Jesus' sacrifice on the cross, the soldiers are rehabilitated and their role in the Wehrmacht whitewashed. Indeed, the larger context of the *Seven Sorrows* ought to be remembered, for the selection of the fifth station of Jesus' crucifixion as the site of the *Ehrenmal* and soldiers' memorial is certainly telling. Rather than the arguably more appropriate (for the repose of the dead) seventh station (i.e. the burial of Jesus), the fifth station ensures the centrality of the trope of sacrifice, and the visual bearing witness to sacrifice (from the Marian perspective). Moreover, the inscriptions on the exterior of the *Ehrenmal* make the parallel between Jesus' sacrifice for the sins of the world and that of the soldiers for the Heimat more explicit. Inscribed on a metal plaque are two inscriptions; firstly, a verse from scripture that reminds the pilgrim that this is in fact the fifth station of the *Seven Sorrows*¹²³ and secondly, a dedication to "all Lower Austrians that gave their lives in combat for society [die Allgemeinheit]."¹²⁴

¹²³ This first inscription reads: "Beim Kreuze Jesu standen seine Mutter... (Joh. 19.25) Gewidmet vom NÖ Kameradschaftsbund." (By Jesus' cross stood his mother, John 19:25....dedicated by the Lower Austrian Veteran's Association.)

¹²⁴ The inscription on the lower dedication plaque reads: "Allen Niederösterreichern, die im Einsatz für die Allgemeinheit ihr Leben gelassen haben zum bleibenden Gedenken." (In continued memory of all the Lower Austrians that gave their lives for the general public.)



Figure 16. The exterior of the *Landesehrenmal* at Maria Taferl, or the fifth station (*Stabat Mater*). Photo by author.



Figure 17. Dedication plaques with the coat of arms of Austrian military, law enforcement, Austrian Red Cross and the town of Maria Taferl. Photo by author.



Figure 18. Dedication plaques with the fifth station of the *Seven Sorrows* or *Stabat Mater* (right). Photo by author.

Although neither the nation nor the Heimat is directly invoked in the dedication plaque,¹²⁵ the plaque makes it clear that the Austrian postwar society is predicated on sacrifice. The point is also elucidated by the choice of the fifth station, the *Stabat Mater*, for the *Landesehrenmal*. In *Symbols of Defeat in the Construction of National Identity*, political

¹²⁵ According to the dedication plaque, Lower Austrians allegedly gave their lives for general public itself [die Allgemeinheit].

scientist Steven Mock has argued for the centrality of sacrifice in nationalism. According to Mock:

Although the *ethnie* may come into existence by its birth, the nation comes into being only through sacrifice, and where that sacrifice is embodied in a myth of defeat, identification with the totem in its moment of defeat is transformed into the key distinction between national insiders and outsiders. Just as the whole of the clan was required to participate in the ritual sacrifice and consumption of the totem, just as Christians are defined by their identification with and ritual consumption of Christ, the whole of the nation must identify vicariously with the moment in which the totem is defeated and thereby take on their share of the guilty fruits of this sacred crime...¹²⁶

According to this logic, the national insiders are those that identify with the defeat at the hands of the Allies and the national outsiders are those that died in Nazi concentration camps or in resistance to the Third Reich. Uhl made this clear in her analysis of the site by pointing to the exclusion of the year 1938 and thus the Anschluss of Austria (the memorial encodes the Second World War as 1939-45) as well as the refusal of the Kameradschaftsbund to participate in the memorial of the murdered priests of the diocese. What is unique to my analysis of the site, however, is the recognition of the symbiosis of religious narrative frameworks and nationalism. More specifically, I point out the ease with which Catholic ritual devotions such as the *Seven Sorrows of Mary* and the *Stations of the Cross* are appropriated to nationalist ends and used to resurrect the Second Austrian Republic.

The ease of this appropriation and the suitability of religious ritual to nationalist ends, has likely to do with the basic human needs both world views address. Drawing on the work of Benedict Anderson and other theorists of nationalism, Steven Mock has made this very point.¹²⁷ Indeed, while religion has traditionally been the discourse concerned with the role of the self in the universe, Benedict Anderson has shown that nationalism's ability to serve a similar role has

¹²⁶ Mock, *Symbols of Defeat in the Construction of National Identity*. 91.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, 44-49.

been key to its success. By providing explanation and comfort in the face of suffering and death, by offering a sense of continuity to a community presented as limited, nationalism provides meaning in the face of unspeakable tragedy. Mock puts it thusly, “For it is through this sense of being part of something greater than oneself that the nation provides a sense of continuity, placing personal sacrifice and suffering in the context of a higher principle.”¹²⁸ But beyond providing meaning in the face of death, the centrality of sacrifice in both nationalism and Christianity also lends itself to easy appropriations.

II. The Carinthian Regional Memorial Site at the Kreuzbergkirche in Klagenfurt

Like the appropriation of the fifth station of the *Seven Sorrows of Mary* at Maria Taferl for nationalist ends, the Carinthian *Landesgedächtnisstätte* (or regional memorial site) in Klagenfurt is also host to an arguably nationalist interpretation of the Second World War; but, in this case, it is inscribed on the Catholic devotional ritual of the *Stations of the Cross*. As mentioned in the introduction, the regional memorial site for Carinthia is located in the provincial capital of Klagenfurt. Here, between 1954 and 1959, the allegedly derelict, centuries-old *Stations of the Cross* on the Kreuzberg hill, located directly beneath the Kreuzbergkirche, was renovated.¹²⁹ But rather than conserve the Stations’ historical form, the city held an artistic contest to redesign the Stations as the Carinthian regional memorial.

The Catholic devotional ritual of the Stations of the Cross has a long history, with roots in the increased medieval emphasis on Christ’s suffering in the 12th Century, by influential

¹²⁸ Ibid., 46.

¹²⁹ “Kreuzberg-Gedenkstätte Ein Schmuckstück Des Landes. Tausende Spender Ließen Das Werk Wirklichkeit Werden - Am Sonntag Feierliche Einweihung - Jeder Bezirk Hat Seine Gedenkstätte - Eine Bedeutende Künstlerische Leistung.” *Volkszeitung*, Number 93, 24 Apr. 1959, p. 4. According to the newspaper article: “Jahrelang bot die Kreuzweganlage unter der Kreuzbergkirche in Klagenfurt einen recht trostlosen und verwahrlosten Anblick, bis eine Gruppe von ideal gesinnten Klagenfurtern ans Werk ging und hier zur Schaffung einer Landesgedächtnisstätte aufrief.”

theologians such as Bernhard of Clairvaux.¹³⁰ At that time, Passion literature became increasingly popular and later, particularly in the late Middle Ages, so did passion dramas. While scholars once viewed the Stations of the Cross as an imitative practice, one that sought make the *Via Dolorosa*, or path of Jesus' passion through Jerusalem, available to those unable to travel and make the pilgrimage to the Holy Land, Sarah Lenzi has sought to draw apart the devotional acts of religious travel and the Stations of the Cross. In doing so, she has shown how the Stations are in fact a European invention, only later inscribed on the landscape of Jerusalem, following the prescribed European model of 14 stations as dictated by the Holy See in 1731.¹³¹

While the number and content of the stations varied before their standardization 1731, the stations were quantitatively and qualitatively prescribed by the Church when the *Stations of the Cross* at the Kreuzbergkirche were renovated in the 1950s. Nonetheless, the fourteen orthodox stations on the Kreuzberg hill are accompanied by two extra stations entitled simply "Ölberg" (Gethsemane) and dedicated to (1) "Menschen in Angst und Todesnot" and (2) "Den Verratenen und Enttäuschten." Based on the accompanying mosaics, these scenes from Gethsemane are easily identifiable as the Agony in the Garden, on the one hand, and the Kiss of Judas (Betrayal of Christ) on the other. In addition to these sixteen stations, there is also a tomb-like structure or memorial chapel "Gedächtniskapelle"¹³² containing an altar with a "book of the dead" and a

¹³⁰ Lenzi, Sarah. *The Stations of the Cross*, 10-1. See also: *Kreuzwege im Osnabrücker Land: Kreismuseum in Bersenbrück ; 31. Mai bis 20. Juni 1993 : Folgeausstellungen in Gemeinden des Landkreises*. Landkreis Osnabrück, Kulturamt, 1993. 13-6.

¹³¹ The standardized 14 stations between the eighteenth and twentieth centuries are as follows: (1) Jesus is condemned to death; (2) Jesus carries His cross; (3) Jesus falls for the first time; (4) Jesus meets His mother; (5) Simon of Cyrene helps Jesus carry the cross; (6) Veronica wipes the face of Jesus; (7) Jesus falls for the second time; (8) Jesus meets the women of Jerusalem; (9) Jesus falls for the third time; (10) Jesus is stripped of His clothes; (11) Jesus is nailed to the cross; (12) Jesus dies on the cross; (13) Jesus is taken down from the cross; (14) Jesus is placed in the tomb. First in 1991, Pope John Paul II updated the 14 stations to more closely draw on scenes from scripture, rather than the medieval cultural tradition (six of the traditional fourteen stations have no basis in the Gospels).

¹³² See *Kärntner Volksblatt*, 1959, no. 17, pg. 6.

mosaic of the risen Christ. This mosaic in the memorial chapel, the seventeenth such mosaic at the memorial complex by local artist Karl Bauer, indicates that the chapel is too part of the stations, serving as a sort of seventeenth station.

The inclusion of these three additional stations are significant, not for their theological unorthodoxy, but rather for the decided emphasis on betrayal¹³³ and redemption or rebirth.¹³⁴ A closer look at the mosaic accompanying the first station,¹³⁵ quickly reveals that the passion of Christ as portrayed in the Stations at the Carinthian Landesgedenkstätte is in fact an allegory for the Austrian nation during the Second World War. While Pilate washes his hands of responsibility, the red and white garb of Christ personifies the Austrian nation. Moreover, the



Figure 19. Station I: “Den Unschuldigen zum Tode Verurteilt.” Photo by author.



Figure 20. Extra Station at Gethsemane: “Den Verratenen und Enttäuschten.” Photo by author.

¹³³ As exemplified in the extra Station portraying the Kiss of Judas.

¹³⁴ As exemplified in memorial chapel with a seventeenth mosaic by Karl Bauer, depicting the Resurrection.

¹³⁵ i.e. Jesus is Condemned to Death (or as per the dedication “Den Unschuldigen zum Tode Verurteilt”).

dedication underscores the Moscow Declaration of 1943, Austria's innocence, and the myth of Austria as the first victim of Nazism.

As such, one can only reasonably interpret the "betrayed and disappointed" (in the dedication of the extra station representing the Kiss of Judas) as the Austrian people themselves. But who then does Judas represent? In light of the longstanding anti-Semitic trope of the Jews as collectively guilty and responsible for the betrayal and sentencing of Christ to death (as well as the contemporary historical context of the Stab-in-the-Back myth), the inclusion of this station within the allegorical context of Austria and the Second World War seems at best unnecessary and questionable, and at worst anti-Semitic. Furthermore, this decided emphasis on betrayal, serves to distract from Austrian guilt and co-responsibility, casting Austrians as innocent victims of a nefarious (Jewish?) plot to undermine the nation.

The depiction of the Austrian nation as a guiltless, Christ-like heroic victim or martyr of the Second World War serves to whitewash the role of Austrians in the Wehrmacht and the German war effort, ignoring Austrian co-responsibility for war crimes and the treatment of their Jewish neighbors. In her article "Was Jesus in the Wehrmacht? National-Religious Commemoration in Central Europe," Israeli art historian Shimrit Shriki-Hilber argues that commemorating Austrian Wehrmacht soldiers within the salvific context of the Stations serves the psychological needs of postwar Austrians.¹³⁶ By dedicating the three falls of Jesus' passion to the three branches of the Wehrmacht (Nazi military),¹³⁷ Karl Bauer's version of the *Stations of the Cross* provides an ultimately exculpatory narrative of loss and redemption through Christ's sacrifice on the cross. In this way, any collective responsibility for Austrian war crimes (or sins)

¹³⁶ Shriki-Hilber, Shimrit. "Was Jesus in the Wehrmacht? National-Religious Commemoration in Central Europe." RIHA Journal, vol. 0150–0176, no. Special Issue: War Graves/Die Bauaufgabe Soldatenfriedhof, 1914-1989, June 2017. <https://www.riha-journal.org/articles/2017/0150-0176-special-issue-war-graves/0158-shriki-hilber>.

¹³⁷ Namely, the army / Heer (station 3), the navy / Kriegsmarine (station 7), and the air force / Luftwaffe (station 9).

are not publicly addressed or confessed but, instead, responsibility is only meditated upon at the level of individual reflection.

What is perhaps most the most unique outcome of Karl Bauer's overlaying of Austrian postwar social memory on the religious framework of the *Stations* are its highly integrationist effects, which are particularly important for the memory of German-speaking refugees and expellees. In fact, this memorial is perhaps the only regional or national memorial in Austria that directly references the memory of German-speaking refugees and expellees. According to the Austrian Federal Office for Statistics, between 1951 and 1961 eighty-nine percent of the population of Austria identified itself as Roman Catholic.¹³⁸ Within the context of this extremely homogeneously Catholic country, it was possible for Bauer to use the *Stations* to remember differing "victim" groups, whose commemoration in another context may highlight the contradictions of Austrian memory culture that Heidemarie Uhl has demonstrated. Indeed, the *Stations* explicitly remember not only the war veterans (both soldiers and nurses) as victims of the war *against Nazism* but also German-speaking refugees and expellees (Station 10), POWs (Station 11), and the murdered priests (Station 12), who were presumably victims *of Nazism*. As mentioned previously, Heidemarie Uhl has demonstrated at least one prominent example, in which the Austrian war veterans' association refused to participate in a ceremony honoring the murdered priests of the diocese as they represented the resistance (to Nazism) narrative. Yet, here at the Carinthian Landesgedächtnisstätte the murdered priests are commemorated alongside the war veterans, POWs,¹³⁹ civilians, and even the German-speaking refugees and expellees, whose victimhood is typically invisible in prominent public space in Austria.

¹³⁸http://www.statistik.at/web_de/static/bevoelkerung_nach_dem_religionsbekenntnis_und_bundeslaendern_1951_bis_2001_022885.pdf

¹³⁹ As Shriki-Hilber has shown, the POWs are remembered in station 11 are portrayed as victims of Communism, being nailed to the iron curtain by a red, hammer-wielding Stalin figure.

Table 1. Stations of the Cross at the Kreuzbergkirche in Klagenfurt. (Listed with each Station’s group dedication, English title, and financier.)

| | Dedication | Title of Station | Financier ¹⁴⁰ |
|-----------|--|--|--|
| Ölberg | Menschen in Angst und Todesnot | Agony in the Garden | Katholische Farbstudenten Kärntens (KMV) |
| Ölberg | Den Verratenen und Enttäuschten | Kiss of Judas (Betrayal of Christ in Gethsemane) | Bundesminister für Verteidigung Ferdinand Graf |
| 1 | Den Unschuldigen zum Tode Verurteilten | Jesus is Condemned to Death | Gemeindeverband Klagenfurt |
| 2 | Den Kriegsoptionen in der Heimat | Jesus is Made to Bear His Cross | Gemeindeverband Villach |
| 3 | Auf den Schlachtfeldern Gefallenen | Jesus Falls for the First Time | Gemeindeverband Hermagor |
| 4 | Den Schmerzensmüttern der Großen Kriegsnot | Jesus Meets His Mother | Kärntner Frauen |
| 5 | Den Opfern Soldatischen Samariterdienstes | Simon of Cyrene is Made to Bear the Cross | Kärntner Ärzte |
| 6 | Den Pflegeschwestern der Krieger | Veronica Wipes the Face of Jesus | Kärntner Pflegeschwestern |
| 7 | Den in den Weltmeeren Untergegangenen | Jesus Falls for the Second Time | Gemeindeverband Spittal an der Drau / St. Veit an der Glan |
| 8 | Den Kindern, die dem Kriege zum Opfer fielen | The Women of Jerusalem Weep over Jesus | Kärntner Kinder |
| 9 | Den in Luftkämpfen Gefallenen | Jesus Falls for the Third Time | Gemeindeverband Wolfsberg |
| 10 | Den im Kriege ihrer Heimat und Habe Beraubten | Jesus is Stripped of His Garments | Volksdeutsche Heimatvertriebene¹⁴¹ |
| 11 | Den Opfern der Kriegsgefangenschaft | Jesus is Nailed to the Cross | Gemeindeverband Völkermarkt |
| 12 | Den Opfern priesterlichen Dienstes | Jesus Dies on the Cross | Priester der Diözese Gurk |
| 13 | Dem Unbekannten Soldaten | Jesus is Taken Down from the Cross | Stadt Klagenfurt |
| 14 | Allen Kriegsoptionen der Welt | Jesus is Laid in the Tomb | Land Kärnten |

¹⁴⁰ Columns one, two and four of this table are taken directly from the memorial chapel (Gedächtniskapelle), which also serves as the final station of the regional memorial and contains an altar with a “Book of the Dead.” I added the additional third column (Title of Station) myself to make it clear which stations are referenced by the dedications and accompanying mosaics. Unfortunately, neither local newspapers, nor the examined German-speaking refugee newspapers that mentioned the memorial provide any more details on the monetary involvement of the groups listed as financiers of the individual stations. According to Shriki-Hilber, there is a *Tätigkeitsbericht des Bauausschusses des Vereins der Freunde der Gedächtnisstätte am Kreuzbergl* in the archive of the diocese of Gurk that would likely shed light on the monetary details. Unfortunately, I was unable to access this archive. Thus, questions such as how the “children of Carinthia” financed the eighth station as well as the monetary involvement of the “expellees” is unclear. The role of money and extent to which the “expellees” (Volksdeutsche Heimatvertriebene) shaped the final outcome of the overlaying of postwar Austrian memory onto Christ’s passion in the *Stations* represent important unanswered questions that would require more archival research.

¹⁴¹ The bolding is mine and meant to draw attention to the Station dedicated to the German-speaking refugees. The *Sudetenpost* described the Station dedicated to the “expellees” thusly: “So wurde gerade die zehnte Kreuzwegstation (Kleiderberaubung Christi) den Heimatvertriebenen zugedacht. Das Mahnbild, ein brennendes Haus, in Mosaik dargestellt, und die Inschrift – ‘den im Kriege ihrer Heimat und Habe Beraubten’ – versinnbildlichen die schwere



Figure 21. Station 10: Jesus is Stripped of His Garments. Dedicated to “Den im Kriege ihrer Heimat und Habe beraubten.” (German-speaking Refugees and Expellees.) Photo by author.



Figure 22. Station 11: Jesus is Nailed to the Cross. Dedicated to “Den Opfern der Kriegsgefangenschaft.” (POWs.) Photo by author.

Writing the Carinthian regional memorial onto the *Stations of the Cross* has both deeply public and private components. It is a public place of memory in the politically exculpatory narrative and in the participation of elites from local politics, the Church and the academy. In addition to elites such as Klagenfurt mayor Aussenwinkler, City Council members and parliamentarians, local Bishop Dr. Köstner, Professor Karl Bauer, local poet Dolores Wieser and various veteran groups (including the prominent Austrian Kameradschaftsbund), thousands of locals filled the streets for the official opening of the renovated memorial site.¹⁴² On the other

Not, die über die Heimatvertriebenen im Jahre 1945 und später hereinbrach. Am Sonntag, 26. April, wurde diese Gedächtnisstätte unter großer Beteiligung der Heimatvertriebenen eingeweiht. Eine Abordnung der volksdeutschen Landsmannschaften unter der Anführung des VLÖ-Vorsitzenden Dipl. Ing. Tönnies legte an der Krypta einen Kranz nieder, der mit den Farben einzelner Volksgruppen geschmückt war...” See “Mahnmal Für Heimatvertriebene.” *Sudetenpost. Offizielles Organ der Sudetendeutschen Landsmannschaft Österreich (SLOe)*, 30 May 1959, p. 5.

¹⁴² “Einweihung Der Gedächtnisstätte Am Kreuzbergl.” *Kärntner Volksblatt*, no. 17, 1959, p. 7.

hand, the religious narrative of redemption as articulated in the Stations, so central to Christianity, also has a deeply private component of individual contemplation and meditation, despite its form as a public ritual. Through the Christ-like sacrifice or Passion of ordinary Austrians, who each had their own cross to bear in the Second World War, the Austrian state was patriotically reborn as the Second Republic.



Figure 23. Memorial chapel with dedication: “1914-1919, 1939-1945. Ehrung den Toten, Mahnung den Lebenden.” Photo by author.

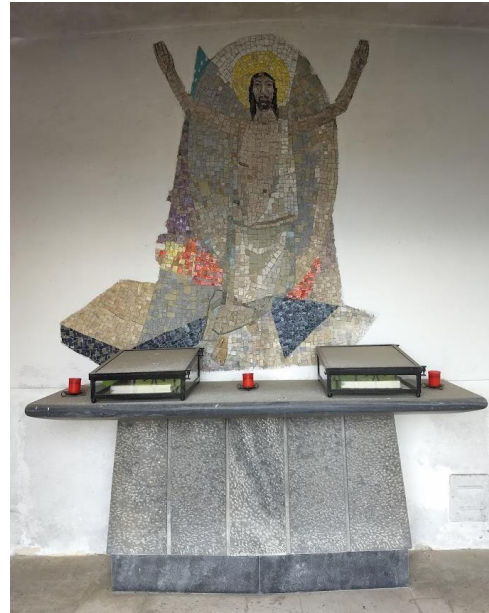


Figure 24. Altar in memorial chapel with Totenbuch and mosaic of the risen Christ as extra Station. Photo by author.

Thus, this form of public commemoration under the auspices of both Church and state was indeed psychologically and spiritually healing, as Shriki-Hilber has argued, but also politically and socially useful in its integrative function. Its catholic, universalizing message of passion and redemption allowed otherwise contradictory memories of disparate groups to occupy the same memorial space. The lack of debate on the right or even mention of the memorial in left-leaning local newspapers such as the *Kärntner Nachrichten* (1958-1969) and communist

“Kärntnens Gefallene Sollen Nicht Vergessen Sein. Krieg Bedeutet Kreuzweg - Feierliche Einweihung Der Kreuzbergl-Gedenkstätte - Ein Ort Der Stillen Besinnung - Lebhaftige Anteilnahme Der Bevölkerung.” *Volkszeitung*, no. 96, 28 Apr. 1959, p. 5.

Volkswille (1945-1990) testifies to the consensus building power of these narrative strategies. At the same time, however, the memorial is, in today's Austria, deeply problematic in its portrayal of innocent victimhood, denial of any collective responsibility and arguably anti-Semitic inclusion of the station featuring the Kiss of Judas.



Figure 25. Anterior entrance to Kreuzbergl regional memorial site. Located at foot of church on Kreuzbergl hill and overlooking central axis of the provincial capital of Klagenfurt. Photo by author.



Figure 26. Crucified Christ at summit of Calvary hill behind the Kreuzberglkirche. Photo by author.

In summary, in this chapter I have demonstrated two contrasting ways in which German-speaking expellees and refugees are represented in the regional memorial sites of two different Austrian provinces. At the Lower Austrian Regional Memorial Site Maria Taferl German-speaking expellees and refugees assimilated into the existing memorial landscape, assigning their own unique meanings to preexisting memorials. In contrast, German-speaking refugees played an active role in publicly assigning meaning and codetermining the memorial landscape of the *Stations* at the Carinthian regional memorial site at the Kreuzberglkirche in Klagenfurt. There German-speaking refugees and expellees proposed and financed a station dedicated to their own unique form of victimhood that was also publicly commemorated within the context of the Austrian national passion narrative. In both examples, previously underexamined religious scripts and rituals are central to the integrationist and exculpatory narratives that Uhl has

described as the “populist counternarrative” to the official state-sponsored narrative of national resistance. Furthermore, at both the Maria Taferl and Kreuzbergl memorial sites religion and nationalism work together,¹⁴³ sharing the trope of sacrifice as their fulcrum. Finally, both memorial sites are in fact palimpsests of memory with long memorial traditions. By focusing on one subset of that memory, namely that of German-speaking refugees and expellees, I peel back the layers of meaning-making to reveal how that memory comes into dialogue with the larger Austrian memory culture. In this way, the German-speaking refugee memorial discourse is not solipsistic but speaks to and is interwoven within the larger Austrian memory culture.

In focusing on the representation of German-speaking refugee and expellee memory at these two regional memory sites, I have drawn on the work of Sarah Lenzi to point to the space and time-bending powers of religious ritual and their relevance to German-speaking refugee memory. While that connection has not been a major focus of this chapter, it will play a more prominent role in the next. Rather than delve directly into the details of more strictly German-speaking refugee memorials, this first section focusing on the “palimpsests of memory” has laid the broader foundations of Austrian cultural memory that will inform the next chapter. Thus, the dissertation will move from major regional memorial sites to more local German-speaking refugee places of memory. In keeping with the focus on religion and German-speaking refugee memory, the next chapter will deal with pilgrimage and Schroubek’s concept of the *Heimatvertriebenenwallfahrt*, informed by the performative turn in the humanities.

¹⁴³ Particularly compelling evidence for the symbiosis of religion and nationalism in postwar Austria, can be found in the speech of Austrian military officer Fretz at the 1959 dedication ceremony of the Landesgedächtnisstätte in Klagenfurt. Fretz was sent to Klagenfurt to represent Austrian Defense Minister Graf at the ceremony. In his speech, he argued, “Diese Anlage ist seit Jahrhunderten heiliger Bezirk und es ist zutiefst ermutigend, dass die Farben unseres Vaterlandes hier wehen, wo an höchster Stelle das Kreuz steht, und dass wir von dieser Warte hinausschauen können in ein Land, das dem Christentum Heimstätte geworden ist. Land und Volk wären arm, wenn das Kreuz nicht mehr stehen dürfte neben der Fahne des Landes.” See “Kärntens Gefallene Sollen Nicht Vergessen Sein. Krieg Bedeutet Kreuzweg - Feierliche Einweihung Der Kreuzbergl-Gedenkstätte - Ein Ort Der Stillen Besinnung - Lebhaftige Anteilnahme Der Bevölkerung.” *Volkszeitung*, no. 96, 28 Apr. 1959, p. 5.

CHAPTER 3: SEEING BEYOND THE BORDER: HEIMAT, PILGRIMAGE, AND GERMAN-SPEAKING REFUGEE MONUMENTS AS HETEROTOPIAS IN (POST-) COLD WAR AUSTRIA

Thus far, Part I of the dissertation has devoted considerable space to the examination of Austrian regional memorial sites and the uncovering of German-speaking refugee memory at the intersection of this marginalized memory with larger, more hegemonic discourses of Austrian cultural memory. I have pursued this course as I contend that the manner in which marginal discourses come into dialogue with more hegemonic, mainstream narratives of the past and conceptions of cultural memory can shed more light on Austrian cultural memory than focusing on a specific discourse. In other words, I consider it important not to examine German-speaking refugee memory culture in isolation but in dialogue with cultural constructions of victimhood, resistance, betrayal, responsibility, etc., as well as frameworks of belonging, whether religious, national or otherwise. In order to achieve this end, I have prefaced my examination of more explicitly German-speaking refugee memorials with close examinations of Austrian regional memorial sites. As I have shown, these regional memorial sites are palimpsests of memory in the sense that they have both more and older layers of memory, from centuries old religious traditions to their postwar rededications to various groupings of Austrian society. These palimpsestic memorials stand in contrast to the main focus of this next chapter, which are largely new, postwar establishments by and for German-speaking refugees. To underscore the contrast with the palimpsestic memorials of the previous section, I refer to these newer postwar German-speaking refugee monuments as heterotopias of memory.

Michel Foucault coined the term “heterotopia” in a talk that he gave in 1967 entitled “Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias.” According to Foucault, utopias and heterotopias both

bear unique relationships to society, such that they “suspect, neutralize, or invent the set of relations that they happen to designate, mirror or reflect.”¹⁴⁴ While utopias are ultimately “placeless places,” heterotopias are in fact real, existing places that “simultaneously represent, contest, and invert” all the other real sites that can be found within the culture.¹⁴⁵ Examples pointed to by Foucault range from prisons to cemeteries, museums, festivals and colonies. Ultimately, however, heterotopias have unique relationships to space and time. Some are peripherally located heterotopias of crisis or deviancy that marginalize the “unacceptable.” Other heterotopias, such as the theater, juxtapose multiple places into a single space. Finally, other heterotopias are characterized by unique heterochronies that are linked to specific “slices in time,” whether that be cemeteries, or the accumulative collapse of time in museums and archives. As I argue below, postwar German-speaking refugee memorials along the Austrian border exhibit all of these characteristics and serve as heterotopias par excellence. Moreover, one general trend that I have identified over the course of the Second Republic is that the more visibility increases, the more difficult it is for German-speaking refugees to gain the approval of local magistrates to erect a monument and the starker the public resistance. This rejection of German-speaking refugee memory (at least in terms of memorials) in Austria as an unwanted “deviancy” is another reason why German-speaking refugee memorials can be thought of as heterotopias. This trend and the cultural response of defacement will be discussed in detail in the final section of the chapter.

While in the aftermath of the Second World War autochthonous Austrians turned inward to provincialism and their local Heimat as all that remained, German-speaking refugees and expellees were not afforded this luxury. Unlike their neighbors, for German-speaking refugees in

¹⁴⁴ Foucault, “Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias,” 23.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

Austria “Heimat” was not coterminous with the local – it was in fact physically unreachable. Nonetheless, some Austrian historians such as Ernst Hanisch have still argued that Heimat in 1950s Austria served as a floating signifier of sorts that even “expellees” could rally around.

Die Mehrheit, enttäuscht von jeder Politik, zog sich in die privaten und lokalen Lebenswelten zurück, die nun neu aufgebaut wurden. Das wahre emotionale Bezugsfeld hieß daher ‘Heimat.’ Einer der populärsten Schlager der späten Vierzigerjahre trug den Titel: ‘Heimat Deine Sterne.’ Um dieses emotionale Feld konnten sich alle sammeln. Die Österreichbewussten, die ehemaligen Nationalsozialisten, die Wehrmachtssoldaten, die dem Krieg als Verteidigung der Heimat gegen den Bolschewismus Sinn geben konnten, die Widerstandskämpfer, die zurückgekehrten ‘Emigranten’ und die Heimatvertriebenen, die der verlorenen Heimat nachtrauerten. Die Heimat konnte man als deutsch oder österreichisch verstehen. Der Staat, die politischen Systeme ändern sich: Die Heimat bleibt.¹⁴⁶

Indeed, the lost Heimat was certainly exceedingly important to the German-speaking refugees and expellees, but it was just that – lost – and not that which remains as Hanisch argues. Moreover, this yearning for the lost home was precisely that which separated German-speaking refugees from their autochthonous Austrian neighbors. In fact, from the perspective of autochthonous Austrians, the longing of German-speaking refugees for the lost Heimat could be characterized as a “deviancy” or “compulsion” that drove them to literally construct memorials, chapels and viewing platforms - or heterotopias along the Austrian border. This “deviancy” (to use Foucault’s characterization) pushed them to the literal margins of Austria, where they co-constructed the iron curtain, as Yuliya Komska argues in a related context, by building watchtowers, monuments and churches to peer into the lost Heimat. Their ritual pilgrimages to these sites, the sacralization of the “look into the Heimat,” and their liminal experience of *communitas* characterize underexamined processual aspects of culture. These “deviant” cultural

¹⁴⁶ Hanisch, Ernst. “Reaustrifizierung in der Zweiten Republik und das Problem eines Österreichischen Nationalismus.” *Gestörte Identitäten? Eine Zwischenbilanz der Zweiten Republik. Ein Symposium zum 65. Geburtstag von Moritz Csaky*, 30.

practices also describe the manner by which German-speaking refugees in Austria constructed the iron curtain as a dense network of cultural meaning, of heterotopias.

In her monograph *The Icon Curtain: The Cold War's Quiet Border*, Yuliya Komska builds on the work of Edith Sheffer to argue that the iron curtain should be thought of as a highly differentiated and uneven landscape of regional subsystems.¹⁴⁷ The section of the Iron Curtain that Komska chooses to concentrate on is the border between Bavaria and Czechoslovakia. This regional subsystem of the Iron Curtain is dominated by the Bohemian Forest which, according to Komska, is the only section of the Iron Curtain along which “expellees” from the East could see the landscape of their former homes across the border.¹⁴⁸ Of course, this claim disregards the Austrian case. Nonetheless, Komska’s innovative cultural studies approach combines methodologies from various disciplines and offers a compelling account of the role of Sudeten German refugees and expellees in constructing what she terms the “icon curtain” and “prayer wall,” made of literal and figurative icons. I build upon her work by examining the case of German-speaking refugee and expellee memorials along the Austrian border with particular attention to processual aspects of memory culture, such as ritual, pilgrimage and defacement.

Firstly, the Bohemian forest extends beyond the Bavarian and Czech border into both Upper and Lower Austria. Indeed, Adalbert Stifter, the nineteenth century German-language author upon whose cultural construction of the Bohemian and “German forest” Komska draws heavily, is generally considered Austrian, hailing as he does from the small town of Oberplan/Horni Plana in the Bohemian Forest, just across the Czech - Upper Austrian border. Secondly, the Bavarian – Czech border was not the only section of the Iron Curtain, along which

¹⁴⁷ Komska, Yuliya. *Icon Curtain: The Cold War's Quiet Border*, 10. For Sheffer reference see Sheffer, Edith. *Burned Bridge: How East and West Germans Made the Iron Curtain*. 2014.

¹⁴⁸ “Aware of being the only expellee group with physical access to their former homeland’s border, they [Sudeten Germans] were not sure whether such a privilege was a blessing or curse.” Komska, 16.

German-speaking refugees could gaze into their former homes and Sudeten Germans were not the only such “expellee” group that could do so. Bohemian Germans (Böhmenwälder) in Upper Austria, Southern Moravians (Südmähren) in Lower Austria, and Carpathian Germans (Karpatendeutschen) along the Lower Austrian – Slovak border all have built German-speaking refugee monuments and viewing infrastructure on hills along the Iron Curtain’s path through Austria in order to gaze into their former homes.¹⁴⁹ Following Komska’s interdisciplinary approach in analyzing the “icon curtain” between Bavaria and Czechia, this section will explore that nexus of pilgrimage, Heimat, and border both during and after the Cold War.

Although Komska too draws on Georg Schroubek’s pioneering work on the postwar “expellee” pilgrimage (or *Heimatvertriebenenwallfahrt* as he termed it), she does not reflect on the cultural practice of pilgrimage itself. Instead, her chapter dealing with pilgrimage focuses on the developing legends, cults and afterlives of two devotional objects (the “expelled Madonna” from Mitterfirmiansreut and the “mutilated Savior” from Waldsassen), which lie at the center of two new postwar pilgrimage sites along the Bavarian-Czech border. My analysis of the dense clustering of German-speaking refugee memorials along the Austrian border (many of which are also pilgrimage sites), on the other hand, builds on insights from the “performative turn” and the work of Victor Turner, in particular, to argue for a dynamic, living conception of memorial that considers the processual dimension of culture. Rather than a synchronic approach that focuses on dedication texts and ceremonies, I pursue a diachronic method that is grounded in the reception

¹⁴⁹ Since German-speaking Burgenland (i.e. most of the territory excluding Sopron) was ceded to Austria after the First World War, the German-speaking “expellees” from Hungary came from deeper in Hungary and these “expellees” could not see their former homes across the Austrian-Hungarian border. Consequently, there is to my knowledge no “icon curtain” of “expellee” monuments along the Austrian-Hungarian border. After 1948 and the Tito-Stalin split, the Iron Curtain no longer passed along Austria’s southern border with Yugoslavia. Although there were German-speaking refugees that may have been able to see their former homes in southern Styria (refugees from the Untersteiermark) and southern Carinthia (refugees from the Südkärnten or the Kanaltal), I have not found evidence of an “icon curtain” along that border. See Schließleder, Wilhelm. “Das Österreichische Flüchtlingsproblem (Versuch Eines Überblicks).”

of local newspapers and German-speaking refugee literature and emphasizes the performative dimensions of places of memory over time. In other words, rather than compare the texts and iconography of a vast number of “expellee” monuments and memorials, as does Jeffery Luppés in his dissertation, I focus on a subset of monuments that I consider emblematic of a given type, and consider the role of processes such as ritual, decay or defacement. In doing so, I provide alternative hypotheses for the sudden postwar boom in “expellee” pilgrimage beyond Schroubek’s analysis as well as for the endurance of the ritual tradition in the post-Cold War era, well beyond their supposed nadir in the 1960s.



Figure 27. Plaque dedicated in memory of the “expellee” pilgrimages of the Southern Moravians to Maria Dreieichen. Located in the narthex of the church, on the left wall when entering. Photo by author.

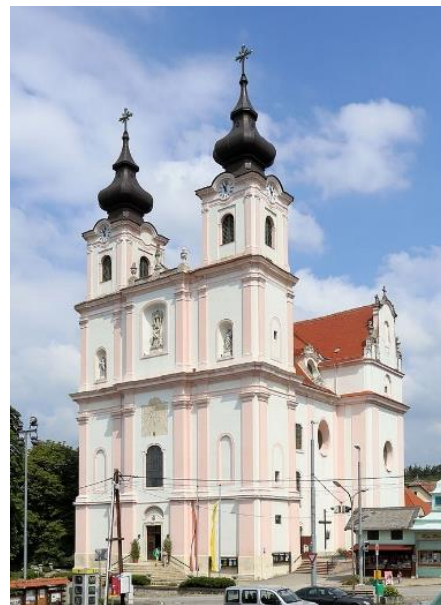


Figure 28. Maria Dreieichen pilgrimage church, near Horn, Lower Austria. Photo from Wikipedia.

Already in 1968, Schroubek was proclaiming the final phase and death of the “expellee” pilgrimage as a unique form [Sonderform] of pilgrimage. His argument was based primarily on the harmonization of the form of expellee pilgrimage¹⁵⁰ with that of the local native pilgrimage

¹⁵⁰ Schroubek points to standardization in the songs and prayers as well as a move from pilgrimage on foot to more industrialized modes of transportation (train, bus, etc.).

tradition as well as the fall in popularity of the “expellee” pilgrimage. He argued that this move paralleled the integration and assimilation of the “expellees” from their preindustrial, agrarian traditions in Southeastern Europe to life in modern, industrialized postwar Austria. What Schroubek could have never predicted in 1968, however, is that expellee pilgrimage would not fade away but continue until the present day in places in Austria like Maria Dreieichen, Maria Trost and Mandelstein and that as late as 1976, over 7000 German-speaking refugees from South Moravia (Südmähren) would attend the yearly “expellee” pilgrimage to Maria Dreieichen.¹⁵¹

In addition, new “expellee” pilgrimage sites were founded in the 1970s and 80s. On August 2, 1975, for example, German-speaking refugees found a new home for a copy of the lost Hohenfurther Madonna “Maria Rast am Stein.” In the Bründlkirche in Bad Leonfelden Upper Austria, the local pastor blessed and dedicated the replica Madonna as a religious memorial for the German-speaking refugees from the city and parish of Hohenfurth in the Bohemian Forest. While the Bründlkirche was in fact already a pilgrimage church with its own Marian shrine “Maria Schutz beim Bründl,” since 1975 the German-speaking refugees also have their own pilgrimage shrine in the narthex of the church (the Bründlkirche’s original shrine and Madonna is behind the main altarpiece). In addition to the copy of the Hohenfurther Madonna, the “expellee” shrine is also home to a small archive and reliquary of sorts with the traditionally accompanying array of votive images, poems and devotional objects. The objects delineate the importance of expulsion, loss of home, and the iron curtain as a passion narrative.

¹⁵¹ *Glaube und Heimat: Rundbrief der Klemensgemeinde*. June 1976, pg. 3. Although still practiced, German-speaking refugee pilgrimages today are much less visited than they were in the 1970s, 80s and 90s. Pilgrimage sites such as Mandelstein, Kleinschweinbarth and Neu Maria Schnee draw in mere dozens of pilgrims for their yearly pilgrimages. In contrast, Neu Maria Schnee brought in over 8000 “expellee” pilgrims in 1984. See Loistl-Sturany, Anna. *Maria Schnee - Einst und Jetzt*.

Yuliya Komska has argued in her study of the “icon curtain” along the Bavarian-Czech border that some “expellees” and readers of the West German expellee periodical “Glaube und Heimat” saw the border and their newly constructed pilgrimage sites as a bulwark against the atheist, iconoclastic East. Aside from photos of Czech soldiers disrespecting or defacing holy objects (as published in “expellee” periodicals), Komska also references a drawing by Adolf Günther that was published in *Glaube und Heimat* in 1965, in which Jesus is hung on the barbed wire of the iron curtain, instead of the wooden cross. Interestingly, Komska interprets the image as symbolic of “religion’s suppression in the East or its feared decline in the West.”¹⁵² In contrast, I interpret the image (in a manner similar to the *Stations* at Kreuzberg hill in Klagenfurt) as a visual metaphor that portrays expulsion as a Christ-like passion.¹⁵³ Like Adam and Eve’s expulsion from the paradise of the Garden of Eden, so too do German-speaking refugees and expellees find their home unreachable. Only through Christ’s passion and death can German-speaking refugees and expellees “come home” to their heavenly Heimat. In fact, this is what the beholder literally sees when viewing Günther’s image: When looking through the filter of Christ’s passion (or by analogy the supposed Christ-like passion of expulsion), Heimat (at least from the perspective of the beholder) becomes idealized and conflated with a heavenly paradise.

¹⁵² Komska, *Icon Curtain: The Cold War’s Quiet Border*, 75.

¹⁵³ This connection is made more explicit in the political writings of Father Reichenberger, particularly *Sudetendeutsche Passion*. See Reichenberger, Emanuel J. *Sudetendeutsche Passion: für Wahrheit und Gerechtigkeit*. Kiel: Arndt, 1995.

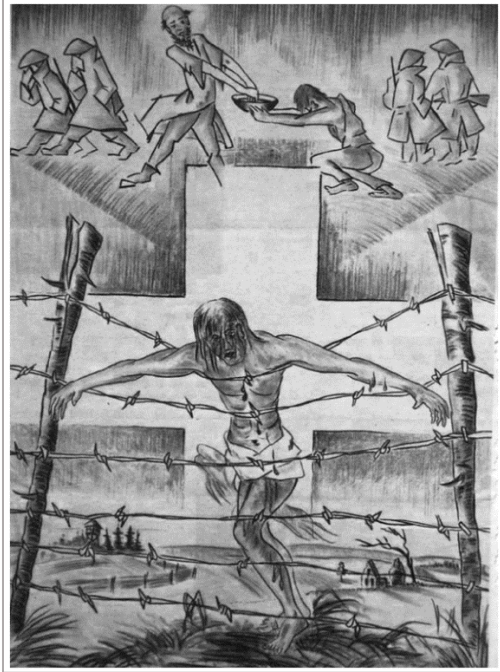


Figure 29. Adolf Günther, Untitled 1963. From *Glaube und Heimat* 13, no. 7 (July 1965) as published in Komska, 2015.



Figure 30. Crown of Thorns made of barbed wire with the Austrian and Hohenfurter colors. Located in the Hohenfurter “expellee” shrine in the Bründlkirche, Bad Leonfelden, Upper Austria. Photo by author.



Figure 31. Stairs leading down to the Hohenfurter Madonna “Maria Rast am Stein.” Archive on the right. The plaque reads: “Die Hohenfurter Pfarrangehörigen gedenken in Verehrung Ihrer Madonna.” The plaque at base of stairs reads: “Zum Gedenken an Maria Rast am Stein bei Hohenfurth im Böhmerwald 1888-1988.” Photo by author.



Figure 32. Copy of the Hohenfurter Madonna at the former pilgrimage site “Maria Rast am Stein.” Now located in Czechia; copy in the Bründelkirche, Bad Leonfelden. Photo by author.

Thus, expulsion is not a historical phenomenon or singular occurrence but becomes a state of being, actualized in religious ritual such as pilgrimage or the *Stations of the Cross*. Christ's passion, like the "passion" of "expellees," is made present every day in the symbol of the iron curtain. Supporting this interpretation is a votive object at the shrine of the Hohenfurth Madonna in the Bründlkirche. There, next to the copy of Maria Rast am Stein, are a number of devotional objects smuggled across the border, such as the holy water font that found its way into Austria in 1983. But, hanging on the wall, is also a peculiar Crown of Thorns, constructed from barbed wire and adorned with two small flags, one with the red and white of Austria and the other with the green and white of Hohenfurth. Once one with Austria, Hohenfurth has since been ripped from the body of Austria. Its loss was an ongoing passion for the "expellees" that was symbolically actualized every day in the iron curtain, as indicated by the barbed-wire Crown of Thorns. Even late in life when their former homes were once again accessible, many "expellees" were never able to recover from the traumatic loss of home; Ilse Tielsch has repeatedly called it the caesura of her life ["Riss meines Lebens."]



Figure 33. Photo of the 100th Anniversary of Maria Rast am Stein in 1988. Pilgrimage to copy in the Bründlkirche, Bad Leonfelden. Original photo located in Bründlkirche archive. This photo by author.

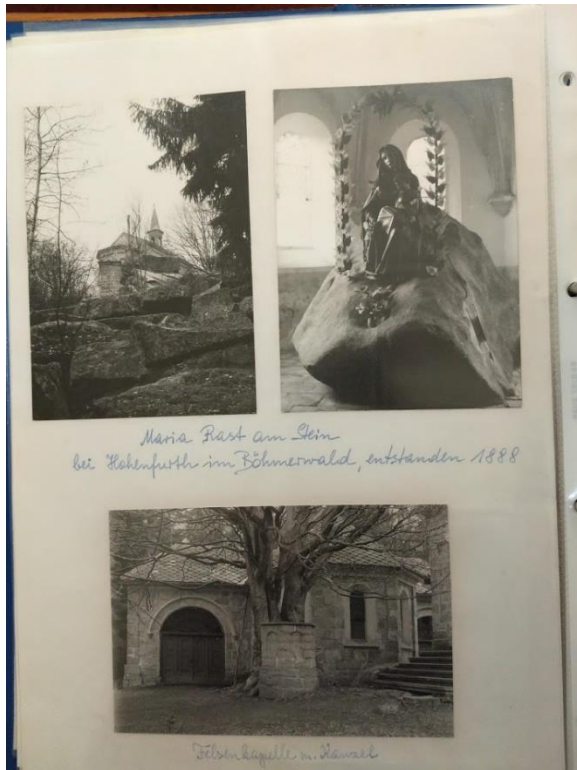


Figure 34. Former pilgrimage site “Maria Rast am Stein” by Hohenfurth. Generally inaccessible after 1945 until opening of Iron Curtain. Original photo album located in Bründlkirche archive. This photo by author.



Figure 35. Photos (3) of the 100th Anniversary of Maria Rast am Stein in 1988. Procession in Bad Leonfelden with copy of Hohenfurth Madonna. Original photo album located in Bründlkirche archive. This photo by author.

This interpretation of the barbed wire Crown of Thorns at the Hohenfurth “expellee” pilgrimage site that understands expulsion as a state of being provides one explanation for the endurance of the “expellee” pilgrimage beyond its supposed nadir in the 1960s. Although German-speaking refugees were increasingly integrated into the Austrian workplace and began to increasingly find permanent housing during the 1960s, the lost Heimat remained inaccessible and was increasingly transformed into a “foreign” place. Its revisiting was only possible through what Andrew Demshuk has called the “Heimat of memory.” Various media from periodicals to literature could serve as portals to or reconstructions of the Heimat of memory but one hitherto underexplored medium is that of pilgrimage, the subject of this chapter. Building on that observation, this chapter draws on anthropologist Victor Turner’s work on pilgrimage to provide

the theoretical underpinnings lacking in Georg Schroubek's 1968 study of the "expellee pilgrimage" in Germany and Austria.

In their 1978 monograph *Image and Pilgrimage in Christian Culture*, the anthropologists Victor and Edith Turner built upon Victor Turner's seminal work, *The Ritual Process* in an attempt to find sites of liminality in Western culture. Based on his decades of anthropological field work as well as that of Arnold van Gennep, Victor Turner had already developed a theory of the processual form of ritual based largely on rites of passage in tribal societies before he turned to pilgrimage studies. Turner recognized that these rituals share a basic tripartite processual structure that can be broken down into three phases: separation, margin or limen, and reaggregation.¹⁵⁴ The second or liminal phase describes a state of betwixt and between and is characterized by a sense of *communitas* or comradeship and communion between colleagues. The Turners later built upon the concepts of liminality and *communitas* as a lens for interpreting the pilgrimage experience.

Pilgrimage, according to the Turners, is an ultimately antistructural, liberating activity. Pilgrimage sites are associated with the folk, are located in the sacred periphery and resist the hierarchy and intellectualism of clerics and the Church. As such, the Turners describe pilgrimage as a kind of "extroverted mysticism."¹⁵⁵ Unlike a rite of passage, the goal of pilgrimage is not membership in a community but a journey to an actual place, containing real objects of the past

¹⁵⁴ These three phases of rites of passage ritual are akin to what Foucault describes as heterotopias of crisis. "In the so-called primitive societies, there is a certain form of heterotopia that I would call crisis heterotopias, i.e., there are privileged or sacred or forbidden places, reserved for individuals who are, in relation to society and to the human environment in which they live, in a state of crisis: adolescents, menstruating women, pregnant women, the elderly, etc." Foucault argues that today these heterotopias of crisis are being replaced by "heterotopia of deviation" or "those in which individuals whose behavior is deviant in relation to the required mean or norm are placed." Examples of heterotopias of deviation include rest homes, psychiatric hospitals, prisons, and as a mixed case, retirement homes. In contrast to heterotopias of crisis, heterotopias of deviation do not seem to typically have a reaggregation phase.

¹⁵⁵ Turner and Turner, *Image and Pilgrimage in Christian Culture*, 33.

that seem to emit “a certain shadowy aura.”¹⁵⁶ For postwar German-speaking refugees and expellees, however, the former sacred pilgrimage shrines were lost behind the iron curtain. As such, they had to make do with copies of icons, shrines and churches that were often located directly at the border. Perhaps in accordance with the more iconophilic Catholic tradition, the loss of aura that occurred with the loss of the real, original shrine translated into a greater emphasis on looking rather than touching, and on the signifier rather than the signified. Aside from the occasional smuggled object or jar of dirt from the Heimat across the border, the most “real” object of many German-speaking refugee and expellee memorials was their location along the border and the look into the Heimat that their location offered.

For example, the location of the “expellee” pilgrimage church “Neu Maria Schnee” on the Hiltchnerberg in Leopoldschlag, Austria was chosen in 1977 because it provided an ideal view of the original Maria Schnee pilgrimage church. Located just across the international border and within the militarized zone on the Czechoslovak side of the border, the original Maria Schnee church and shrine was purged of its holy and votive objects and used temporarily as a stall and then as a watchtower for Czech soldiers during the Cold War. From Hiltchnerberg, the German-speaking refugees could still, with the naked eye, see a diffuse outline of Maria Schnee and their Heimat but without seeing the detailed ways in which the Heimat had been transformed and made “foreign.”

Neu Maria Schnee began as a small shrine in the outskirts of a forest on the Hiltchnerberg that was adorned with a copy of the Maria Schnee Madonna by local “expellee” artist Anna Sturany Loistl in 1978.¹⁵⁷ At this location German-speaking refugees made a makeshift altar out of stone and could enjoy an ideal view of Maria Schnee and their former

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., xv.

¹⁵⁷ Loistl-Sturany, Anna. *Maria Schnee - Einst und Jetzt*, 39.

Heimat. As early as the dedication ceremony in 1978, the site drew over 300 German-speaking refugees and the numbers continued to grow from year to year. Soon local German-speaking refugees and expellees began work on building a miniature copy of the pilgrimage church as well. After completion of the pilgrimage church in 1984, Neu Maria Schnee became a popular pilgrimage destination for German-speaking refugees on every fifteenth of August (or the Feast Day of the Assumption of Mary into Heaven) and the pilgrimage continues to take place today.



Figure 36. Neu Maria Schnee Shrine on Hiltchnerberg with “Blick in die Heimat” and arrow directing viewer towards Maria Schnee. Photo by author.



Figure 37. Seating for mass and meditation by the Maria Schnee Madonna. Photo by author.



Figure 38. Copy of Maria Schnee Madonna at Neu Maria Schnee on Hiltchnerberg, Leopoldschlag. Completed in 1978. Photo by author.



Figure 39. Maria Schnee Neu pilgrimage church. Completed in 1984. During the pilgrimage that year, about 8000 German-speaking refugees participated. Photo by author.



Figure 40. Votive offerings surrounding the German-speaking refugees' copy of the "Holy Stone" (Heliger Stein/Svatý Kámen). The Holy Stone marks the site where the Marian apparition allegedly took place, according to sixteenth century legend. Photo by author.

As recently as August 15, 2019, the German-speaking refugee pilgrimage to Neu Maria Schnee began at 11:00 am with a musical procession with flags, folk clothing, and songs from the former home, such as the *Böhmerwaldlied*.¹⁵⁸ After some introductory remarks by the local mayor Hubert Koller, the local pastor celebrated mass in a tent in front of the pilgrimage church because there were too many attendees to fit in the small church. Then at 1:15 pm, some German-speaking refugees prayed the rosary. At 2:00 pm the German-speaking refugees held a service in memory of their dead and concluded their ceremony with a circuitous procession through the forest to the copy of the Maria Schnee Madonna. Rather than the ritual climax of touching a holy relic as is the case with most pilgrimages, the "expellee" pilgrimage culminated with a "Blick in die Heimat" as its climax.

I argue that continuance of this tradition into the present (long after the original, authentic space of the original shrine became more easily accessible again in 1990) indicates that the act of looking and the accompanying replica images have taken on lives of their own and become more

¹⁵⁸ This report of events comes from a printed copy of the church's bulletin posted in a glass cabinet outside the church in November, 2019.

“real” than the original shrine itself. Indeed, this interpretation is supported by a votive poem in the original shrine in Czechia. During the war, Czech soldiers allegedly cleared out the panoply of votive offerings that dated back to the chapel built in the seventeenth century by abbess Christine Pöperl. Since 1990, donations from German-speaking refugees and the diocese of Linz as well as grants from the Austrian and Czech states allowed the church to be rebuilt by 1993.¹⁵⁹ Slowly, new votive offerings replaced those that had been destroyed and a few votive offerings that locals salvaged were even returned.



Figure 41. The original Heliger Stein/Svatý Kámen with new, post-Cold War votive offerings. Photo by author.



Figure 42. Close up of Madonna in Figure 41. The original votive offerings were largely discarded during the Second World War. Photo by author.

Rather than bring a devotional image, one returning German-speaking refugee named Johann Pangerl wrote a poem and dedicated it as a votive offering. That poem can be found at Maria Schnee today and emphasizes how “empty” the former Heimat felt upon Pangerl’s return after the end of the Cold War. While the trees and the landscape felt familiar, everything else was different.

Horch, wie die alten Tannen rauschen!
 Sie rauschen immer noch dasselbe Lied;
 sonst ist alles anders worden,
 als ich aus der Heimat schied.

¹⁵⁹ “Maria Schnee, Eine Wallfahrtskirche Ist Wieder Erstanden! Nehmen Wir an der Feierlichen Wiedereinweihung Teil!” *Glaube Und Heimat: Mitteilungsblatt der Klemensgemeinde*, May 1993, p. 2.

Traurig gingen wir von hinnen,
fremd und einsam kehr ich her.
Herz, ach Herz, wie bist du voll von Sehnen,
Heimat, wie bist du leer!
Heimatland, wo ich geboren bin,
deine dunklen Wälder weinen im Wind!

When viewed through the filter of memory, the newly accessible Heimat appears “empty,” foreign or even destroyed, according to the poem’s narrator. In my chapter dealing with German-speaking refugee travelogues, I refer to this way of looking as the result of a tension between scopophilic and scopophobic gazes or, in other words, the cognitive dissonance between positively connotated images of the Heimat of memory and the negatively connotated images of the Heimat transformed. Yuliya Komska also notes this slippage between image and vision, this tension between the Heimat seen and the Heimat remembered. She terms this process or specific way of seeing, “nostalgic bifocalism.” This form of looking had important implications for German-speaking refugee memorials and heterotopias along the border after 1990. Although German-speaking refugees in Austria did, in the aftermath of the Cold War, resume the prewar tradition of making pilgrimages to Maria Schnee (alt), nostalgic bifocalism ensured the preeminence of Maria Schnee Neu as a prominent “expellee” pilgrimage destination every fifteenth of August. Consequently, visiting the lost Heimat could only be accomplished through memory, the assistance of ritual and the avoidance of the distractions accompanied by the scopophobic gaze (i.e. seeing the Heimat transformed). This insistence on Maria Schnee Neu and other heterotopias implies that German-speaking refugees greatly valued the *communitas* associated with pilgrimage, the liminal space of the border and the power of ritual to transform and transport pilgrims in the early Christian tradition of Matthew 18:20, and Jesus’ invocation

that any place can be holy, when two or more are gathered in His Name.¹⁶⁰ Perplexingly, the time and space bending power of “expellee” religious ritual and its ability to transport German-speaking refugees to their lost Heimat could either mean the Heimat of memory, their heavenly Heimat or both simultaneously. In the dedication of a small book that was published to commemorate the building of Neu Maria Schnee, the author Anna Sturany Loistl places the following poem entitled simply “Maria Schnee” by Maria Watzlik:

Zur Liebfrau hingetragen
Hat man Gebet und Weh-
Das gabs in früheren Tagen:
Wallfahrt Maria Schnee.

Wir können nimmer eilen
zum Gnadenort am Stein!
Ach, fern wir müssen weilen
Und voller Heimweh sein!

Uns wird oft gar zu bange-
Liebfrau, neig Dich uns zu;
Mit Deiner Mutterwange
Bring unsern Gram zur Ruh.

Zur Güte ohne Maßen,
wir beten schlichten Reim:
Führ einst auf alten Straßen,
Maria Schnee, uns heim!

Invariably, the poem’s author seeks solace in faith and petitions Mary to intercede on her behalf to bring her and all “expellees” home. Yet, the meaning of home in the final line could be either the lost Heimat for which she longs, the heavenly Heimat of all the faithful, or both.

Hitherto this power of religious ritual has generally been overlooked in the scholarly literature

¹⁶⁰ As Sarah Lenzi has argued on the space- and time-bending powers of religious ritual in the context of the *Stations of the Cross*: “...[L]iturgy and other acts of ritualized behavior can change space into place, and in so doing transcend place. A church, a monastic cell, a forest on the edge of town can, through the ritualized Stations, become delineated, measured, valued as a site of holy activity. And then in the enacting of the ritual, as one imagines oneself beside Jesus, the church is no longer just the church, the cell not just a cell, the forest, not just a forest,” 192-3.

dealing with German-speaking refugees and expellees, with the possible exception of ethnologist Georg Schroubek's work. In assiduously documenting these "expellee" pilgrimage sites, Schroubek has argued that the "expellee" pilgrimage was a temporary postwar phenomenon and a unique form of pilgrimage. It arose, in Schroubek's argument, in response to "expellees'" homesickness and served as an antidote that attempted to assuage their longing by temporarily recreating the lost home. According to Schroubek, with increasing "expellee" integration into their new homes and surroundings participation in the "expellee" pilgrimage should thus fade. The fact that the "expellee" pilgrimage continued into the post-Cold War era and even the present indicates that either German-speaking refugees and expellees were never truly integrated or Schroubek's analysis missed something.

In my view, both of those problematizations of Schroubek's theory are partially true. While some German-speaking refugees and expellees were certainly not fully integrated, expulsion can also be understood, as already argued, as a state of being or form of trauma concomitant with the curse of the scopophobic gaze. While Schroubek contends that the "expellee" pilgrimage served to temporarily recreate the lost home, I argue, in contrast, that "expellee" religious ritual at the heterotopias of memory, like Neu Maria Schnee, bends space and time to transport willing German-speaking refugees to, rather than recreate, the lost home. While the distinction may seem minor, the nuance is actually important. In my conception, the German-speaking refugee is the active mover and must choose to meditate and participate, whereas in Schroubek's conception it is the Heimat that moves, downplaying the agency of the German-speaking refugee and the important role of meditation and pilgrimage. Finally, I contend that German-speaking refugee heterotopias are no mere temporary antidotes but enduring portals

to the past. They have taken on lives of their own and become, in some ways, more real than their original inspirations.

In contrast to the “expellee” pilgrimage sites at the Bründlkirche in Bad Leonfelden and Neu Maria Schnee in Leopoldschlag, whose functions were almost solely religious, the functions of the primary memorial site of the Catholic German-speaking refugee group (Klemensgemeinde, Vienna) were mixed. Alternatively referred to as pilgrimage (Wallfahrt) or meeting (Heimattreffen) in the organization’s newspaper, *Glaube und Heimat*, it was primarily referenced simply by its location, Mandelstein. The German-speaking refugee memorial there, located on a forested mountain peak in Moorbach Harbach, Lower Austria, is another example of a religious heterotopia situated at Austria’s geographic margin, just across the border from Czechia. The site was discovered as early as 1946 when German-speaking refugees were searching for a lookout point along the border as the iron curtain was being constructed. From here, they watched the “destruction work” of their homes on the other side of the border. Soon word traveled among German-speaking refugees of this popular destination. Although in private hands, the Klemensgemeinde was eventually able to purchase a small piece of the land that offered an ideal view across the border. They built paths through the forest, benches and the viewing infrastructure that eventually led to the site becoming a local tourist destination. Then in 1956, the Klemensgemeinde installed a cross at the peak with a small granite altar; the Mandelstein German-speaking refugee memorial, pilgrimage and Heimattreffen was born.

At the dedication ceremony on June 10, 1956, thousands of German-speaking refugees and expellees allegedly participated.¹⁶¹ It began with a Catholic mass celebrated by an “expellee” priest that focused on remembering the dead and concluded with a political rally led by Erwin

¹⁶¹ “Kreuz an der Grenze” *Glaube und Heimat: Rundbrief der Klemensgemeinde*. July/August 1956. Pg. 1-4.

Manchunze, a founding member of the Klemensgemeinde and a ÖVP parliamentarian as well as the “expellees” sole representation in the Austrian parliament. In this general format, the Mandelstein “expellee” gathering continued to take place each year on the last Sunday in August for about a decade (or approximately as long as Manchunze remained in parliament). In his remarks in 1961, Manchunze argued that the political rally (Kundgebung) portion of the meeting was not a political provocation – as their Czech neighbors claimed – but a peaceful demonstration for human rights. “Wenn sich Menschen treffen, um der verlorenen Heimat zu gedenken, sei das keine Provokation, wie die Kommunisten schreien, sondern eine friedliche Demonstration gegen die Verletzung der Menschenrechte...Die Heimatvertriebenen seien auch keine Revanchisten und Kriegshetzer, gerade sie hätten durch den Krieg am meisten gelitten und seien daher mit Abscheu vor kriegerischen Auseinandersetzungen erfüllt.”¹⁶² Although typically accompanied by the watchful eye of Czech soldiers in helicopters,¹⁶³ the yearly Mandelstein meeting was never cancelled as was the analogous annual German-speaking refugee meeting at the Südmährerkreuz on the Kleinschweinbarth hilltop. Despite having a nearly identical format and also being denounced each year in demarches by the Czech Foreign Ministry to their Austrian counterparts, the German-speaking refugee meeting at Mandelstein was never blocked by the Austrian government, perhaps because it was less visible due to the dense forest and more rural setting. Indeed, the cancelled rally at Kleinschweinbarth was closer to the more populated area of Mikulov and highly visible from Czechoslovakia, with the visibility issue being specifically referenced in the Czechoslovak demarche.¹⁶⁴

¹⁶² “Heimatkundgebung.” *Glaube und Heimat: Mitteilungsblatt der Klemensgemeinde*, Nov. 1961, p. 5.

¹⁶³ Freißler, Gerhard. “Unser Mandelsteintreffen 1991.” *Glaube und Heimat: Mitteilungsblatt der Klemensgemeinde*, Sept. 1991, p. 1.

¹⁶⁴ “Veranstaltungen von Sudetendeutschen in Österreich und ihre Wirkung auf die österreichische Öffentlichkeit und auf die osteuropäischen Staaten” in Matejka, Helmut. “Die Eingliederung der Sudeten- und Karpatendeutschen in Österreich nach 1945,” 472-9.



Figure 43. Klemensgemeinde's 1956 dedication ceremony of their pilgrimage site and memorial at Mandelstein. It featured a Catholic mass, political rally and "Blick in die Heimat." *Glaube und Heimat: Rundbrief der Klemensgemeinde*, August 1956.



Figure 44. Klemensgemeinde's 1956 dedication ceremony of their pilgrimage site and memorial at Mandelstein, including "Blick in die Heimat." *Glaube und Heimat: Rundbrief der Klemensgemeinde*, August 1956.



Figure 45. Klemensgemeinde's 1956 dedication ceremony of their pilgrimage site and memorial at Mandelstein, including Catholic mass and political rally. *Glaube und Heimat: Rundbrief der Klemensgemeinde*, August 1956.

The political work of the Klemensgemeinde in the 1950s and 60s focused on working with the Austrian Caritas to provide housing to German-speaking refugees and offering University scholarships to German-speaking refugees and their children as well as working towards equal employment opportunities for German-speaking refugee families. Since most German-speaking refugees in Austria did not have the legal right to work in Austria until the

Optionsgesetz in 1954, the Klemensgemeinde worked together with local Austrian farmers and tradesmen to find work for displaced German-speaking farmers and other craftspeople.¹⁶⁵

By the 1970s, the format of the Mandelstein meeting began to change. The political portion fell away and was replaced with a greater emphasis on culture and memory. The meeting became a whole weekend event that began with cultural activities on Saturday and included traditional dances, songs and Lichtbilder presentations that juxtaposed images of the lost Heimat from both before the war and in the present. On Sunday, the pilgrimage to the Mandelstein memorial would still take place, beginning with mass and a wreath laying ceremony at the foot of the cross in remembrance of the dead.

At Mandelstein in 1981, the president of the Klemensgemeinde Dr. Ernst Waldstein-Watenberg described the change as a new phase in the work of the Klemensgemeinde. The first phase, according the group's president, was the experience of expulsion and the immediate aftermath of the war when German-speaking refugees were primarily concerned with survival. The second phase was the political phase that focused on integration into the new Heimat, finding a place to live and work and a clarification of the legal rights of German-speaking refugees. The new, third phase was exemplified by both a greater emphasis on their cultural heritage, on the one hand, and the German-speaking refugees' place in the contemporary moment, on the other. The speaker then asked attendees and readers of *Glaube und Heimat*,

¹⁶⁵ About a decade after the 1952 German Lastenausgleich for German-speaking refugees and expellees in Germany, German-speaking refugees in Austria (who were categorically excluded from the German Lastenausgleich for their wartime losses) received partial compensation through the 1962 bilateral German-Austrian Kreuznacher Abkommen, whereby the German and Austrian states agreed to compensate "ethnic Germans" in Austria for their wartime losses. But since Germany refused to claim full responsibility for the "ethnic Germans" in Austria and the Austrian state agreed to only a partial sum that was given "out of generosity", fearing, as it did, the financial repercussions of admitting responsibility for any part of the war. Maintaining its innocence through the legal logic of the victim myth and refusing any responsibility, the Austrian state ultimately reneged on its monetary obligations in the decade following the Kreuznacher treaty. Consequently, money stopped flowing from West Germany and "ethnic Germans" in Austria were only compensated about 11,390 Schilling per household, in contrast to the 35,000 Schilling provided the average "expellee" household in Germany by the Lastenausgleich.

“What do we, as expellees, have to offer society? What brings us together beyond camaraderie and the look backwards into the past?”¹⁶⁶ As an answer, Waldstein-Watenberg offered their values learned as a people [Grenzvolk] in the Czech-Austrian interzone [alte Heimat] and through the shared experience of expulsion. These experiences taught “expellees” the importance of peace and empathy. “Wir haben doch als Grenzvolk gelernt, uns in andere hineinzudenken.”¹⁶⁷ While the perceived injustice and loss of control that German-speaking refugees experienced when losing their material possessions may have made some German-speaking refugees bitter, according to the Klemensgemeinde’s president, the vast majority of the faithful have grown richer through the experience. Expulsion may have been their unique passion or cross to bear, but that lesson of loss taught them not to be distracted by a world of increasing materialism and consumerism. Pointing to the contemporary expulsions in Vietnam and Lebanon, Waldstein-Watenberg argued that their fate provided them with a moral compass in a world of violence that required them to reject hate and apathy and insist on human rights.¹⁶⁸ As the next section will show, Waldstein-Watenberg’s hope to foster empathy and transnational understanding was much more pervasive during the Klemensgemeinde’s earlier years, in particular among its religious leadership and “expellee” priest leaders. As these leaders began to pass away in the 1980s, there developed an intellectual vacuum in *Glaube und Heimat*’s columns that also visibly lacked professional editorial redaction. Consequently, *Glaube und Heimat*’s new dilettante editor began to look to increasingly far-right newspapers such as the (formerly banned) *Eckartbote* for ideas and content.

¹⁶⁶ Baschant, Karl. “Mandelsteintreffen 1981.” *Glaube und Heimat: Rundbrief der Klemensgemeinde*, Dec. 1981, pg. 3. Translation mine.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., 3.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., 3.

I. Between Transnational Outreach and Domestic Politicization: German-Speaking Refugee Heterotopias in Post-Cold War Austria

An insatiable yearning for the lost and unreachable Heimat during the Cold War drove German-speaking refugees and expellees to Austria's geographic margins to find the best viewing locations to peer into their former hometowns. There they built memorials, constructed replica churches and painted copies of inaccessible devotional images, such as the Maria Schnee Madonna or Maria Rast am Stein. This "compulsion" differentiated them from their new Austrian neighbors and constituted heterotopias of "deviancy," to use Foucault's designation. Yet, these heterotopias were no mere copies but new pilgrimage destinations with their own unique devotional rituals. The liminal experience of the "expellee" pilgrimage was furthermore characterized by the unique time bending properties of liturgy that permitted the "expellee" pilgrim to visit the Heimat of memory. These pilgrimage rituals relied upon a variety of media, from music to poetry but above all, sacralized vision, as the pilgrimage's holy climax was invariably the "Blick in die Heimat."

The end of the Cold War certainly brought change to the German-speaking refugee heterotopias but was far from its death knell. In fact, it highlighted the endurance of these heterotopias as having taken on lives of their own and further emphasized the importance of visuality. While German-speaking refugees and expellees certainly returned to their former homes and helped lead the effort to rebuild derelict pilgrimage sites, nostalgic bifocalism, or the debilitating scopophobic gaze more specifically, dominated German-speaking refugee vision, leading many to prefer the new pilgrimage sites, such as Maria Schnee Neu. Nonetheless, many German-speaking refugees still did return and assisted in leading the outreach and rebuilding efforts in their former communities across the border.

Indeed, another hitherto underexplored aspect of German-speaking refugee heterotopias (and religious pilgrimage sites in particular) is their often transnational dimension. Since at least 1989, German-speaking refugees and expellees in Austria have begun to increasingly reach out to their former Czech neighbors. At Maria Schnee, for example, German-speaking refugees helped rebuild the original Maria Schnee pilgrimage church and rekindle the pilgrimage that traditionally took place on August 5 and that has, since 1989, once again become a pilgrimage destination. As local Czechs too began to increasingly participate in the pilgrimage on August 5 to Maria Schnee (alt), the readings and songs began to be practiced in both languages, i.e. Czech and German. The German-speaking refugees then invited their former Czech neighbors to their pilgrimage to Maria Schnee Neu on August 15.¹⁶⁹ Today, some Czechs too participate in the pilgrimage to Neu Maria Schnee, although there are likely very few Czech participants as the events take place almost entirely in German.

However, not all post-Cold War German-speaking refugee transnational outreach efforts were positive; in fact, some were highly problematic. For example, Gerhard Freißler, the editor of the Klemensgemeinde's *Glaube und Heimat* admitted in his yearly article reporting on the 1991 Mandelstein Heimattreffen that the Mandelstein pilgrimage had seemingly “lost some of its meaning” as German-speaking refugees could now easily travel and see their former homes for themselves. Still, the Klemensgemeinde dedicated itself to new tasks, particularly the attempt to provide German language classes to the children of “ethnic German” families that remained in the CSR.¹⁷⁰ Unfortunately, this move coincided with a change in the editorship of *Glaube und*

¹⁶⁹ Keplinger-Radler, Elisabeth. “*Maria Himmelfahrt*” in *Maria Schnee*. Muehlviertel.tv, Aug. 2014, <http://www.muehlviertel.tv/video/6499/maria-himmelfahrt-in-maria-schnee>.

¹⁷⁰ Freißler described this move to provide Czech children with free summer camps in Austria and language classes as “eine tätige Hilfe über die Grenze, die weiter als der Blick vom Mandelstein reicht...” Freißler, “Unser Mandelsteintreffen 1991.” *Glaube und Heimat: Rundbrief der Klemensgemeinde*, Sept. 1991, pg. 1.

Heimat that had occurred a few years prior and a visible lowering of journalistic standards. Gerhard Freißler, the newspaper's new editor, decreased the number of columns, increased the font, and added a picture of a stained-glass window featuring a medieval German Teutonic Knight to the title page, symbolizing his new focus on Germanness. He committed himself to sending out free copies of the newsletter to readers in the CSR to ensure they had "relevant" German language material to read. Due to his lack of time or ability to write more columns (and the passing of number of the organization's "expellee" priest leaders), Freißler began to insert copies of other publications. These inserts ranged from innocent fairy tales to other "expellee" publications, including increasingly radical far right publications such as the formerly National Socialist *Eckartbote* (banned in Austria until 1953) as well as the tamer *Sudetenpost* and *Volksbote*. Some readers even wrote letters to the editor to complain and reject the inclusion of this "propaganda." In sum, the Klemensgemeinde's new commitment to providing free German language courses in the 1990s and their renewed transnational outreach coincided with a restorative nostalgia for the lost *Heimat* that attempted to revive the German heritage of the region of the German-speaking refugees former homes, at least in terms of the work of the editor of the Klemensgemeinde's *Glaube und Heimat*.

Despite Freißler's ominous predictions in 1991 for the future of Mandelstein and his problematic outreach efforts, the yearly pilgrimage persevered and still continues today (as of 2019). In fact, as symbol of their transnational commitment to peace, the Klemensgemeinde began in 1992 to build a new memorial chapel at the Mandelstein memorial on the border. The chapel was supposed to be understood as a "message of peace" but also a warning [Mahnung] to future generations to keep the peace.¹⁷¹ "Wir bezeugen damit unseren Willen zum Aufbau einer

¹⁷¹ "Unser Mandelsteintreffen." *Glaube und Heimat: Mitteilungsblatt der Klemensgemeinde*, Dec. 1992, p. 3.

gemeinsamen Zukunft, über Grenzen hinweg, in einem gemeinsamen Europa.”¹⁷² The new memorial chapel included a roofed altar open to the elements and a plaque featuring an “expellee” trek and a quote from Adalbert Stifter, reminding German-speaking refugees and expellees to return hate with love. “Hass und Zank zu hegen oder zu erwidern ist Schwäche, sie übersehen und mit Liebe zurückzahlen, ist Stärke.”



Figure 46. The renovated, post-Cold War Mandelstein memorial. *Glaube und Heimat: Mitteilungsblatt der Klemensgemeinde*. Dec. 1994.

Moreover, the hiking paths that the Klemensgemeinde built to their memorial at Mandelstein and the accompanying viewing platform have since received funding from the EU Regional Development Fund that permitted the site’s renovation as a local tourist destination. Consequently, the site is now accompanied by a bilingual sign that problematizes the concept of “Heimat” and “expulsion” and provides a brief history of the “ethnic Germans” that once lived on the other side of the border, their expulsion and postwar fate. According to the EU funded signage: “Weil der Mandelstein an Tagen mit guter Sicht einen Blick weit in das südböhmische

¹⁷² Ibid.

Land zulässt, wurde er zum ‘Sehnsuchtsberg’ jener, die durch die Folgen des zweiten Weltkrieges ihrer Heimat verloren hatten. Es wird berichtet, dass einige von Ihnen, nachdem die Grenze dicht gemacht wurde, täglich den Mandelstein besuchten um, zumindest aus der Ferne, einen Blick auf die verlorene Heimat werfen zu können.”



Figure 47. The memorial chapel at Mandelstein in 2019. The new chapel was completed in 1994 and was used for mass beginning that year. It included a plaque with an image of “expellees.” Under the title, “Mahnmal der Vertreibung 1945” is a quote from Adelbert Stifter: “Hass und Zank zu hegen oder zu erwidern ist Schwäche, sie übersehen und mit Liebe zurückzahlen, ist Stärke.” Below the quote is a reminder to remember the dead “expellees”: “Gedenke der toten Heimatvertriebenen.” Photo by author.



Figure 48. EU funded signage at Mandelstein. Photo by author.



Figure 49. Viewing platform with “Blick in die Heimat.” The view is obscured by a snowy 2019 winter day. Photo by author.



Figure 50. Kleinschweinbarth German-speaking refugee memorial. One of the major German-speaking refugee and expellee memorials in Austria for refugees from Southern Moravia. Photo by author.



Figure 51. “Blick in die Heimat” with signage. The signage points out the exact location of Mikulov (Nikolsburg), the German names of the surrounding villages, and other landmarks. Photo by author.



Figure 52. Path to main altar at Kleinschweinbarth. Photo by author.



Figure 53. Seating below the altar at Kleinschweinbarth. There are more monuments next to the small parking lot. Photo by author.

II. Defacement and German-Speaking Refugee Heterotopias

In the final section of this chapter, I would like to turn away from the role of religious ritual in the context of German-speaking refugee longing and visibility. Rather than the cultural practice of pilgrimage to the various heterotopias that offered German-speaking refugees a “Blick in die Heimat,” I turn now to more political responses and the practice of memorial defacement in particular. From the case studies examined in detail, at least one general trend can be identified over the course of the entire Second Republic. In general, the more visible and explicit a German-speaking refugee memorial is, the more politically difficult it is for German-speaking refugees and expellees to gain the approval of local authorities to build the monument and the starker the cultural responses of defacement.¹⁷³ Indeed, this observation offers another reason that German-speaking refugee longing can be understood as an unwanted “deviancy” in Austria that manifested itself as heterotopias in Austria’s most rural settings and along its margins.

The case of the Carpathian German “expellee” memorial on the Braunsberg in Hainburg, Austria provides an excellent example of this point. Despite renewed attempts by Karpathendeutschen “expellees” in Austria to construct a memorial on the Braunsberg mountain, their proposal was repeatedly rejected and delayed until gaining the blessing of a new mayor in the late 1970s. At the memorial’s dedication ceremony in 1980, the mayor apologized for the delays, which he attributed to political reasons.¹⁷⁴ Even so, the KPÖ, or Austrian Communist

¹⁷³ As noted in the introduction of this chapter, one prominent counterexample to this general trend can be found in Graz. Hypotheses for the exceptionality of the responses to this memorial will be examined at the conclusion of the chapter.

¹⁷⁴ JHD. “Enthüllungsfest des Gedenksteines.” *Heimatblatt der Karpatendeutschen in Österreich der Deutschen aus der Slowakei*, Oct. 1980, pg. 2–3. “Nach dieser Ansprache trat Bürgermeister Rein von Hainburg vor das Mikrophon: ... Wohl habe es aus politischen Gründen lange gedauert, bis das Denkmal errichtet werden... ”



Figure 54. Cleaning of the Braunsberg memorial, 1989. Heimatblatt der Karpatendeutschen in Österreich.



Figure 55. Top of the Braunsberg memorial in 2019. Photo by author.



Figure 56. Braunsberg memorial (rear). Photo by author.



Figure 57. Braunsberg memorial (front). Photo by author.



Figure 58. Braunsberg memorial at distance. Photo by author.



Figure 59. "Blick in die Heimat" from Braunsberg memorial. Photo by author.

Party, protested the memorial in their newspaper, the *Volkswille*, calling it a clear provocation by former Nazis. Like the Mandelstein (or Hiltchnerberg) for the Böhmerwälder or Kleinschweinbarth for the Südmähren, the Braunsberg offered an ideal view of Bratislava (or Preßburg) for the Karpathendeutschen. But unlike some of these other mountains or hills, the Braunsberg was much less rural. Already a popular tourist destination at the time, the peak of the Braunsberg is a short 20- to 30-minute walk from downtown Hainsburg. Moreover, the town of Hainsburg is one of Austria's better-connected border towns with a direct rail connection to Vienna, the Danube River and located at the juncture of the main road connecting Vienna and Bratislava.

Given the site's popularity as a tourist destination, the president of the Karpatendeutschen in Austria, Dr. Josef Derx expressed his hope at the memorial's dedication ceremony that the stone could serve as kind of historical orientation for visitors and tourists. "Es soll jeder wissen, dass dort drüben, jenseits der Donau, in unserem Karpatenland, Jahrhunderte hindurch deutschsprachige Menschen gelebt haben, in Frieden und in angenehmer Zusammenarbeit mit den slawakischen und mit den ungarischen Nachbarn. Das Karpatenland war ihre gemeinsame Heimat, bis ein grausames Schicksal diesem Glück ein Ende setzte." Moreover, the Dr. Derx reiterated why the site was chosen, namely for the "Blick in die Heimat" that it offered.¹⁷⁵ Nonetheless, the location's increased visibility was not always well received by visitors. Already in the 1980s, the memorial was repeatedly defaced – to the point that the Landsmannschaft der

¹⁷⁵ Ibid. "Wir haben dies getan, weil Hainburg unsere Patenstadt ist, aber auch deshalb, weil Braunsberg für uns Karpatendeutschen etwas Besonders bedeutet. Ich kann wohl sagen, dass jeder von uns oder die meisten von uns wieder auf den Braunsberg gekommen sind, um hinüberzuschauen in ihre ehemalige Heimat, hinunter auf die Donau, auf die braune March und ihre Einmündung..."

Karpatendeutschen in Österreich began to ask the readers of their Heimatblatt to contact the local Hainsburg police any time that they visit the memorial and notice more vandalism.¹⁷⁶



Figure 60. Broken German-speaking refugee memorial in Linz, May 2010. *Sudetenpost*, 6 May 2010.



Figure 61. Defaced German-speaking refugee memorial in Linz, October 2013. *Meinbezirk.at*, 30 October 2013.



Figure 62. Vandalized German-speaking refugee memorial in Linz, September 2018. *Sudetenpost*, 6 September 2018.



Figure 63. The memorial on the Linzer Nibelungenbrücke during my visit in May 2019. Photo by author.

Another example of a German-speaking refugee and expellee memorial located in populated public space can be found on the Nibelungenbrücke in the heart of Linz, the capital of Upper Austria and the country’s third largest city. Built in 1985, it was dedicated to remembering the freedom represented by the crossing of the Danube. After the Second War and until the Austrian State Treaty in 1955, Linz was divided along the Danube river with one half of

¹⁷⁶ “Unser Gedenkstein auf dem Braunsberg wurde im Laufe des Sommers und Herbstes des letzten Jahres mehrmals beschmiert und verunziert, die Tafel sogar abgerissen und ist verschwunden!” *Ibid*, Jan 1989, pg. 6.

the city being in the American zone and the other in the Soviet zone. The plaque reads, “Mit dem Überschreiten dieser Brücke endeten im Jahre 1945 die Schrecken der Vertreibung für zehntausende Sudetendeutschen.”

The memorial has been repeatedly vandalized, defaced and broken. After the third time, the Landsmannschaft der Sudetendeutschen in Österreich paid for an extra treatment to make it harder to break and easier to clean the next time. In an interview with the *Kurier* newspaper, the local “expellee” leader sounds bitter and exasperated by the lack of law enforcement concern or protection. He believes that the memory of the expulsions and financial restitution will be ignored by the Austrian and Czech governments until “no more expellees live.”¹⁷⁷

Based on the example of the defaced “expellee” memorials, it becomes clear how politicized the topic of expulsion has become in the post-Waldheim era of Austrian politics. While FPÖ parliamentarian Werner Neubauer allegedly blamed the Greens, SPÖ and KPÖ for the vandalization of the memorial, the KPÖ responded by alleging that far right “expellees” defaced the memorials themselves in order to make themselves seem more like victims.¹⁷⁸ FPÖ parliamentarian, FPÖ Vertriebenen Sprecher, and president of the Nationalrat Anneliese Kitzmüller built her career on her advocacy of “expellee” issues; her treatment of the issue was particularly important. The daughter of “expellees” from the Bukovina, she was a member of the far-right sorority the “pennalen Mädelschaft Sigrid zu Wien” before eventually becoming president of the Landsmannschaften der Bukowinadeutschen in Österreich and running for parliament. She has since penned a number of misleading works on German-speaking refugees and expellees in Austria that were eventually published by the extreme right publisher, Unzensuriert – Verein zur Förderung der Medienvielfalt. Books such as *Frauen während der*

¹⁷⁷ See <https://kurier.at/chronik/oberoesterreich/bis-kein-vertriebener-mehr-lebt/140.865.474>

¹⁷⁸ See <http://ooe.kpoe.at/article.php/20140210114148489>

Vertreibung (2012), *Kinder während der Vertreibung* (2013), and *Vertrieben – geflohen – ermordet. Vertreibung im österreichischen Kontext* (2014) attempt to reach out to the youth with lots of pictures, little text and an exaggeration of expellee victimhood. The backs of the books even contain ads for far-right fraternities and sororities. Through her tireless advocacy for “expellee” issues and the unbalanced manner, with which she deals with the topic, it is unsurprising that the memory of German-speaking refugees in Austria has become since the Waldheim affair increasingly viewed as a subject of the far right. While the political right and left increasingly point the finger at each other over “expellee” issues, the political middle in the ÖVP and SPÖ has become increasingly silent.

Given this context, it is also unsurprising that Kitzmüller’s continued submission of parliamentary questions on “expellee” issues are often perfunctorily dismissed by the bureaucrats that must answer them. This was also the case for her parliamentary question dealing with the vandalism of “expellee” memorials. On December 15, 2014, Kitzmüller submitted twenty-two questions about the vandalism of “expellee” monuments, prefaced by the following remarks:

Immer wieder wird seitens der Vertriebenenverbände von mutwilligen Zerstörungen von Denkmälern, Gedächtnistafeln und Grabanlagen usw., welche an die Leiden der altösterreichischen Vertriebenen erinnern berichtet. Exemplarisch für alle Zerstörungen sei die Besudelung der Gedenktafel der Sudeten-deutschen an der Linzer Nibelungenbrücke genannt, diese wurde mit roter Farbe beschmiert um ein öffentliches Gedenken der Leiden der Altösterreicher zu unterbinden.¹⁷⁹

The response of the Interior Ministry to most of Kitzmüller’s questions showed a clear lack of interest. The answer given to most questions was simply that the requested statistics do not exist and that it is the responsibility of local police to deal with these issues. The bureaucrat finally admits that, “ein generelles Programm zum vorbeugenden Schutz vor Vandalismus besteht jedoch nicht.”

¹⁷⁹ See https://www.parlament.gv.at/PAKT/VHG/XXV/J/J_03348/index.shtml.

These repeated cases of defacement of German-speaking refugee memorials, the lack of local response and the politicized national responses indicate that neither German-speaking refugees nor their memories were ever fully integrated into Austria or Austrian memory culture. The analysis of the palimpsests and heterotopias of German-speaking refugee memory in Austria as presented in this chapter has shown that German-speaking refugee memorials are largely invisible, marginalized and peripheral. Where they are visible as heterotopias, they exist on the margins: either in an extremely rural setting, as part of a cemetery or inside a church. In the case of the examined palimpsests of memory, German-speaking refugee memory is either carefully contained within a religious nationalism of the 1950s passion narrative at the Kreuzbergl Landesgedächtnisstätte or made invisible and forced to assimilate within the preexisting religious memorial architecture as is the case at the Maria Taferl regional memorial site. And, as I have shown, particularly visible German-speaking refugee memorials in populated or frequently visited destinations generally tend to be defaced.

One important exception to this general correlation (i.e. increasing visibility corresponding to increasing political response and defacement) that deserves closer examination is the “Heimatvertriebenenendenkmal der Deutsch-Untersteirer” in Graz. Prominently located on the castle grounds of the Grazer Schlossberg in downtown Graz, the capital of Styria, the German-speaking refugee memorial is privileged with perhaps the most prominent location of an “expellee” memorial in Austria.¹⁸⁰ Nonetheless, I have been unable to find any instances of defacement.¹⁸¹ An investigation of the memorial’s dedication ceremony in 1970 provides some clues as to why it seems to profit from a greater level of acceptance, or at least less resistance.

¹⁸⁰ This claim disregards the many prominently named streets, town squares and memorials to Südtirol.

¹⁸¹ My inability to find instances of defacement does not preclude the possibility that there were actually some cases of vandalism. The “expellee” newspaper for the German Untersteirer, *Der Untersteirer : Mitteilungsblatt der*



Figure 64. Deutsch-Untersteirer memorial at Graz castle with southwardly view of the Untersteiermark. Built and dedicated in 1970. The obelisk is dedicated to “Our Dead” and the triptych on the right wall shows the clergy and nobility on the left panel, the working class of farmers on the right, and the “expellees” with the formerly majority German speaking cities of Pettau, Cilli, Marburg and Rann in the middle. Above the bronze mural is the inscription, “Untersteiermark Unvergessene Heimat” and below, “1945.” Photo by author.

It is important to preface the close reading of the memorial’s dedication ceremony with the unique historical circumstances of the German-speaking refugees from the Untersteiermark. Unlike the Donauschwaben, Gottscheer or Karpatendeutschen, for example, the German-speaking Untersteirer hailed from territories that were directly bordering postwar Austria but severed from the remainder of their corresponding provinces in the aftermath of the First World

Landsmannschaft und des Hilfsvereines der Deutsch-Untersteirer in Österreich ; für die Vertriebenen der Untersteiermark, des Miesstaales sowie des Übermurgebietes, is only available in at the Austrian National Library in microfiche and is not searchable. As such, the scanning of headlines is extremely time consuming and I could have easily missed something. Moreover, the newspaper went out of print in 2005 so data since then is unavailable.

War. Like Südtirol for Tirol, Südkärnten for Carinthia, and parts of Südmähren for Lower Austria, the Untersteiermark was an integral part of the pre-World War I Austrian territory of Styria. For this reason, some German-speaking refugees and intellectuals argued for the privileging of these approximately 50,000 (not including the Sudetendeutschen)¹⁸² so-called “ethnic Austrians” (Volksösterreicher) in contrast to the “ethnic Germans” (Volksdeutsche). Lujo Tončić-Sorinj, the director political division of the influential Austrian Research Institute for Economics and Politics (and later Austrian Foreign Minister and General-Secretary of the Council of Europe) argued in the immediate aftermath of the Second World War for the expedited integration of these ethnically Austrian Volksösterreicher, whom he viewed as more culturally and intellectually aligned with Vienna than Berlin. “Es liegt im eigenen österreichischen Interesse, die großen Bevölkerungsverluste im Kriege durch Elemente zu ersetzen, die dem Österreichertum am ehesten nachkommen. Das aber dürfte vor allem bei den Volksösterreichern der Fall sein.”¹⁸³

Given the arguments of intellectuals like Tončić-Sorinj, it is reasonable to hypothesize that this sense of kinship with so-called “ethnic Austrian expellees” was what had afforded the Untersteirer the prominent location of their memorial and had prevented its defacement. After all, the Dachsteinlied, the Styrian state anthem, was sung by the Austrian military at the German-speaking refugee memorial’s dedication ceremony in 1970. And still today – in 2020 – the Styrian anthem defines Styria in its prewar borders, thus including the Untersteiermark as

¹⁸² See Schließleder, 269. According to Schließleder, in July 1954 there were approximately 50,900 Volksösterreichische refugees and expellees residing in Austria: 12,000 Untersteirer and Unterkärntner, 7,500 Ostburgenländer, 29,800 Südtiroler, 1,600 Kanaltaler and an undiscernible number of Südböhmen and Südmährer as they were indistinguishable from the 122,700 Sudetendeutsche.

¹⁸³ Tončić-Sorinj, Lujo. “Volksdeutsche und Volksösterreicher,” 226-227.

integral to the province of Styria.¹⁸⁴ However, at the memorial's dedication ceremony, it was not Austrianness but a Pan-German nationalism that was celebrated as the unifying factor between the Untersteirer and the Graz natives.

In fact, the keynote speech given by Graz native and Austrian parliamentarian Otto Hofmann-Wellenhof makes very clear how alive and well *völkisch*, Pan-Germanist ideas were in the public life of 1970s Styria. After praising the untersteirische “expellees” for their industriousness in helping rebuild postwar Austria as well as for their achievements as the “cultural vanguard” of German-Austria [Deutschösterreich] in the Untersteiermark,¹⁸⁵ Hofmann-Wellenhof welcomed the Untersteirer not as fellow Austrians, but as fellow ethnic Germans:

...Sie, meine Lieben, die hierher gekommen sind, bei Gott nicht als Heimatvertriebene, das war ja eine Heimat, und auch nicht als Volksdeutsche, wir waren ja alle in diesem Sinne Volksdeutsche, wie wir eben zum deutschen Volkstum gehören, aber sie sind zu uns gekommen, aus der engeren Heimat vertrieben und haben hier mitgeholfen, dies so am Boden liegende Land mit der Kraft ihres Fleißes, mit ihrem Unternehmungsgeist, mit ihrer Treue zum Gesamten, wieder aufzubauen.¹⁸⁶

Hofmann-Wellenhof recognized in 1970 that his speech and enthusiasm for “Nation, Volk und Vaterland” were, at that moment, “no longer fashionable,” particularly among the youth, but argued that Austrians should not listen to and believe the “sociologists, political scientists and

¹⁸⁴ Despite efforts to reform the provincial anthem and make it more politically correct, the Dachsteinlied has not yet been changed. The first verse that describes the Untersteiermark as part of Styria is still sung:

Hoch vom Dachstein an, wo der Aar noch haust,
bis zum Wendenland am Bett der Sav'
und vom Alptal an, das die Mürz durchbraust,
bis ins Rebenland im Tal der Drav'
Dieses schöne Land ist der Steirer Land,
ist mein liebes teures Heimatland...

¹⁸⁵ “Festliche Enthüllung Und Einweihung Unserer Deutsch-Untersteirer Gedächtnisstätte Auf Dem Grazer Schloßberg, Am Sonntag, Dem 28. Juni 1970.” *Der Untersteirer: Mitteilungsblatt Der Landsmannschaft Und Des Hilfvereines Der Deutsch-Untersteirer in Österreich Für Die Vertriebenen Der Ehemaligen Untersteiermark, Des Miesstaales Sowie Des Übermurgebietes.*, Sept. 1970, p. 3. “Zur Festrede ergriff sodann unser Ehrenmitglied, Bundesrat Otto Hofmann-Wellenhof das Wort! In ausgewählte, tiefgründende Dichterworte eingebaut, stellte er fest, dass wir Deutsch-Untersteirer schon immer als emsig tätiger, kultureller Vorposten Deutsch-Österreichs tätig waren, eigentlich nur in unsere engere Heimat zurückkehrten und auch durch unsere emsige Mitarbeit am Wiederaufbau Österreichs nie und nimmer als außenstehende deutsche Volkssplitter betrachtet werden dürften.”

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 1-2. “Die Deutsch-Untersteirer sind wieder Österreicher – Gleich und ganz wie anno dazumal!”

politicians” so much, but should instead remember the poetic words of Friedrich Hölderlein, Theodor Storm and the untersteirische poet Max Mell and their love of and dedication to Heimat and Vaterland.¹⁸⁷

Hofmann-Wellenhof’s 1970 speech is not nearly so noteworthy for what it says about the untersteirische German-speaking refugees as for what it reveals about the conception of Austrianness and Austrian national identity at the time. That a national politician could give a public speech in downtown Graz in 1970 that was attended not only by German-speaking refugees and expellees but also by “many Graz locals” and that it was filled with outspoken Pan-German nationalism seems to indicate that at least some Austrians identified as German.¹⁸⁸ But perhaps this is not so surprising given that, in a 1963 poll, the majority of Austrians agreed with the idea that “Austrians are just as German as other German regional groups, such as, for example, the Bavarians, the Swabians, etc.,” whereas only 30 percent agreed more with the statement that “Austrians are not German at all, but form a nation of their own.” And as late as November 1990, a full twelve percent of Austrians felt personally addressed by the events of the *Wiedervereinigung* of East and West Germany and the statement, that “the whole German people remains called upon to complete German unity and liberty in free self-determination,” according to a poll by *Die Presse*.¹⁸⁹ Yet, identifying as German does not necessarily mean those Austrians shared Hofmann-Wellenhof’s sense of Pan-German nationalism. In fact, there is evidence to suggest that not even all attendees of the memorial’s dedication ceremony shared Hofmann-

¹⁸⁷ Ibid., 1.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid., 3. “Rückblickend war die ganze Gedenk- und Festveranstaltung eine mächtige und würdige Gemeinsamkeits-Kundgebung, ein Beweis, dass man auch in den Reststeiermark das Zusammengehörigkeitsgefühl mit den untersteirischen Landsleuten und den verlorenen Landesteil nicht verloren hat. Die große Beteiligung, nicht nur der Heimatvertriebenen sondern auch der Grazer Bevölkerung, wie auch die wohlwollende Anteilnahme, Hilfe und Mitwirkung an unserm Gedenkwerk bis in die höchsten Stellen der Landesregierung und unserer Landeshauptstadt haben dies eindeutig bewiesen und bezeugen, dass Heimatliebe und Volksbewusstsein kein leerer Wahn sind.”

¹⁸⁹ Thaler, Peter. *The Ambivalence of Identity*, 170.

Wellenhof's views. For example, although the Graz mayor Scherbaum's speech was not printed in full, *Der Untersteirer* "expellee" newspaper reported the mayor to have addressed the city's reasoning for providing the untersteirische German-speaking refugees with such a prime site for their memorial; i.e., the location was given with the goal of promoting city partnerships, peace between peoples and deescalating old ethnic conflicts.¹⁹⁰ Scherbaum's goals for the memorial are in direct contrast to Hofmann-Wellenhof's praise for the untersteirische "expellees" and their "eternal ethnic strife."¹⁹¹

In the end, it is a surprising finding that the most prominently located German-speaking refugee memorial in Austria was originally supported not because the Grazer saw the Untersteirer as Volksösterreicher or as particularly Austrian, but because they also saw both themselves and the Untersteirer as ethnic Germans. Ultimately, however, this finding does little to change the conclusions already drawn regarding the tabooization of the German-speaking refugee memory discourse in Austria or its relative marginalization as heterotopias of memory. While the memory of German-speaking refugees and expellees has been generally marginalized across the political spectrum and throughout the history of the Second Republic, it has always been a welcome victim narrative among the FPÖ and VDU (the former FPÖ), who viewed the "expellees" as fellow German victims of the war *against* Nazism. Thus, German-speaking refugee memory can be found in the memorials of pan-German nationalists (like in Graz) and in the more consensus-building memorials of religious nationalism like at the Kreuzbergkirche in Klagenfurt. Moreover, along with this trend of tabooization and marginalization across the

¹⁹⁰ *Der Untersteirer*, Sept 1970, pg 3. "Für die Landeshauptstadt Graz ergriff Bürgermeister Dipl. -Ing. Scherbaum das Wort und wies darauf hin, dass diese durch die Pflege der Städtefreundschaften für die Hebung des Verständnisses zum Völkerfrieden und den Abbau des seinerzeitigen gegenseitigen Völkerhasses Sorge trage. In diesem Sinne habe die Stadt Graz den vertriebenen Deutsch-Untersteirern den schönen Blickpunkt der Kanonenbastei für ihre Gedächtnisstätte zur Verfügung gestellt."

¹⁹¹ "Eternal ethnic strife" is my translation of the German original "ewigen Volkstumskampf."

entire history of the Second Republic, a few general post-Cold War developments can also be identified. Firstly, the German-speaking refugee discourse has become increasingly politicized, particularly by the FPÖ in the lead up to Czechia's 2004 joining the EU¹⁹² and by Anneliese Kitzmüller more generally. Consequently, as both Heidemarie Uhl and Stefanie Meyer have argued, the memory of German-speaking refugees and expellees in Austria is largely viewed as a far-right discourse to this day.

Secondly, German-speaking refugees and expellees have increasingly reached out to their former communities in the "authentic spaces" of their former homes, but this transnational outreach has also at times been problematic, as the case of the Gerhard Freißler, the editor of the Klemensgemeinde's *Glaube und Heimat* in the 1990s has shown. However, since this chapter is primarily concerned with the German-speaking refugee and expellee memory discourse in Austria, the transnational outreach that accompanied the erection of dozens of post-Cold war memorials outside of Austria in Czechia, Slovakia, Hungary and Serbia, for example, have not been analyzed and no claims can be made regarding the dimensions and extent of this transnational turn.

Finally, the cases of the Deutsch-Untersteirer memorial in Graz and the Kreuzberg Landesgedächtnisstätte seem to indicate that German-speaking expellees and refugees are only truly integrated and visibly welcome in Austria within the context of either religious nationalism or German nationalism. In all other analyzed cases, the German-speaking refugee memorials are either invisible, as in the case at Maria Taferl, or exist as heterotopias on the margins of Austria society. Moreover, visible, non-nationalist memorials in populated or heavily frequented destinations tend to be vandalized and defaced. These findings seem to further indicate that

¹⁹² Mayer, Stefanie. "Totes Unrecht"?: Die "Beneš-Dekrete" - Eine Geschichtspolitische Debatte in Österreich.

German-speaking refugees and expellees were never fully integrated into Austria nor into Austrian memory culture.

PART II: THE MEMORY OF GERMAN-SPEAKING REFUGEES AND EXPELLEES IN AUSTRIAN LITERATURE AFTER WALDHEIM

INTRODUCTION TO PART II

In the following two chapters, my analysis of the memory of “flight and expulsion” in Austria turns to the medium of literature. Literature represents, according to Aleida Assmann, a more “liquid” form of memory that is discursively functionalized on the individual level. In contrast, “solid” forms of memory such as monuments, museums and exhibitions are commemorated publicly.¹⁹³ While Part I examined the “solid” memory of memorials and their performative dimension in the symbolic practices of ritual and pilgrimage, this second part of the dissertation concentrates on literature and narrative reconstructions of the past. Given that the literature forming the basis of my analysis has been written in the post-Waldheim era, I begin this introduction with a brief summary of Austrian memory culture since the Waldheim affair. In doing so, I put particular focus on the various discursive constructions of the Second World War as these provide important context for my study of narrative constructions of “flight and expulsion” in literature. I then briefly sketch out the literary trajectory of the memory of “flight and expulsion” in Austria before concluding with an outline of each of the two chapters and their interconnections.

¹⁹³ The metaphors of “liquid” and “solid” forms of (cultural) memory derive from Assmann’s earlier work and are analogous to the tension between “functional” and “storage” memory in her later work, whereby storage memory is associated with material representations and functional memory is associated with symbolic practices. See Assmann, Aleida, ed. “Fest und Flüssig. Anmerkungen zu einer Denkfigur.” In *Kultur als Lebenswelt und Monument*, 181–99.

I. Austrian Memory Culture Since the Waldheim Affair: Fragmentation and Politicization of the Past

The Waldheim affair has been repeatedly described as a “turning point” in and reorientation of Austria’s postwar memory culture.¹⁹⁴ According to these analyses, Austria has moved on from its erstwhile official policy as the first victim of Nazism, finally admitting its complicity and “co-responsibility” for NS crimes. Judging on the basis of official governmental policy, Holocaust memory initiatives, and restitution programs, Günter Bischof declared as early as 2004 that Austria “is no longer the black sheep of Europe.”¹⁹⁵ Similarly, Heidemarie Uhl argued in 2005 that Austria had “arrived in the mainstream of international memory culture.”¹⁹⁶ But recent research, particularly in the fields of political science and sociology, has shown that the Waldheim affair actually represents less a “turning point” than a fragmentation of Austrian memory culture.¹⁹⁷ Rather than transforming Austrian memory culture, the Waldheim affair simply pulled back the veil to reveal the longstanding paradoxes of Austrian memory during the “ice age” of postwar nation building and consociationalism. Looking from the top down, Austrian memory culture may appear wholly transformed, but a bottom-up perspective highlights

¹⁹⁴ For this exact wording see, for example, Beniston, Judith. “‘Hitler’s First Victim’? — Memory and Representation in Post-War Austria: Introduction,” 5. and Krylova, Katya. *The Long Shadow of the Past Contemporary Austrian Literature, Film, and Culture*, 3.

¹⁹⁵ Bischof, G. “Victims? Perpetrators? ‘Punching Bags’ of European Historical Memory? The Austrians and Their World War II Legacies,” 17–32.

¹⁹⁶ As quoted in Lehnguth, Cornelius. *Waldheim und die Folgen*, 471.

¹⁹⁷ See Peter Utgaard’s chapter “Fragmentation of the Victim Myth since 1986: From Kurt Waldheim to Jörg Haider” in Utgaard, Peter. *Remembering and Forgetting Nazism: Education, National Identity and the Victim Myth in Postwar Austria*, 161-191. Three chapters of sociologist Christian Karner’s recently published longue durée study of Austrian nationalism are also particularly relevant for making this point, see “Multiple Crises Turning Banal Nationalism(s) ‘Hot’ ” ; “Localizing Strategies against Global Flows” ; and “Renationalization Gathering Pace” in Karner, Christian. *Nationalism Revisited: Austrian Social Closure from Romanticism to the Digital Age*. Finally, political scientist Cornelius Lehnguth’s published dissertation *Waldheim und die Folgen: Der parteipolitische Umgang mit dem Nationalsozialismus in Österreich* (2013) is required reading for those wishing to better understand the varied and discrete narrative constructions of the past used by Austrian political parties throughout the history of the Second Republic and into the present (or at least until 2013).

continuities with the past (and with the Waldheim affair's "nationalist backlash" and the rise of the FPÖ, for example).

In fact, Austrian political scientist Anton Pelinka has emphasized how Austria, as a belated nation and democracy, only gradually developed loyalty over the course of the Second Republic. After each of the subjectively experienced defeats in both 1918 and 1945, loyalty in Austria did not exist toward the nation but rather toward three ideological camps that "opposed the nation and served as substitute nations." According to Pelinka, these ideological camps were (1) the socialist camp, predicated on class, (2) the Christian conservative camp, predicated on political Catholicism, and (3) the pan-German national camp that focused on annexation with Germany. After the Second World War, the Allied occupying powers prevented former Nazis from voting (at least until 1949) and helped set up a consociational democracy (Proporz system) between the primarily religiously oriented camp (ÖVP) and the class-conscious camp (SPÖ). As former Nazis gained the right to vote in 1949, the SPÖ and the ÖVP competed for their votes. In doing so, they quickly forgot the memory of Austrian resistance, instead performing a paradoxical and hypocritical political "double speak" that focused on a universalized victimhood narrative (of Austrians as victims of NS, the Allies, denazification, etc.) at the local level (i.e. the dedication ceremonies of monuments to veteran groups, etc.) while simultaneously emphasizing the legalistic definition of the Austrian state as "the first victim of Hitlerite aggression" on the international stage (to avoid financial responsibility).¹⁹⁸ These victim narratives were highly

¹⁹⁸ For a discussion of this paradoxical double speak and the commemoration of veterans' groups as heroes at local level monuments see Uhl, Heidemarie. "Of Heroes and Victims: World War II in Austrian Memory," 185–200.

integrative and arguably necessary¹⁹⁹ to construct the Austrian nation but hinged on keeping certain aspects of Austria's involvement in the Second World War taboo.²⁰⁰

When the Waldheim affair broke the postwar taboo, the political consensus that had dominated the Austrian political landscape between the Austrian People's Party (ÖVP) and Socialist Party (SPÖ) until that point was forever shattered. The rise of the Green Party on the left and the particularly dramatic growth of the FPÖ on the far right (since the late 1980s) demonstrates both the fragmentation of political consensus as well as the variety of discursive constructions of the past that now compete for hegemony.²⁰¹ In fact, Cornelius Lehnghuth has identified five distinct discursive constructions of Austria's role in the Second World War that are promoted by today's Austrian political parties. In the following, I will briefly sketch out the argumentation of these discursive constructions of the past as they are highly relevant for my analysis of narrative constructions of "flight and expulsion" in contemporary Austrian literature, the subject of Chapter 4.

On the far-right, Lehnghuth has identified two discourses that have both existed since the end of the war and have gained currency on the national level with the FPÖ's increasing electoral success since the Waldheim affair. He terms the first discourse the "*paranazistische Mittäterthese*." It circulates in pan-Germanic circles and argues that Austria freely joined the Third Reich and thus hold as much or as little responsibility for the Second World War as Germany. It also contends that Austrian soldiers in the Second World War were simply

¹⁹⁹ See, for example, Günter Bischof's argument that this Austrian amnesia made it possible for Austria to invent and the sell a "usable past." Bischof, Günter. *Austria in the First Cold War, 1945-1955. The Leverage of the Weak*, 52-67.

²⁰⁰ Pelinka, Anton. "The Great Austrian Taboo: The Repression of the Civil War," 69-82.

²⁰¹ According to Lehnghuth, "Die österreichische Erinnerungslandschaft stellt sich heute heterogen dar. Nach der Erosion der Opferthese entstand kein neues hegemoniales Narrativ, wenngleich die Mitverantwortungsthese dadurch, dass sie in einem hohen Maß multiperspektivisch angelegt ist, viele – partiell gegeneinander laufende – Teilerzählungen in hybrider Form in sich vereinen kann, so dass sie sich ab Anfang der 1990er Jahre zu einer beliebten Argumentationsfigur entwickelte," 461.

defending the Heimat from Bolshevism. The second discourse on the far right identified by Lehngruth is the “*universalisierte Opferthese*” narrative that interprets the Austrian state and the Austrian people as victims of both National Socialism and the Allies. Both the “*paranazistische Mittäterthese*” and the “*universalisierte Opferthese*” narrative circulate to varying degrees within the FPÖ and have allowed the FPÖ to place particular focus on the victimhood of “*Altösterreicher*” in Austria:

Die FPÖ konnte ihrer vergangenheitspolitischen Linie treu bleiben, indem sie mit einer möglichst breiten Gleichsetzung von NS- und (Nach-) Kriegsopfern operierte. Sie führte dazu u.a. den Begriff ‘indirekte Opfer’ in die Debatten ein und forderte die Ausweitung von materiellen Leistungen auch auf die aus den deutschsprachigen Gebieten Vertriebenen oder Bombenopfer, kriegsgefangene ehemalige Wehrmachtssoldaten oder Trümmerfrauen. Mit dieser Ausweitung wurden die NS-Verbrechen nicht geleugnet, aber relativiert.²⁰²

In contrast to the universal victimhood narratives on the far right, the “*kritische Mittäterthese*” thesis of the left views Austria as a successor state to the Third Reich and thus considers both the Austrian state and Austrians as morally and materially responsible. Lehngruth views this discourse as exclusive to the Green party; moreover, this unique perspective enabled them to enter the Austrian parliament in the wake of the Waldheim affair.

Die Grünen trugen ihre Deutungsmuster als Gegenerzählung zum hegemonialen Opfernarrativ in den parlamentarischen Raum, womit sie nicht nur die Vergangenheitsdebatte generell dynamisierten, sondern auch im Rahmen der praktischen Politik den Stellenwert des Nationalsozialismus erhöhten, da sie die anderen politischen Akteure – in welchen Form auch immer – zwangen, auf ihre Initiativen zu reagieren.²⁰³

The Greens’ historical narrative emphasizes the singularity of the Holocaust and argues that restitution should only be provided to the victims of National Socialism (i.e. Jews, Roma, Sinti, forced laborers and not expellees, POWs, etc.).

²⁰² Ibid., 463.

²⁰³ Ibid., 464.

Finally, Lenguth points to two separate “co-responsibility” theses. The first of these is the “*relativierte Opferthese*” that is popular among part of the ÖVP and which maintains that the Austrian state is a victim, but that Austrians are perpetrators. Consequently, any form of restitution is only a voluntary (and not legally enforceable) choice. The final co-responsibility thesis, entitled simply “*Mitverantwortungsbekennnis*”, is popular among the SPÖ and argues that even though the Austrian state did not technically exist, Austrians were just as involved in National Socialism and the Holocaust as Germans and thus share co-responsibility. As a result of this co-responsibility Austrians have a moral duty to provide restitution to victims of National Socialism.

II. The Treatment of “Flight and Expulsion” in Postwar Austrian Literature

Literature dealing with the topic of “flight and expulsion” in Austria has been difficult to identify. But a search of Austrian German-speaking refugee publications produced some results.²⁰⁴ These Austrian German-speaking refugee newspapers include: the Catholic, ÖVP friendly *Glaube und Heimat* (1948-2013), SPÖ friendly *Heimatbote: Wochenblatt volksdeutscher Heimatvertriebene* (1951-1953), the politically unaffiliated Linzer *Sudetenpost* (1955-present), German-speaking refugee periodicals such as *Österreichische Begegnung – Vierteljahresschrift für Kultur und Zeitgeschichte* (1960s) and the various publications of the Verband Katholischer Donauschwäbischer Akademiker (VKDA Salzburg) in addition to various smaller German-speaking refugee Heimatblätter (such as that of the Karpatendeutschen). Even so, the extant literature is quite scant. Perhaps this is to be expected given that most postwar German-speaking refugees and expellees eventually ended up in Germany or elsewhere

²⁰⁴ Even so, I do not claim to have necessarily found all examples of Austrian “expellee” literature.

abroad²⁰⁵ with only about 300,000 ultimately remaining in Austria (vs. about 12 million in Germany). As such, the corpus of Austrian “expellee” literature is predictably sparse in comparison to Germany.



Figure 65. Flyer advertising Hans Naderer’s 1949 play, “Volk am Kreuz.” Austrian National Library Online.

In the genre of drama, Viennese playwright Hans Naderer’s 1949 play “Volk am Kreuz” seems to be the first treatment of the topic. The play is disconnected from the actual historical events of postwar ethnic German “flight and expulsion” and deals more generally with the questions of guilt, suffering, hate, and forgiveness in the context of expulsion. In the piece, a family is expelled from their farm on the other side of a border for something that their ancestors did but for which the present-day family was not personally responsible. Despite the “timeless” historical circumstances, reviewers in postwar Austrian newspapers immediately recognized the

²⁰⁵ USA, Canada, Brazil, Australia and New Zealand were popular destinations for the German-speaking refugees that found themselves stuck in Austria after the war and the closing of the border to Germany in October 1946.

reference and were divided in their response.²⁰⁶ While most (particularly SPÖ and Communist leaning newspapers) were very critical of the piece's "political bias" and kitsch treatment of the subject, the right leaning ÖVP friendly *Kleine Volksblatt* praised the piece. The *Kleine Volksblatt* argued that the heart of the piece is also that of Christendom.

Nicht ein einzelner, ein ganzes Volk hängt am Kreuz...dauernde Befriedung kann nur kommen, wenn jeder einzelne hüben und drüben den Gekreuzigten als Vorbild nimmt. Aus Gewalt, Haß und Rache quillt unaufhaltsam Blut und Tod. Die Kette des Unheils können nur die Menschen selber sprengen. Die Brücke von Volk zu Volk ruht nur auf den Fundamenten der Liebe, wie sie der Menschensohn der Welt verkündete.²⁰⁷

In contrast, in a scathing review of Naderer's play the *Österreichische Zeitung* wrote:

[Naderer möchte]...sehr tendenziös seine These von den politischen Ungerechtigkeiten in den Grenzgebieten vor Augen führen...Diese Ungerechtigkeiten, so will er glauben machen, sind an den heutigen DP begangen worden, die einst im Sudetengebiet und anderswo als Stachel im lebenden Körper eines slawischen Volkes die Rolle eines Vorspanns des deutschen Imperialismus spielen wollten und auch tatsächlich gespielt haben....²⁰⁸

Dvorak-Stockerer has shown how politically Naderer's play was interpreted in the newspapers during the Second Republic's 1949 election year (the first election former NSDAP party members could vote in). Although most German-speaking refugees did not have Austrian citizenship until the 1954 Optionsgesetz and could not participate in the election, the topic of granting citizenship was taken up in the debates that followed in both the left and right leaning reviews of Naderer's play. For example, in response to the left leaning *Arbeiterzeitung*'s strong criticism of the play, the *Kleine Volksblatt* wrote that:

Ihr Kommentar zu dem Volksstück kann nur so verstanden werden, daß die österreichischen Sozialisten an ihrer Haßtradition festhalten wollen. Ihnen geht es nach wie vor nur um die Partei. Die Menschen spielen für sie keine Rolle. Wer sich nicht beugt

²⁰⁶ See Dvorak-Stocker, Wolfgang. "Schicksal und Integration der Volksdeutschen Heimatvertriebenen im Spiegel der Wiener Tagespresse 1945-1950," 57-60.

²⁰⁷ As quoted in Dvorak-Stocker, 58.

²⁰⁸ Ibid., 58-9.

und den Beitritt zur SPÖ ablehnt, dessen Staatsbürgerschaftsakt bleibt unerledigt liegen.²⁰⁹

In sum, even the earliest treatment of the topic of “flight and expulsion” was immediately politicized in postwar Austria. This politicization of the topic may also be a reason that hardly any novels on the subject appeared in Austria during the 1950s and 60s. In fact, Romanian Germanist Horst Schuller has hypothesized that politicization was a likely reason why Otto Folberth’s novelization of the subject was never published.²¹⁰

Written between 1952 and 1954, Otto Folberth’s (1896-1991) unpublished manuscript *Das Stundenglas* received the 1955 Südostdeutsches Kulturwerk prize (but was still not published). Despite being a well-connected Transylvanian Saxon “expellee,” art historian, and journalist and even serving as president of the Austrian section of the “Europäischen Forschungsgruppe für Flüchtlingsfragen,” Folberth was unable to get his manuscript published. In fact, it was not until 2013 that the Romanian Schiller Verlag posthumously published the novel. In the afterword, Horst Schuller hypothesizes that political reasons were the cause for the delay:

Das ewige Thema der Liebe wird wohl bei Gutachtern, Jurymitgliedern und Verlegern keinen Anstoß erregt haben, im Falle der hochpolitischen Flüchtlingsproblematik hingegen sind wenige Jahre nach Kriegsende durchaus kontroverse Einschätzungen, Tabus, und Vorbehalte denkbar. Von der näheren Definition des Flüchtlingsstandes, von der politischen Zugehörigkeit des Herkunftslandes vor und nach dem Krieg, von ursächlichen Aktionen wie KZ-Lagerhaft, Zwangsarbeit, Deportation, Evakuierung, Flucht und Vertreibung hingen letzten Endes wesentliche internationale Hilfeleistungen und das Gewähren von Darlehen für die Eingliederung ab. Vorstellbar bleibt auch, dass die von Folberth schonungslos gezeichnete Figur eines siebenbürgischen SS-Typen bei betroffenen Generationsgenossen zumindest Unbehagen, vielleicht sogar den Eindruck der persönlichen Denunziation geweckt und die Drucklegung nicht gerade gefördert hat.²¹¹

²⁰⁹ Ibid., 59. “Sie wollen ewigen Haß.” *Kleine Volksblatt*, 3 August 1949.

²¹⁰ See Horst Schuller’s afterword to Otto Folberth’s 2013 posthumously published novel *Das Stundenglas: ein Roman*, 265-276.

²¹¹ Ibid., 270-1.

Decades before Herta Müller's *Atemschaukel*, Folberth's *Das Stundenglas* tells the story of flight, expulsion, and deportation of Transylvanian Saxons into the Soviet Union for forced labor and describes their arrival in and the conditions of their immediate postwar situation in Austria. Based on Folberth's firsthand experience, the novel presents the situation of German-speaking refugees in Austria through the eyes of an "objective" Swiss protagonist. Sent to Austria by the American section chief of the Geneva based international refugee organization (IHK -International Hilfskomitee) that he works for, the protagonist Claude sees the barracks that the German-speaking refugees and expellees in Austria are still living in during the early 1950s as well as the legal and bureaucratic troubles that they faced. Eventually, Claude falls in love with the beautiful Transylvanian Saxon expellee Susanne and learns the story of expulsion and deportation into the Soviet Union through a series of flashbacks. Folberth's candid presentation of the difficult situation of the German-speaking refugees and their treatment in postwar Austria as well as his critique of some of the Transylvanian Saxons' involvement in the SS during the war very likely played a role in preventing the novel from being published, as hypothesized by Schuller.

Since Folberth's novel did not appear until 2013, the first published literary treatment of the subject of "flight and expulsion" in Austria (in novel form) is likely Gertrud Fussenegger's 1957 novel *Das verschüttete Antlitz*. As the last novel of her Bohemian trilogy, it only indirectly deals with "flight and expulsion," and much more directly with "ethnic German" guilt and complicity.²¹² Beyond Fussenegger's limited treatment of the subject, the first major author to focus on "flight and expulsion" is Ilse Tielsch (1929-present), beginning with her 1979 novel

²¹² For a detailed analysis of the novel, see Karina Berger's *Heimat, Loss and Identity – Flight and Expulsion in German Literature from the 1950s to the Present*, 53-59. Curiously, Berger does not address Fussenegger's Austrianness but treats her as a West German author, perhaps because of her willing involvement in writing for the *Völkischer Beobachter* during National Socialism.

Erinnerung mit Bäumen. By far the most successful and prolific Austrian “expellee” author, Ilse Tielsch almost certainly enjoys the largest audience of any German-speaking refugee author in Austria. The success of her 1979 novel and the positive reviews it received from high profile authors (such as Gertrud Fussenegger) spawned a lifelong preoccupation with the subject. After completing her trilogy *Die Ahnenpyramide* (1980), *Heimatsuchen* (1982), *Die Früchte der Tränen* (1988), Tielsch also published various poems, travelogues, and the late novel *Das letzte Jahr* (2006).

Ilse Tielsch’s work represents the most comprehensive engagement with the topic of “flight and expulsion” literature by any author in Austria. The Austrian essayist and literary critic Karl-Markus Gauß, himself the son of Danube Swabian refugees, has similarly written often about his family heritage and explored the idea of a nonnational “Mitteleuropa” but has not extensively dealt with the topic of “flight and expulsion.” An examination of the differing approaches to the topic of “flight and expulsion” by these two authors is the subject of Chapter 5.

Finally, there are also a number of Austrian Heimatbücher and autobiographies that deal with “flight and expulsion.” These autobiographical writings include texts by high profile Austrians, such as painter Robert Hammerstiel’s 1999 *Von Ikonen und Ratten: Eine Banater Kindheit 1939-1949* and 2007 *Von klaren und von blinden Spiegeln* as well as journalist Barbara Coudenhove-Kalergi’s 2013 *Zuhause ist überall*. While Günter Grass’ 2002 novel *Im Krebsgang* precipitated a renewed interest and national discussion of “flight and expulsion” and how to properly discuss German victimhood in the context of the Second World War in Germany, there was no similar echo in Austria or in Austrian literature.²¹³ In fact, there has been no major shift

²¹³ Uhl, Heidemarie. “Der gegenwärtige Ort von ‘Flucht und Vertreibung’ im deutschen und österreichischen Gedächtnisdiskurs.” Haslinger, Franzen, Wessel. *Diskurse über Zwangsmigrationen in Zentraleuropa. Geschichtspolitik, Fachdebatten, literarisches und lokales Erinnern seit 1989*, 157-174.

in the treatment of the subject in Austria until around 2015 or 2016 when five novels were published by authors of the second and third generations, the majority of whom are also journalists.²¹⁴ What accounts for the sudden shift and interest in the topic is unclear but has also been noted by the Austrian press.²¹⁵ An analysis of narrative construction of the past in four of these works is the subject of Chapter 4.

III. Outline to Part II

Chapter 4 analyzes the narrative strategies employed by four different authors in examples of contemporary Austrian literature that deal with the memory of “flight and expulsion.” This chapter examines how the past is constructed in the novels with particular attention to discourses of complicity and victimhood within the context of the post-Waldheim Austrian memory regimes. It also critically examines the novels’ reception in the Austrian press to elucidate the place of the novels’ differing approaches to the past in today’s Austria.

In contrast, Chapter 5 takes a different approach to examining the place of “flight and expulsion” in post-Waldheim Austrian literature. Chapter 5 analyzes post-Waldheim travelogues by Ilse Tielsch and Karl-Markus Gauß to investigate how the trip is narrated through the lens of memory and/or postmemory. In other words, it is not the narrative reconstruction of the past per se that is under investigation in Chapter 5, but rather how the present moment of the trip is challenged by the nostalgic desire for ‘the presence of the past.’ This approach is informed by insights from the iconic turn and visual studies and in particular by Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht’s concept of “presence.” Drawing on these insights, I propose the term “refugee/expellee gaze,” to

²¹⁴ These include: Hanna Sukare’s 2015 novel *Staubzunge*, Gabriele Vasak’s 2016 novel *Den Dritten das Brot*, Ulrike Schmitzer’s 2015 *Die Gestohlene Erinnerung*, Constantin Göttfert’s 2014 *Steiners Geschichte* and Corinna Antelmann’s 2015 *Hinter die Zeit*.

²¹⁵ See Chapter 4. The ongoing European refugee crisis in Austria may have renewed interest in the topic.

capture a particular way of looking that sees past the present and is dominated by memory or postmemory.

These chapters are united in their recognition of literature's ability to make history (through the memory of others) emotionally accessible. The power of narrative to make the past present and negotiate new identities and subjectivities can foster understanding and empathy. On the other hand, the uncritically presented past can perpetuate hateful perspectives and lopsided views of history. As such, the literary critic can play an important role as an advocate of ethical thinking. This argument is in line with Alison Landsberg's concept of prosthetic memory and the idea that each individual's reading experience is a negotiation between the memory presented in the novel and one's own experiences. According to Landsberg, mass media (including literature) promote the adoption of "prosthetic memories" through "transferential spaces," where people can enter experiential relationships with events through which they did not live and gain knowledge that would otherwise be difficult to obtain through mere cognitive means.

This process occurs in contrast to the publicly commemorated memorials discussed in part I and the ossification of memory that material memorials represent. While Part I of the dissertation focuses on the more democratic, bottom up memory of local memorials, Part II examines literature as a medial carrier of cultural memory, whose content has already been curated by elites. Scholars, editors and politicians thus serve as the gatekeepers of memory. As argued throughout this introduction, the memory of "flight and expulsion" in Austria has been a particularly politicized memory throughout the history of the Second Republic and found relatively little attention by scholars or in published literature. It is time for these memories to be taken seriously and not dismissed as uncritical or otherwise problematic representations of the past. Nonetheless, they cannot be accepted wholesale without placing them in their historical

context. Thus, an analysis of narrative strategies and the role that memory plays in making the past present is timely and important.

CHAPTER 4: REMEMBERING “FLIGHT AND EXPULSION” IN CONTEMPORARY AUSTRIAN LITERATURE: NARRATING VICTIMHOOD, RESPONSIBILITY, AND BELONGING

In the following chapter, I identify how four contemporary works of Austrian literature dealing with “flight and expulsion” construct Austrian memory. The authors of these novels are of the second (or third) generation and have not experienced the events of the Second World War themselves but instead have inherited familial postmemories that are negotiated in each of the following four texts. My analysis investigates the following questions: To what extent do these novels subscribe to differing discourses of victimhood, responsibility or the unifying paradigm of historical innocence? What narrative approaches to they take in dealing with the subject and how effective are those approaches? Finally, in examining the reception of the novels in the Austria press, I gain insight into how each of the narrative strategies pursued by the novels have been evaluated in the mainstream media of today’s Austria.

I. Hanna Sukare: *Staubzunge*

Hanna Sukare was born in 1957 in Freiburg im Breisgau but spent most of her youth in Vienna. She works as a journalist, editor and author. Her prize-winning book *Staubzunge* (2015) tells the story of a family that spans four generations and three countries and is meant to stand prototypically for the postwar European family. The novel begins with the traumatic childhood upbringing of Matthias and Adele Röhrich in a pastoral home in 1960s Austria. The motif of silence dominates the first chapter and remains a leitmotiv throughout the work, standing exemplary for both the family in the novel and Austria as a whole. The novel’s title *Staubzunge* (literally “dust tongue”) also metaphorically references this prevailing theme, associating the

silence about the past with imagery of a dusty, unused tongue or even death and decay.²¹⁶ In the subsequent chapters, the effects of this silence and the burden of the past on both Matthias and Adele, as well as their differing ways of dealing with the family history, are told through the perspective of five different family members.

Adele and Matthias' mother Jad is a Polish-German refugee from Lodz. Their father is supposedly Austrian but has also lived in Germany and speaks "nach dem Schrift." He is an Protestant pastor, who has built his house on an "island." "Drei Meere trennen die Insel vom Dorf: die Hochsprache, der rechte Glaube, die fremde Herkunft."²¹⁷ Their house is their home ("Zuhause") but their only "Heimat" is the "Kingdom of God," where their father is no foreigner and their mother is no refugee.

Matthias and Adele deal with the burden of the past and their postmemories in starkly contrasting ways. Matthias' wife Gitti explains how Matthias becomes a successful international businessman but never speaks of his childhood or parents' past and stresses the effects of his forward-looking silence on their relationship. Adele, on the other hand, is always curious about her mother's past, despite her mother repeatedly dodging her questions. Then, after Jad's death, she begins obsessively searching for answers about her mother's past, learns Polish and goes on several research trips to Lodz.

On one of her research trips to Lodz, Adele is asked whether her family was Polish or German. She is annoyed by the question and rejects the idea of sorting into national categories. "In Litzmannstadt wurden polnisch, jüdisch und deutsch scharf getrennt, die Zuordnung entschied über Tod oder Leben. Aber ich bin nicht nach Litzmannstadt gekommen, sondern nach

²¹⁶ "...for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." Genesis 3:19 ("Staub bist du, und zum Staub wirst du zurückkehren.")

²¹⁷ Sukare, *Staubzunge*, 9.

Lodz. Ich bin Bürgerin der Europäischen Union, wie die Fragerin. Muss man in Lodz nicht nur Namen und Zahlwörter, sondern auch seine Herkunft deklinieren?“²¹⁸ Frustrated, Adele maintains her silence. Later, however, she is confronted again by the same woman. This time she is prepared for the question and answers:

Sie waren deutsch, sage ich und verleugne mit dieser Antwort Jads erstes Land, ihre Muttersprache...Die Nationalsozialisten lebten in Litzmannstadt. Magdalena ist übergelaufen auf die deutsche Seite, Jad ist mitgelaufen. Kein Haar wurde ihnen gekrümmt. Ihre Entscheidung und ihr Schweigen sind mein Erbe, es entscheidet über meine Antwort.²¹⁹

Shortly after her mother's death, Adele remarks that Jad lived five lives. In her first life, she was a Catholic Pole with two mother tongues in Poland. During her second, she chose to be a Catholic German in Nazireichsgau Wartheland. During her third life, she was a stateless refugee; in her fourth life she was Frau Pastor and spoke only German (with her children). Finally, in her fifth life, Jad had forgotten all her previous lives and the boundaries between them (she suffers from dementia). Although there is no chapter from Jad's perspective, the chapters written from Adele's, Jad's sister Frantzek, and Jad's mother Magdalena's perspectives make it clear that Jad demonstrates a continued preference for being German and the narrative of historical innocence. Moreover, she clearly does not subscribe to the narrative of "expellee" victimhood: "Mit den Vertriebenen wollte Jad nichts zu tun haben. Mich hat niemand vertrieben, sagt sie, ich bin geflüchtet."²²⁰

For example, in a description of her postwar situation in Bad Ischl, Austria, Jad remembers a camp for POWs in the Grazer Straße. Adele is impressed that Jad remembers this because apparently, she could remember nothing of the Jewish ghetto at the end of her street in

²¹⁸ Ibid., 93.

²¹⁹ Ibid., 112-3.

²²⁰ Ibid., 103.

Lodz. When asked about the Jews, Jad would characteristically exclaim, “Die Jidden, die Jidden und wieder die Jidden...kann das nicht endlich einmal aufhören? Was sie mit dem Juden angestellt haben, hat keiner gewusst. Das konnte keiner wissen.”²²¹ Regarding the POW camp, however, Jad was highly informed. She tells Adele, “Die Männer in dem Kriegsgefangenenlager, die hatten für uns, für die deutsche Seite gekämpft. Denen haben wir manchmal etwas zum Essen über den Zaun geworfen...aber vor KZlern...die halbverhungert aus diesem Lager in Ebensee kamen, vor denen habe sie Angst gehabt.”²²² Apparently, the former concentration camp inmates wandered around freely “plundering” and “one did not know if they were criminals.”²²³

Thus, clearly both Jad and the locals of Bad Ischl subscribed to the prototypical postwar hierarchy of empathy with Jews at the bottom that is described by Knight and Zahra. Moreover, and despite being a refugee herself, Jad seems to not align with the Austrian or “expellee” narrative of victimhood, but rather views herself as a victim of the war against Nazism, as articulated by the populist counternarrative of hero worship described as prevalent in the postwar era by Uhl.

On the metalevel of the work itself, Sukare demonstrates an openness to dealing with the past in all of its aspects. She does not dwell on the victimhood narratives but also investigates her characters’ complicity in the Second World War and their knowledge regarding the fate of their Jewish neighbors. In presenting the perspective of multiple generations, she is not overly judgmental of the war generation but allows those figures to tell their own story and the difficult decisions they were faced with, e.g. the division of Jad’s grandparents and her cousins when being forced to choose their nationality and on which Volksliste to enroll. At the same time,

²²¹ Ibid., 102.

²²² Ibid., 135.

²²³ Ibid., 136. Translation mine.

these chapters written largely from the perspective of the war generation are far from a justification of their actions and choices. The use of critical distancing by the narrator and the questioning of familial complicity in the chapters from Adele's perspective contribute to an overall balanced tone of critical understanding that is neither overly accusatory,²²⁴ nor uncritical in its presentation of problematic perspectives.

In terms of the contemporary Austrian reception in newspapers and reviews, Sukare has received overwhelmingly positive critique. In over a dozen reviews in Austrian newspapers ranging from *Die Presse* to *Salzburger Nachrichten*, reviewers have highlighted the importance of literature in conveying history, its ability to make individual fates emotionally experienceable and portray social history as panorama. In her laudatio to Sukare upon receiving the Rauriser Literature Prize, literary critic Liliane Studer praised the novel as, "Der gelungene Versuch, Geschichte zu erzählen." Nearly all reviews praise Sukare for her archival research in Poland and the exploration of familial complicity. "Dabei geht es ihr – und auch das macht diesen Roman auszeichnungswürdig – nie um eine Abrechnung. Sie will wissen, wer Jad wirklich war..."²²⁵ Similarly, in *Salzburger Nachrichten*, Anton Thuswaldner writes: "Eine harte Geschichte setzt uns Hanna Sukare vor. Dennoch schreibt sie keine Abrechnung, wie sie in den Siebzigerjahren so hoch im Kurs stand. Damals standen rhetorische Prügel an die Nazi-Eltern auf der Tagesordnung. Diese moralische Überlegenheit der Jüngeren vermisst man bei Hanna Sukare."²²⁶ The unanimous praise among reviewers for Sukare's novel and its narrative of

²²⁴ One example of the critical distancing that I am referring to is offered by the narrator in the chapter from Magdalena's perspective when Magdalena (Jad's mother) describes her arrival in postwar Austria as a refugee. "Bedauert will Magdalena nicht sein, auch nicht von den Missionarinnen. Uns wurde kein Haar gekrümmt, sagt Magdalena, als wüsste sie, dass den Nachbarinnen in Polen mehr als nur das Haar gekrümmt wurde." Here the narrator points critically to the irony of Magdalena's word choice and the war generation's preference for a willful silence of complicity with regards to their role in the Second World War.

²²⁵ Studer, "Der gelungene Versuch," 7.

²²⁶ Thuswaldner, "Wie Ausgezeichnete denken," 9.

Austrian co-responsibility on the one hand, and their emphasis on her balanced and conciliatory tone between generations on the other is noteworthy. It is perhaps an indication of a willingness in the mainstream Austrian media²²⁷ to deescalate polarizing narratives of the past (and the co-responsibility thesis in particular) in the wake of the Waldheim controversy and the “fragmentation of Austrian memory.”²²⁸

II. Gabriele Vasak: *Den Dritten das Brot*

Gabriele Vasak was born in 1963 in Vienna. She works as both a journalist and author. Her novel, *Den Dritten das Brot*, was published in 2016 and tells the story of mother and daughter of Danube Swabian heritage on a trip back to their family’s former home in present day Serbia.

The catalyst for the trip was a letter that Marlene, the mother of the main protagonist, Klara, received from her childhood friend and former Serbian neighbor, Jelena. As she was getting older and she wanted to get her affairs in order, Jelena went out of her way to research and find Marlene’s new address in Austria. She then wrote her a letter with a detailed list of all of Marlene’s family belongings that she still had in her possession and that she wanted to return. The daughter of a wealthy Danube Swabian family, Marlene had given some of the family’s most valuable belongings to the family of her Serbian neighbor Jelena for safekeeping shortly

²²⁷ My research of reviews in Austrian newspapers is limited to the “quality Austrian newspapers” collected by the Literaturhaus Wien. This includes major outlets such as *Die Presse*, *Der Standard* and *Kurier* as well as lesser known regional newspapers such as *Oberösterreichische Nachrichten* but not populist newspapers, such as Austria’s *Kronen Zeitung*. This methodological limitation likely skews the ideological orientation of the reviews to the left of the true middle of the Austrian media landscape and towards the narrative of Austrian “co-responsibility,” while underestimating the prevalence of the enduring populist understanding of Austrian victimhood and historical innocence as espoused by the FPÖ and common in the *Kronen Zeitung*.

²²⁸ Utgaard, *Remembering and Forgetting Nazism*, 185.

before the expulsion of the German minority in Hodschag/Odzaci at the end of the Second World War.

Jelena invites Marlene to her home in Novi Sad but Marlene's trip back to the land of her former home is a very difficult one. She still suffers from the traumatic experience of "flight and expulsion." Having lost her father in a forced labor camp in the Soviet Union, Marlene, together with her mother and grandmother, were expelled from their homes and forced to live in a local internment camp for two years until Marlene and her mother were able to escape to Austria via Hungary in 1947. The smell of corn fields (which had surrounded the camp) still causes her anxiety and she also suffers from panic attacks whenever she sees uniformed men.

This story is clearly a victimhood narrative with psychological effects in the present, not only in Marlene's present, but also that of her daughter. Returning to places in Marlene's past triggers traumatic memories for Marlene, whether that be a return to her former home, the village where the internment camp was located, the site of a nearly unmarked mass grave where her grandmother was buried, or the chapel where her father's name is inscribed on a plaque with a list of deportees. Moreover, the postmemories passed down to Klara also haunt her present and are translated into anger at the lack of recognition and remembrance of her family's victimhood. For instance, while visiting a newly erected memorial at the site of the Gakovo internment camp where Marlene spent two years of her childhood and Klara's great-grandmother died of starvation, Klara is overcome with rage:

Die Geschichte eines Volkes in fünf Sätzen, dachte Klara, wer, der nicht wusste, was wirklich geschehen war, wüsste es aufgrund dieses Textes, fragte sie sich, und sie dachte an die Verhungerten, die Erschossenen, die Vergewaltigten, von denen Mama erzählt hatte, sie dachte an die unendliche Angst, die diese Menschen in den Jahren ihrer Gefangenschaft im Lager Gakovo wohl beherrscht hatte, und ein dunkler Zorn überkam sie, die Gebeine ihrer Urgroßmutter lagen in dem Massengrab, das hier, genau hier an dieser Stelle war, und wo stand überhaupt, dass das hier ein Massengrab war? ²²⁹

²²⁹ Vasak, *Den Dritten das Brot.*, 83-4.

Similar to *Staubzunge*, the silence of the war generation is also a theme in *Den Dritten das Brot*. In a chapter written from Klara's perspective, the protagonist Klara questions why her mother never spoke of her past until she received the letter from Jelena. Rather than an attempt to hide guilt, however, the novel seems to imply that it was simply part of Marlene's personality and upbringing to never speak of herself. "...[S]o hätte sie ihre Tochter nie darauf angesprochen, sie schon gar nicht dazu gedrängt, Marlene dränge niemandem ihre Geschichte auf, wie sie überhaupt nie von sich selbst sprach, sondern sich immer dem Gegenüber und dessen Interessen anpasste..."²³⁰

Yet, the novel also offers another, more compelling explanation of Marlene's silence: namely, the inability of language to express her trauma. This explanation is implied in Klara's critique of the sober language of a report of "numbers and facts" that Marlene wrote during the war when she was thirteen:

Warum hatte Mama, die all das als Kind von neun, zehn, elf Jahren erfahren hatte, so viele Jahre nie darüber geredet, überlegte Klara, sie erinnerte sich nur daran, dass die Mutter ihr kurz nach ihrem vierzehnten Geburtstag wortlos einen Bericht überreicht hatte, den sie selbst im Alter von dreizehn Jahren über die scheinbar unaussprechlichen Ereignisse in der Vojvodina während und kurz nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg verfasst hatte.²³¹

Another similarity with *Staubzunge* is the use of multiple perspectives to convey the viewpoints of the three main characters. Of the 17 chapters, seven are written from the perspective of Klara, seven from the perspective of Marlene and three from the perspective of Jelena. The inclusion of the chapters from Jelena's perspective seem initially to be a transnational attempt to empathize with and understand the Serbian perspective. However, in this instance they serve merely to repeat some of the novel's less commendable stereotypes of the

²³⁰ Ibid., 13-4.

²³¹ Ibid., 8.

“East” and “Volksdeutsche” as well as style the suffering of the German minority through decontextualized comparison with the victimhood of the Serbs.

For example, Jelena’s portrayal of the prewar Hodschag merely serves to strengthen German claims to the land and stereotypes of Germans as Kulturträger. She describes her prewar home as a “blühende Ortschaft...von Deutschen bewohnt,” which were “industrious” and made the region profitable.²³² All that beauty and order “[war] den Kolonisten zu verdanken” as well as the “imperial Hapsburg engineers.”²³³ Thus, the region is described as German in ethnolinguistic terms as well as culturally Austrian with the history of the region and its people being an Austrian inheritance. Indeed, these portrayals of the region and its technological advances (e.g. paved streets and train) as German and Austrian achievements are presented uncritically as uncontested facts.²³⁴

In another chapter, Jelena describes her family’s suffering at the hands of the Croatian Ustascha and the war that “Hitler began.”²³⁵ Jelena’s grandparents were expelled from their homes on Croatian territory and died in the internment camp Jasenovac. Above all, however, Jelena’s description of her family’s suffering serves to externalize all responsibility to third parties (the Croatian Ustascha and Hitler) and create an empathic community of victims between the German and Serbian victims, in which all guilt and responsibility is lost in a sea of incomparable victimhood. In fact, Jelena explicitly declares the incomparability of individual suffering and questions, “...wer wollte schon vergleichen, welches Leid schwerer wiegt? Sie wollte es nicht.”²³⁶

²³² Ibid., 31.

²³³ Ibid., 33.

²³⁴ Ibid., 33. “...[A]ber, und so ehrlich muss man sein, ohne die Bachers [local wealthy German family] hätte man in Odzaci vielleicht heute noch keine asphaltierten Straßen und sicher keine Eisenbahn.”

²³⁵ Ibid., 89, 90.

²³⁶ Ibid., 95.

By portraying the suffering of Jelena's family in this manner, the novel only further strengthens the narrative of German victimization. Even if Jelena does not want to directly compare the victimhood of Serbians and Danube Swabians, the novel itself implicitly does so. Moreover, Marlene clearly points to the Serbian partisans as perpetrators and ruthless murderers, whereas nowhere is there a reference or accounting for the complicity and responsibility of the German minority. At most, Klara notes how historians have pointed out that the Danube Swabians had a particular "receptiveness to National Socialism" and that many Danube Swabians were in the Waffen-SS but that many others also served in the Yugoslav army.²³⁷ As a result, she questions which side her grandfather was on and is frustrated that her grandmother never spoke of any of these events.²³⁸ While reading from the Schieder Commission's *Dokumentation der Vertreibung der Deutschen aus Ost-Mitteleuropa. Band V: Das Schicksal der Deutschen in Jugoslawien* in her hotel room in Serbia, Klara struggles to make sense of the "numbers and facts" on the one hand, the "pieces of stories told to her by her mother" and the images of her trip in the Vojvodina, on the other. In her despair, she even goes so far as to question not only what was true but also, whether "there even was a truth."²³⁹

In the end, and despite her traumatic journey throughout her former homeland, Marlene is overjoyed by Jelena's gift of her former childhood possessions. Klara, on the other hand, cannot enjoy the supposedly delicious meal at the local restaurant Jelena has taken them to; she is too distracted by the experiences of her trip, the stories and symbols of her family's victimhood such as the "verlogene Gedenktafel" etc.²⁴⁰ She focuses on the negative tropes of a land that she

²³⁷ Ibid., 107, 108.

²³⁸ Ibid., 113.

²³⁹ Ibid., 113. "... Warum hatte ihre Großmutter nichts von alldem erzählt, hatte sie wirklich nichts davon gewusst oder hatte sie alles ganz anders gesehen, was war wahr, was unwahr, worin hatten die Historiker recht, gab es eine Wahrheit, würde es einmal noch eine andere Wahrheit geben..."

²⁴⁰ Ibid., 141.

describes as “sad” with “dilapidated houses,” “unkept fields” and “stray dogs” and questions whether everything was actually “good.”²⁴¹ The novel’s attempt to find common ground and mutual understanding through a focus on victimhood ultimately fails as it is an abdication of responsibility. The difficult but necessary questions of responsibility and complicity are undercut by the narrative of historical innocence and the attempt to create a community of incomparable victims.

In terms of the reception in Austrian newspapers and reviews, Vasak’s novel received far less coverage than Sukare’s *Staubzunge*. Compared to over a dozen reviews, *Den Dritten das Brot* was the subject of a mere three reviews, albeit in some major outlets such as *Wiener Zeitung*, *Der Standard*, and the *Literaturhaus* in Vienna. While the *Wiener Zeitung* appeared less enthusiastic, writing that the protagonist finds “no way back” to the past and her family’s former home and that the meeting with Jelena was no happy ending, Bernd Schuchter, writing for *Das Literaturhaus*, finds the opposite to be true, i.e. that in the end, hope and human feelings win over the “shadow of the past that reaches into the present.”²⁴² None of the reviews are particularly critical, however, and Schuchter emphasizes that the time has finally come for the Danube Swabians and their story of victimhood to be heard. Pointing to the multiple books recently published in Austria dealing with the “flight and expulsion” of “ethnic Germans,” Schuchter comments that it seems “as if the time has finally come” to also “give voice to the German minorities.” Referring to what has been called a taboo on the topic by Barbara Coudenhove-Kalgeri, Schuchter states that, “Über Jahrzehnte war es *common sense*, das alles Deutsche nur als Täter zu denken war....” Moreover, he later references the lack of remembrance of the Donauschwaben in postwar Austria, “...nach dem Krieg beginnt doch der Frieden. Nicht

²⁴¹ Ibid., 141.

²⁴² Schuchter, “Gabriele Vasak: Den Dritten das Brot. Vom langen Schatten der Vergangenheit.”

so für die Donauschwaben, für die im kollektiven Erinnern im Rahmen des Zweiten Weltkrieges kein Platz ist.”²⁴³ While my research generally supports Schuchter’s claim regarding the tabooization of Danube Swabian memory in Austria,²⁴⁴ I argue that overcoming the stigma that long equated “ethnic” Germanness with Nazi perpetration in Austria hinges on how the past is presented. Lopsided narratives of victimhood that ignore culpability or dismiss the problem as too difficult or even “unknowable” (e.g., Vasak’s questioning of whether any truth exists) do German-speaking refugees and expellees in Austria no favors.

III. Ulrike Schmitzer: *Die gestohlene Erinnerung*

Ulrike Schmitzer is an Austrian journalist, author, and film producer. She was born in 1967 in Salzburg and has received multiple prizes for her work in journalism. Her novel, *Die gestohlene Erinnerung*, was published in 2015 and, like *Den Dritten das Brot*, also tells the story of a Danube Swabian mother and daughter travelling back to their family’s former home in present day Serbia.

The novel is a mosaic of familial memory that aims to represent diverging perspectives, rather than construct a linear narrative. The plot occurs on three levels: the present of the first-person narrator and her mother on their trip to the Vojvodina (which includes the mother’s recollections of the war recounted to her daughter during the trip), the recordings of the grandmother and, finally, the meta-level commentary and memories of the first-person narrator. Before the narrator’s mother passed away, the narrator interviewed her and recorded her

²⁴³ Ibid.

²⁴⁴ I say generally because there has been support for the memory of ethnic German victimization among the far-right, pan-Germanic parties VDU (Verband der Unabhängigen) and later FPÖ (Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs) since the founding of the Second Republic and into the present. This support from the far-right has been deeply problematic in many cases (e.g. referring to the expulsions as “Our Holocaust.”)

memories of her life in the Vojvodina before, during and after the war on a cassette tape. Along their journey to the family's former home, the mother and daughter play the tape. The narrator's mother hears the recording for the first time, and sometimes exclaims in surprise or contradicts her mother's (the narrator's grandmother) retelling on the recording, having remembered an event differently.

Thus, in contrast to Vasak's novel, Schmitzer does not take on the perspectives of multiple generations in order to reconstruct the past and forge a coherent linear story. Instead, she presents a fragmented familial memory and highlights its contradictions (the differing recollections of certain events by different family members, for example) and the gaps in memory. In that sense, Schmitzer's background in journalism and film seems to inform her approach to literature, in which the past is presented from multiple, differing and sometimes contradicting perspectives, rather than constructed into a coherent, unambiguous narrative. In fact, one reviewer even noted that it was apparent that Schmitzer was a documentary filmmaker and advocated a film adaptation of the novel.²⁴⁵ Rauchenbacher describes this inclusion of documentary evidence and the juxtaposition of familial memories as a necessary narrative tactic that "productively refuses" to create a past that cannot be found.²⁴⁶ "In Hinblick auf das titelgebende Thema kann diese Zusammenstellung (fragmenarischer) Erinnerungen als notwendige erzählerische Taktik verstanden werden – als produktive Verweigerung, eine

²⁴⁵ Kraus, Rudolf. "Schmitzer, Ulrike - Die Gestohlene Erinnerung. Ein Autobiographischer Roman Über Eine Donauschwäbische Familie." "Man merkt, dass die Autorin Filmemacherin ist, der Schnitt und schnelle Wechsel sind ihr nicht fremd; spannend wäre eine filmische Version des Buches."

²⁴⁶ In terms of documentary evidence, Schmitzer includes not only oral history in the transcript of the grandmother figure, but also photocopies of her grandmother's diary and transcriptions of the many lists that she made as well as references to scholarship, such as the Schieder Commission's *Dokumentation der Vertreibung der Deutschen aus Ost-Mitteleuropa*, and more recent influential scholarship on the Holocaust and "expellee memory," e.g. *Opa war kein Nazi. Nationalsozialismus und Holocaust im Familiengedächtnis*, Sabine Bode's *Die vergessene Generation: Die Kriegskinder brechen ihr Schweigen* and *Kriegsenkel: Die Erben der vergessenen Generation*, Anne-Ev Ustorf's *Wir Kinder der Kriegskinder: Die Generation im Schatten des Zweiten Weltkrieges*, etc.

homogene Erzählung zu erfinden, die eine Vergangenheit beschwört, die ohnehin nicht gefunden werden kann.”

Yet, there is a significant difference between a past or memory that has, on the one hand, been lost and cannot be found and one that has been stolen, repressed or censored, on the other. The novel’s title, “The Stolen Memory” begs the question: Whose memories have been stolen and who stole them? In the end, the novel never explicitly addresses this question but infers at least two interpretations. The first reading understands the novel as the narrator’s search for a familial memory that may have been lost or perhaps silenced but is not truly “stolen.” In this interpretation, the narrator’s trip to the Vojvodina is, as Kathleen Thorpe has interpreted the novel, not a search for a concrete place (as is the case for the narrator’s parents who had actually previously lived there) but rather a search for memories.

Das Interesse der Großmutter wie auch der Mutter galt der Vergewisserung ihrer ortsgebundenen eigenen Erfahrungen. Bei der Erzählerin geht es um etwas Anderes – sie sucht eigentlich nicht nach konkreten Orten, sondern Erinnerungen. Die Ich-Erzählerin stellt sich nämlich als eine Person ohne Erinnerung vor, also ohne eine eigene Verbindung zur Vergangenheit ihrer Familie.²⁴⁷

This interpretation of the novel as a search for the narrator’s identity between cultures and her lost familial memory is made explicit at the end of the novel.²⁴⁸ The narrator describes the piecemeal retelling of the past within German-speaking refugee families (i.e. the repetition of some stories and silencing of others) as a large puzzle of memory that makes one question what truly happened.²⁴⁹

²⁴⁷ Thorpe, “ ‘Es Ist Alles Wie Ein Großes Puzzle’ - Anmerkungen Zum Roman Die Gestohlene Erinnerung von Ulrike Schmitzer,” 196.

²⁴⁸ Schmitzer, *Die gestohlene Erinnerung*, 181. “Ich bin ein Kind von Einwanderern, Österreicherin der ersten Generation. Ich bin nicht von hier und auch nicht von dort.”

²⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 181. “Es ist so: Wenn man in einer Familie lebt, die vertrieben wurde, dann ist selten eine Geschichte so wichtig wie die, die schon passiert ist. Es ist allerdings nicht so, dass diese Geschichte einmal von A bis Z erzählt wird, und dann Schluss damit. Nein! Die Geschichte wird in lauter kleine Geschichten aufgeteilt. Mal wird das erzählt, mal was anderes. Und dann wird die eine Geschichte hundertmal erzählt, fast wortgleich, und

Such a questioning of the historical reality is problematic in the context of historical responsibility and just one step away from Vasak's questioning of whether or not there even is a truth. While it is certainly justifiable to be skeptical of familial retellings of the past, the past presented in the novel could have been better researched to fill in the gaps hinted at in the novel and actually describe the details of Nazi perpetration and culpability, rather than merely presenting the differing accounts of familial memory that emphasize victimhood and downplay complicity. Indeed, Sukare's novel provides a good example of a narrative approach that carefully balances victimhood and culpability through the archival research that the narrator undertakes in her mother's former home in contemporary Poland.

On the other hand, however, Schmitzer is acutely aware of recent scholarly research on trauma, the Holocaust and the cultural memory of German-speaking refugees and expellees (at least in Germany). Indeed, the middle section of the novel is essentially a metalevel reflection on how the narrator came to the topic that began with an avoidance of anything to do with the Second World War, followed by her discovery of a postwar denazification camp outside her neighborhood and consequent obsession with all sorts of detention camps. The narrator self-diagnoses her journalistic research and obsession with expulsions from Guatemala to Pakistan and Belarus as a form of what Anne-Ev Ustorf has called "Acting Out" or the attempt by the second generation to concretize and better understand the wartime trauma of their parents. Yet, this section of the novel also provides an alternative explanation of the novel's title, whereby it is the cultural memory of the Danube Swabians that has been stolen by the far right and the political tabooization of the memory. "Eigenartigerweise hatte die universitäre Zeitgeschichte die

möglicherweise verdreht man die Augen und schnauft. Die andere Geschichte wird lange nicht erzählt und dann irgendwann vergessen. Es ist alles wie ein großes Puzzle. Irgendwann fragt man sich: Was war denn da eigentlich los"?

Aufarbeitung der Flucht größtenteils den Vertriebenenverbänden überlassen. Und sie damit revisionistischen Ideen der rechten Parteien ausgeliefert. Vor ein paar Jahren begann ein regelrechter Boom der Aufarbeitung der Vertreibung der Deutschen aus Osteuropa, vor allem aus Polen.”²⁵⁰

This second interpretation of the novel’s title understands the cultural memory of “ethnic German expellees” (rather than familial memory) and of the Danube Swabians in particular as that which has been “stolen” through tabooization and the political coopting of the memory by the far-right. However, this interpretation can, in my argument, only make sense in the Austrian context, given the “normalization” of the discourse in Germany since at least the early 2000s and Günter Grass’ *Crabwalk*. If the political tabooization of the Danube Swabian cultural memory in Austria is indeed the “theft” that is implied in the novel’s title, the narrator’s lack of distinction between Austrian and German memory culture makes that very much unclear. In fact, all reviews of the novel seem to indicate that the dominant reading is one that focuses on the narrator’s uncertain identity between cultures and an unrecoverable or lost familial memory. As Ada Karlbauer writes, “Die titelgebende gestohlene Erinnerung bleibt auch am Ende gestohlen, denn die unterschiedlichen Zugänge der Familienmitglieder weichen zu sehr voneinander ab, um Klarheit zu schaffen, jedoch kann man die unternommene Reise als eine unabhängige und multidirektionale Perspektivenbildung verstehen.”

Instead of describing the state of German-speaking refugee cultural memory in Austria or delineating the differences between the situation in Austria and Germany, Schmitzer quotes the German historian Karl Schlögel to point to the difficulty in writing about German victimhood and “flight and expulsion” in the shadow of the Holocaust. I argue, however, that this move is

²⁵⁰ Ibid., 106.

indicative of the differences in writing about the memory of “ethnic Germans” in Austria and Germany. In fact, writing about “ethnic German” victimhood in Germany has long been vastly different than writing about the subject in Austria. In the immediate postwar era of West Germany, “ethnic Germans” stood as symbolic victims for all Germans and the focus on their victimhood in projects such as the Schieder Commission’s documentation of their suffering, sought to use the rhetorical strategy of offsetting (to use Aleida Assmann’s term)²⁵¹ to relativize and exculpate Germans from their guilt for the Holocaust.²⁵² In Austria, on the other hand, “ethnic Germans” were externalized as German and therefore non-Austrian Nazi perpetrators. Although the dynamics of cultural memory have greatly shifted in Germany (making a pendulum swing from a decontextualized emphasis on victimhood in the 1950s and 1960s, to a shift in the other direction that minimized victimhood in the 1970s and 1980s and finally an attempt to balance or normalize the approaches in the 2000s), my dissertation reveals how static the immediate postwar construction of the German-speaking refugee discourse in Austria has remained throughout the Second Republic. As such, Schmitzer argues for what may be a novel move in Austria but which has long been possible in Germany; namely, that it is time to finally speak about “ethnic German” victimhood without diminishing the suffering of Jews in the Holocaust. She argues: “Vielleicht ist es jetzt endlich möglich, die Tatsachen auf den Tisch zu legen, ohne den Holocaust, die Ermordung von sechs Millionen Juden und die Verbrechen der Wehrmacht deshalb in ihrem unfassbaren Leid zu schälern?”²⁵³

²⁵¹ Assmann, Aleida. *Shadows of Trauma*, 142.

²⁵² See Beer, Mathias. “Im Spannungsfeld von Politik und Zeitgeschichte. Das Großforschungsprojekt ‘Dokumentation der Vertreibung der Deutschen aus Ost-Mitteleuropa’,” 345–89. Cf. “Über die misslungene Dokumentation der Vertreibung” in Hahn, Eva and Hans Henning Hahn. *Die Vertreibung im deutschen Erinnern. Legenden, Mythos, Geschichte*, 460-475.

²⁵³ Schmitzer, *Die gestohlene Erinnerung*, 107.

Contemporary reviews in the Austrian press seem to buy Schmitzer's argument that the time has come to tell these victimhood stories in the mainstream media. Unlike Vasak's lukewarm reception, reviews of *Die gestohlene Erinnerung* are overwhelmingly positive. Writing in the *Wiener Zeitung*, Gunter Neumann argues that, "Deutschen Fluchtgeschichten haftete oft ein Nazi-Ruch an, ein Braunschleier lag über der Aussiedler-Herkunft." Neumann points out that Ulrike Schmitzer and the popular Austrian essayist Karl-Markus Gauß both avoided the topic of their heritage for a long time but that the time has come to tell these stories. "Gerade heute wäre so manche Fluchtgeschichte aus der eigenen Familie hilfreich. Schmitzers Erinnerungsreise ist nicht nur für die Ich-Erzählerin so berührend wie erhellend."

While Schmitzer argues (and reviewers agree) that it is time to "lay the facts on the table," the vital question remains: which facts and from whose perspective is the narrative of the past told? When sharing a familial memory, to what extent is complicity in the Wehrmacht or the Waffen-SS thematized and to what extent is that narrative silenced in lieu of a focus on victimhood? In the case of *Die gestohlene Erinnerung*, the balance surely shifts towards victimhood. In her retelling of her life story, the narrator's grandmother notes that two of her husband's brothers (the narrator's great-uncles Wendelin and Franz) were in the Waffen-SS with the latter being mobilized in the infamous Prinz Eugen division. But neither their motivations for joining, nor the extent of their complicity is addressed whatsoever. Moreover, the narrator does not press for more details or add any research of her own, despite having a chapter about her childhood memories of one of the uncles. Instead, she focuses on her own grandfather, who neither joined the Nazi party, nor the Wehrmacht.²⁵⁴ Consequently, the narrator sums up her

²⁵⁴ Since the incorporation of the Vojvodina into Hungary in 1941, joining the Waffen-SS would result the loss of Hungarian citizenship. As such, the narrator used his Hungarian contacts to hide from the Nazis and avoid fighting in the war.

family's complicity with the following statement: "Mein Opa war kein Widerstandskämpfer, er hat niemanden versteckt und niemandem geholfen, nur sich selbst. Das einzige, was ich aber nach der Reise in der Vergangenheit sicher sagen kann: Mein Opa war kein Nazi! ...Ich bin wohl auch nicht anders als alle anderen."²⁵⁵ This ironic reference to the seminal study by Harald Welzer et al., *Opa war kein Nazi: Nationalsozialismus und Holocaust im Familiengedächtnis*, indicates Schmitzer recognizes that her presentation of her familial memory is cliché.²⁵⁶ While this metalevel awareness reflects a certain skepticism on the part of Schmitzer regarding the truthfulness of her familial story, it also represents a capitulation to difficult questions of historical responsibility and an unwillingness to do the necessary research.

The plot itself relies heavily on the recording of the narrator's grandmother to tell the family's story from the beginning of the twentieth century until the narrator's present. It begins in the deeply religious village of Filipowa in Austria-Hungry with a population of about five thousand, 53 of which were Catholic priests and 133 of which were nuns. The grandmother figure describes her life during the village's transition into Yugoslavia after the First World War and then the move back into Hungary in 1941 when Hungary annexed the territory with the help of the Wehrmacht. She describes the pressure to join the Wehrmacht and Waffen-SS but maintains, "Im Dorf waren weniger als die Hälfte Nazis, es waren mehr auf der Seite vom Pfarrer. Alle haben auf den Pfarrer gehört."²⁵⁷ The crimes committed by the Waffen-SS and the Prinz Eugen division (which was active in the area) go unmentioned. But she does point out how the Yugoslav partisans rounded up all the remaining men in the village in 1944, took the

²⁵⁵ Schmitzer, *Die gestohlene Erinnerung*, 108.

²⁵⁶ Welzer et al. identified a tendency in the third generation to fill the gaps of their grandparents' stories and construct their own positively connotated image of their family. Welzer et al. argued that this tendency to "heroize" one's own grandparents fulfilled a psychological need to disassociate them from the "bad Nazis."

²⁵⁷ Schmitzer, *Die gestohlene Erinnerung*, 72.

majority of them to the outskirts of the town and made them dig their own mass grave, killing all 212 of them.²⁵⁸ She then continues to describe the rounding up of the village's remaining women and men in December 1944 for their deportation in cattle cars to the Soviet Union for forced labor in order to "pay" for Yugoslavia's liberation by the Red Army, much like the fate of the Romanian Germans in Herta Müller's *Atemschaukel*. While the story of deportation to the Soviet Union, years of forced labor, and the return journey to Austria is exclusively told from the perspective of the grandmother, the mother figure tells the story of the two years she spent with her grandmother (the narrator's great-grandmother) in the internment camp Gakowo before eventually being able to flee via Hungary to Austria.

Yet, the novel does not end with the expulsions of the Danube Swabians. The narrator continues to document her life growing up in a family of German-speaking refugees in postwar Salzburg. She mentions the 300,000 stateless German-speaking DPs, some of which lived in barracks for up to ten years until "expellee" neighborhoods were founded, such as her neighborhood "Die Caritassiedlung Elsbethen."²⁵⁹ She notes their community's typical black headscarves which served as "symbols of foreignness" to demarcate them as unwanted "Serbs" as they were called. In the end, the narrator describes herself as, "ein Kind von Einwanderern, Österreicherin der ersten Generation...nicht von hier und auch nicht von dort."²⁶⁰ Her attempts to integrate result in her speaking the most extreme form of the local Salzburg dialect possible, to the extent that she could allegedly no longer pronounce certain vowels or speak "Hochdeutsch" in school.²⁶¹

²⁵⁸ Ibid., 80.

²⁵⁹ Ibid., 163.

²⁶⁰ Ibid., 181.

²⁶¹ Ibid., 86.

While *Die gestohlene Erinnerung* is conscious of the difficulty in writing about ethnic German victimhood in the context of the Second World War and attempts to find the appropriate language, it ultimately fails as a balanced exposé of Danube Swabian victimhood as complicity is externalized to two great uncles serving in the Waffen-SS. Moreover, the novel's cover - with its cliché representation of innocence and victimhood in the form of a pieta-like mother's embrace of her child with the word "peace" written in multiple languages - evokes a narrative of innocent suffering. Nonetheless, the novel is also an attempt to authentically represent the gaps and contradictions of familial memory. In this sense, the documentary juxtaposition of sources is a promising approach, but lacking in its exploration of Danube Swabian complicity.

IV. Constantin Göttfert: *Steiners Geschichte*

Born in 1979, Constantin Göttfert is a graduate of the Deutsches Literaturinstitut in Leipzig and recipient of prestigious grants, from the Heinrich-Heine scholarship to the Gisela-Scherer scholarship. In contrast to Sukare, Vasak and Schmitzer, Göttfert is not a journalist and of a much younger age. To the best of my knowledge he is the only author of his generation to grapple with the legacy of "ethnic Germans" in Austria, albeit at about the same time as the other analyzed novels (all of which were published between 2014 and 2016).

His latest novel, *Steiners Geschichte*, is the 500-page story of a young couple's relationship in disarray. The protagonist Martin and his long-term girlfriend Ina Steiner, with whom he has a child, separate after the death of Ina's grandfather Steiner. Subsequently, Ina becomes obsessed with her grandfather's past and with breaking the silence surrounding it. The novel delineates at least four distinct approaches to the past in the characters of Martin, Ina and Ina's father and grandfather. After a critical summary of the plot that thematizes some of the

issues relevant to the memory of “flight and expulsion” in Austria, I will explore these differing approaches to the past as represented through the various characters.

Ina and Martin are both from the rural Marchfeld, a region in Lower Austria between Vienna to the west and the Slovak border to the east. Unlike Martin, however, Ina is the descendent of *Karpatendeutschen* or the German minority native to the Carpathian Mountains of Slovakia. Growing up on her grandfather’s farm in the Marchfeld, she is portrayed as anachronistic despite the novel’s contemporary setting.²⁶² When Martin meets her, she has never seen an escalator, operated a cell phone or eaten a mango. She even dresses differently, in traditional *Karpatendeutschen* garb and with the traditional hair style of unmarried women. Martin, in comparison, appears as a modern, cultured man and they fall in love as he shows her “exotic” foods and takes her to the opera in Vienna.

Far from a romance, however, the novel begins in crisis, as a pregnant Ina demands a separation from Martin. After the recent passing of her grandfather, Ina becomes obsessed with her familial past and her Carpathian German identity as a Steiner. She wants to travel to Limbach, the town in present day Slovakia whence her family hails, but Martin is more concerned with his work obligations. He moves out into a grimy shared flat above a café in Vienna and becomes progressively more depressed as days turn into weeks and months, eventually even missing the birth of his child.

Meanwhile, Ina struggles with her family’s unspoken past and a “feeling of emptiness [Leere]” after the loss of her grandfather. She cannot bury him; when she looks at his face, she realizes she knows nothing about him and it “...drives [her] crazy to know nothing about...this

²⁶² The novel’s narrative present is set sometime in the late 2000s or early 2010s (after the 2004 EU enlargement and YouTube’s popularization).

Heimat.”²⁶³ Although perplexed by the aura of silence surrounding her grandfather,²⁶⁴ Ina seems only interested in learning more about (his) Heimat,²⁶⁵ which, according to the narrator, is ironic since “Heimat” was not a word that Ina lightly used, for she hated it:

Das Wort Heimat war Ina verhasst. Sie verstand es nicht. Es war ein Wort, das sie hauptsächlich in der Negation kennengelernt hatte, in der Aussage Steiners, dass es keine Heimat mehr gebe.²⁶⁶

The contradictions in the familial meaning of Heimat made the concept unimaginable for Ina. How could it be that Heimat was “over there” but not anymore, and why was no one interested in visiting after the collapse of the iron curtain? How could her father proudly claim to be Austrian when he spent his childhood in Limbach while her grandfather,²⁶⁷ “...erschien ihr als Slowake, was er – darauf angesprochen – energisch zurückwies. Er sei kein Slowake und kein Österreicher. Zuletzt behauptet er Deutscher zu sein, obwohl er nie in seinem Leben in Deutschland gewesen war.”²⁶⁸

As thematized in the novel, the familial silence vis-à-vis the past also has a paradoxical visual dimension. On the one hand, flags and all manner of Limbach memorabilia were displayed openly throughout the house, but on the other, it was impossible (“taboo”) to address their presence without risking dangerous emotional outbursts.²⁶⁹ This paradoxical postmemorial Heimat was accompanied by a lack of basic understanding of the historical facts and context.

²⁶³ Göttfert, Constantin. *Steiners Geschichte*, 84.

²⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 59.

²⁶⁵ It is later revealed that Steiner was a local tyrant and member of the SS but Ina seems disinterested in issues of culpability and does not investigate this avenue as an explanation for the familial silence. Instead she focuses entirely on the familial meaning of Heimat and its relation to questions of identity.

²⁶⁶ Göttfert, *Steiners Geschichte*, 84.

²⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 59.

²⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 84.

²⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 60. “Obwohl die Zeugen dieses Limbachs so prominent und allzu offensichtlich im Wohnzimmer hingen, waren sie gleichzeitig ein Tabu – ein Paradox, das Ina nicht auflösen konnte. Ich habe ja selbst gesehen, wie allein die Frage nach der Bedeutung der Strickereien auf der Limbacher Fahne, die ihr jeden Tag beim Frühstück ins Auge fiel, die nackte Angst auf die Gesichter zeichnete.”

Ina's grandmother would sometimes complain about how their Heimat was "stolen," how they were expelled and how there no longer is any Heimat. But the subject was not addressed in her local Austrian school. According to the narrator, history stops in Austrian schools after the assassination of Franz Josef – Austrofacism and the Second World War are not even discussed. "Diffuse Kriegsanekdoten einer Großelterngeneration ersetzen den Unterricht."²⁷⁰ Determined to find answers, Ina turns to her teachers, "Was ist das, hatte sie gefragt, wovon Steiner spricht? Was ist diese Vertreibung?"²⁷¹ But they just shake their heads and do not understand.

Determined to find answers following her grandfather's passing and despite the silence of both the familial and public spheres with regards to the subject, Ina eventually feels compelled to visit the only place where the topic is addressed, a local Heimat organization that turns out to be headed by former SS officers and right-wing revisionists. After a couple of visits, Ina leaves and decides to never return – still without answers. More time passes and, unable to cope any longer, Ina abruptly elects in the middle of one icy winter night that she will travel to Limbach at that very moment. She takes her infant child, wakes the ferryman, and demands to cross the river to Slovakia.

The remainder of the novel describes Martin's attempt to follow Ina and find her in Limbach. He eventually succeeds in doing so, but only after she fails to find her family's allegedly buried "treasure," is she eventually convinced to return home. The climax of the novel occurs as Ina calls her father while searching for the family treasure in the dilapidated ruins of a castle in Limbach, furiously demanding answers. Her father initially refuses, so she decides to take the train with Martin back to Austria, although they plan to remain separated. On the way

²⁷⁰ Ibid., 60.

²⁷¹ Ibid., 60.

back, her father returns her call and she finally hears the tear-filled story of her family's forced evacuation and unwanted refugee status in Austria in May 1945.

In contrast to the approaches used by Sukare, Vasak, and Schmitzer in Göttfert's novel the past is presented through the perspective of a single male narrator, an outsider to the familial postmemory of "flight and expulsion" – at least until meeting Ina and pursuing a family with her. As such, the questions and issues plaguing Ina in terms of identity, silence and the meaning of Heimat are presented as problems unique to her. When Ina argues that she must be more involved in the Steiner family, that she is a Steiner, the narrating Martin simply responds, "Ich war kein Steiner." While this change in tense from narrative present to past leaves open the possibility for change and Martin becoming more involved in the Steiner family and its past, these postmemorial challenges are ultimately disinteresting to him and only issues insofar as they affect his relationship with Ina. It may also be read as male unwillingness to deal with unstable, changing identities in a traditionally patriarchal society. Alternatively, Martin's approach to the Steiner past could also be interpreted as representative of Austria's begrudging and belated acceptance of ethnic German expellees and refugees. Martin, as a prototypical Austrian local (without familial ties to a lost Heimat), does eventually follow Ina to Limbach and listen to stories of the war and its consequences as told by Slovak locals and Ina's father.

Indeed, his own perspective and interests aside, the narrator's attention to detail reveals a variety of memorial discourses surrounding the Second World War in Austria. In this sense, the novel shows how multifaceted local conceptions of the past are in Marchfeld and in provincial Austria more generally. Citing similar reasons, some reviewers have read the novel as a new form of Heimatroman "between the black and white of Anti-Heimat and Heimat."²⁷² For

²⁷² Both Juliane Fischer, writing for the Viennese weekly news magazine *Falter*, and Bernd Schuchter, author and critic writing for das Literaturhaus in Vienna have made this argument in their reviews of the novel.

example, the narrator critiques the racist xenophobia of the school principle,²⁷³ the historical revisionism of the local Heimat organization²⁷⁴ and the support for Waldheim,²⁷⁵ while also pointing out ironic contradictions in German-speaking refugees' racist, orientaling rejections of East Europeans joining the Schengen area and the ensuing "flood" of Eastern Europeans into Austria.²⁷⁶ He also demonstrates how Eastern Europe in the Austrian imagination after the opening of the borders is understood by many as primarily, "Einkaufszentrum und Bordell."²⁷⁷ But in other cases, the narrator is less ironic or critical and merely points out differing historical discourses, such as the discourse of innocence that Uhl recognizes in memorials to the fallen soldier heroes. Indeed, Martin stumbles across one such monument when visiting Steiner's grave:

Es waren die Namen der Gefallenen aus den Weltkriegen. Die Statue war mir oft aufgefallen, aber ich war nie auf die Idee gekommen, sie näher zu betrachten. Das Wort *Helden des Vaterlandes* fiel mir auf. Es war nicht schwierig herauszufinden, wer diese Helden hier waren, nicht etwa Widerstandskämpfer gegen das Naziregime oder jene, die Unschuldige vor der NS-Verfolgung geschützt hatten, sondern Soldaten der Wehrmacht und Mitglieder der Waffen-SS.²⁷⁸

The novel makes clear that this discourse builds on the longer patriotic heroization of fallen soldiers during the First Austrian Republic – the monument by Steiner's grave is dedicated to the fallen soldiers from both World Wars. Moreover, Martin comes across a similar monument dedicated to the fallen "Helden des Weltkrieges" in a graveyard behind the local church in Limbach, although this one is neglected and only dedicated to the fallen soldiers of the First

²⁷³ Göttfert, *Steiners Geschichte*, 146.

²⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 131-2.

²⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 153.

²⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 86, 107, 156.

²⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 233.

²⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 212-3.

World War.²⁷⁹ Since no date is mentioned, however, it is unclear if this memorial was built by the German minority in the First Czechoslovak Republic or during the Nazi occupation.

Indeed, the narrator's diverse interests reveal a panorama of local Austrian memory and his penchant for political and multicultural history does not go unremarked.²⁸⁰ After asking Podobny, an older Slovak gentleman and former farmhand for Steiner in Limbach, about the Nazis and the war, Podobny replies, "was einer wie du ständig von der Politik hören will!...Hör auf mit dem Krieg!"²⁸¹ But Podobny eventually does go on to tell him a story about the Nazis and the first time he was made conscious of being different. Despite being raised bilingual, he was told he was a Slav and excluded from a local dance put on by Nazis, whereby the Carpathian Germans were taught how to dance like Germans after "having had to suffer under the Czech yoke" and become "corrupted" by Slavic influences.²⁸²

Similarly, Martin also listens to the local Slovak priest who is also bilingual and emotional to be able to speak his native tongue with Martin. The priest tells the "grotesque" story of the flight and expulsion of the ethnic Germans, "as would a wounded person in order to be free of the burden," as a kind of therapy.²⁸³ In fact, this is the only point in the novel that we hear the story of both flight and expulsion. While the Steiner family claims to have been expelled, they were in fact forcibly "evacuated" by the Nazis at the end of the war, albeit in rushed, miserable conditions and with only a suitcase. They never returned following the war as did most farmers, who, according to the priest, were then forced to wear armbands with the letter "N," moved into camps and eventually "deported" or expelled back to Austria.²⁸⁴ Although the

²⁷⁹ Ibid., 310.

²⁸⁰ Ibid., 154. In one example, Martin is disgusted to discover that his childhood playground was once a concentration camp for French and Hungarian Jews, who served as forced laborers for the local farmers.

²⁸¹ Ibid., 376.

²⁸² Ibid., 382.

²⁸³ Ibid., 325.

²⁸⁴ Ibid., 324.

Steiners were thus never truly “expelled,” Göttfert’s novel refers to their forced evacuation as expulsion. In this way, the novel leans heavily on the imprecise German conceptual coupling of the generally distinct historical processes of “flight” on the one hand and “expulsion” on the other.²⁸⁵

Even so, Martin at least hears the priest out and listens to the powerful story of a local German speaking Jewish family. Despite converting to Christianity and becoming baptized, the family is forced to pay the cost of their own deportation to a concentration camp. Yet, the father ultimately survives and is cursed as German by the Slovaks that now occupy his house when he returns.²⁸⁶

While Martin is eager to see the house, Ina is interested in only her family’s material and cultural remains. She dangerously locks herself (and her infant child) in the dilapidated remains of her family’s farmhouse and becomes obsessed with finding her family’s buried treasure. She watches videos of traditional Carpathian German folk songs on her cell phone on YouTube and sings them to her baby. In such a manner, Ina’s only demonstrated interest is in the meaning of “Heimat” and the pursuit of her family’s narrative of “expulsion” and victimhood. She is not interested in what happened to the local Slovaks or Jews and treats Podobny with disrespect. Tellingly, she also shows no interest in discovering her grandfather’s past as a member of the Nazi Party and the Waffen-SS. Unlike the protagonists in Sukare’s novel, narratives of responsibility and culpability are not on her agenda either.

²⁸⁵ With the term “German,” I refer to the practice characteristic of the originally West German scholarship since the comprehensive documentation project of the Schieder Commission to refer to the differing historical processes of flight, expulsion, and deportation simply as expulsion or flight and expulsion. See Ther, *Deutsche und polnische Vertriebene*. Cf. Traba and Żurek, “ ‘Expulsion’ or ‘Forced Resettlement’? The Polish-German Dispute about Notions and Memory.”

²⁸⁶ Göttfert, *Steiners Geschichte*, 328.

Martin too, despite his wider interests and panoramic view of local Austrian history, ultimately fails to engage with difficult topics of responsibility and complicity. While going through Steiner's possessions with Ina after his passing, Martin finds Steiner's old Nazi identification card and membership card for the Carpathian German party, as well as some old Nazi literature and the original copy of the Nazi evacuation order for the "Volksdeutsche family Steiner."²⁸⁷ Rather than show these documents to Ina or engage with the difficult topics of Steiner's membership in the SS or the Steiner family's relationship to the Nazi past, he literally throws away these symbols of familial culpability by surreptitiously placing them in a black trash bag while Ina is distracted. Moreover, he claims to have never spoken of this to Ina and if ever confronted, he maintains he would lie about having thrown anything away and blame everything on Ina's father.²⁸⁸ Since the room makes him feel uneasy, Martin runs away from these symbols of the difficult past and into the fresh air outside.

In sum, Göttfert's novel delineates at least four distinct approaches to the past in the characters of Martin, Ina and Ina's father and grandfather. Ina's approach focuses entirely on the familial and cultural meaning of Heimat and depicts "flight and expulsion" as a narrative of victimhood that ignores culpability. Martin, on the other hand, is attentive to a variety of memorial discourses, yet ultimately also fails to engage with issues of culpability. Ina's father's approach, much like that of Sukare's character Matthias, is to completely ignore the past, never speak of it, and integrate as much as possible into the new Austrian postwar society. Rather than become a farmer in the Steiner family tradition and help his father achieve his goal of "rebuilding" his lost home, Ina's father chooses to study business and becomes a successful international businessman that never speaks of the past. Steiner, in contrast, tries hopelessly to

²⁸⁷ Ibid., 207-8.

²⁸⁸ Ibid., 210.

rebuild his lost pastoral home and is allegedly “broken” when his son tells him he will not become a farmer and will instead study business. At this point, Steiner realizes his Heimat is “lost forever,” yet still maintains pervasive visual references to Limbach in his home, even repairing the traditional clothing that he fled wearing in 1945 multiple times. Yet, by never speaking of the past, Steiner creates a paradoxical postmemorial Heimat that is both visually ubiquitous but never spoken of – this constellation ultimately proves traumatic to his granddaughter Ina and poisonous in her relationship with Martin.

In such a manner, Göttfert’s novel presents the disparate approaches to the past taken by various members of the Steiner family through the lens of an “outsider” (Martin) who lacks a familial connection to the memory of “flight and expulsion.” Martin, a prototypical Austrian from the March region, is compelled by his relationship with a Karpatendeutsche to learn that history. In what is perhaps a parallel to the mainstream Austrian approach to the past of the ethnic German “expellees,” Martin is at first disinterested and dismissive of the story of the Karpatendeutsche. His attempts to undercover their story in Austria fail as they are either nonexistent, as is the case in schools, or coopted by right-wing radicals, as is the case with the local Heimat organization. Consequently, the search for honest answers drives both Ina and Martin abroad, suggesting a transnational displacement of this memory. While Göttfert’s novel makes this tendency most explicit, in all the novels examined in this chapter the characters are eventually forced abroad in search of answers that they cannot find in Austria. The motif of silence surrounding the war and “flight and expulsion” in particular is also something all of these novels share. In fact, only those characters that engage with former neighbors in the “former Heimat” abroad (such as Martin in *Steiners Geschichte*) are successful in having their conceptions of the past challenged and uncovering new information about the past.

In their reviews of the novel, both Bernd Schuchter and Juliane Fischer have pointed to the importance of the river March. Schuchter interprets the river as the “epitome of standstill,” a border defined by the Cold War, the border between past and present, etc. Martin and Ina’s crossing of the river on their return to Austria at the end of the novel signifies the better understanding of the past that they bring back with them. In fact, the symbolism of bridge-building is the optimism with which the novel concludes, despite the couple’s decision to remain separated. “Sie werden diese Brücke bauen, sagte sie...Diese Brücke würde jetzt gebaut werden, dort, wo sich schon einmal vor hundert Jahren eine Brücke über die March gespannt habe.”²⁸⁹ It is thus transnational border crossing that brings about a better understanding of the past, reimporting the long-silenced memories of the war generation and ethnic Germans and making them at home in Austria. In fact, the motif of border-crossing is a theme that all four examined novels penned by second and third generation authors share. In all four cases, the narrator travels to their family’s former home in Eastern Europe in an attempt to uncover more details of their family’s past and identity, but the trips are not always successful. Only those that are willing to engage with the changed place in the present and speak with locals seem to gain new information.

In the end, reviews of Göttfert’s novel were generally positive in the Austrian press. Perhaps because the novel was published by a German publishing house (C.H. Beck), there were relatively few (only four that I was able to identify) by Austrian outlets. Most interpreted the novel as a new form of Heimatroman (between the positively coded descriptions of Heimat and the negative characterizations of the Anti-Heimatroman) that attempted to shine light on the

²⁸⁹ Ibid., 477.

forgotten topic of ethnic Germans in Austria.²⁹⁰ “Slowake, Österreicher oder doch Deutscher? In Steiners Geschichte erzählt Constantin Göttfert sehr ambitioniert, wie Karpatendeutsche nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg im Marchfeld Fuß fassen,“ wrote Sebastian Fasthuber in *Die Presse*. Similarly, Schuchter praised Göttfert for his research and unbiased treatment of the difficult subject. “Dabei verhandelt Göttfert große Themen, für die der Autor – man merkt es dem Roman stark an – akribisch recherchiert hat. Bei sudetendeutschen Heimatverbänden, bei ehemaligen Siedlern vor Ort. Doch Göttfert übernimmt weder das Geschichtsurteil der einen noch das der anderen Seite. Er versucht zu verstehen.”

V. Conclusion

In summary, I have shown how four contemporary Austrian authors deal with the topic of “flight and expulsion” and identified the narrative strategies they use to construct Austrian memory. In terms of narrative approach, Hanna Sukare most successfully takes advantage of the perspective of multiple characters of varying generations to break the silence of the past, while also highlighting their different and unique struggles. The protagonist goes out of her way to understand her family’s past – in terms of both victimhood and complicity. The narrative of the mother Jad is not actually a discourse of victimhood but rather the populist counternarrative of historical innocence and a denial of guilt. The protagonists of the second generation suffer emotionally from the silence of their traumatic upbringing but can be best described as adherents

²⁹⁰ For example, Juliane Fischer writes in the *Wiener Falter*, “Über die Provinz schreiben die Österreicher bekanntlich gerne. Zumeist nähert man sich ihr verächtlich, klischeehaft verschärft oder künstlich verklärt, was eventuell später als Ironie dargestellt werden kann. Göttfert wählt keinen dieser Wege, wenn er über das Marchfeld schreibt. Er bespielt die kahle Eintönigkeit des Dorflebens, die Stille, die seit der Kindheit des Ich-Erzählers über der March hängt, angenehm anders. Zwischen dem Schwarz und Weiß von Antiheimat und Heimat verschafft sich sein zweiter Roman viel Platz.”

of the co-responsibility thesis. This narrative of Austrian complicity and responsibility is also the approach to the past that the novel can best be described as espousing.

Garbrielle Vasak, on the other hand, is unsuccessful in her attempt to use a similar narrative approach. While also employing the perspective of multiple characters, *Den Dritten das Brot* ultimately uses the perspective of the Serbian childhood friend Jelena to repeat some of the novel's less commendable stereotypes of the "East" and exaggerate the suffering of the German minority through decontextualized implicit comparison with the victimhood of the Serbs. While Jelena refuses to compare individual suffering, the novel itself implicitly does so and thereby exaggerates the victimhood of the German minority. The novel's exclusive focus on victimhood and its externalization of responsibility to third parties attempts to find common ground between Austrians and Serbs in a narrative of historical innocence.

Thirdly, Ulrike Schmitzer employs an entirely different approach. Rather than reconstruct the past into a coherent linear story, she presents a fragmented familial memory with all its contradictions and gaps. The novel also uses the transcript of an interview with the grandmother figure and authentic excerpts from the grandmother's diary to reveal the mosaic-like construction of familial memory. Schmitzer's novel is a promising attempt to find the right language to tell the story of Danube Swabian victimhood in the broader context of the twentieth century but is lacking in its exploration of Danube Swabian complicity in the Second World War.

Finally, Constantin Göttfert is the only author to use a narrator with no familial connection to ethnic Germans in Austria. Instead, the narrator is supposed to represent the perspective of a typical Austrian outsider to the history of "flight and expulsion."²⁹¹ Göttfert thus shows how emotionally poisonous traumatic experiences and memories (such as "flight and

²⁹¹ Constantin Göttfert: *Tabus Erledigen Sich Nicht Durch Schweigen - Sie Wabern Weiter von Einer Generation Zur Nächsten*. 2014, <https://interview-lounge.tv/?s=steiners+geschichte>.

expulsion”) can be when ignored by society; moreover, they are not only toxic to later generations but also to those individuals with no prior connection to the history, who attempt to build relationships with German-speaking refugee families. This approach is very effective at revealing the extent to which the memory of “flight and expulsion” remains ignored and misunderstood in today’s Austria. Like the characters in Sukare’s *Staubzunge*, those in Göttfert’s novel also demonstrate differing approaches to dealing with the traumatic emotional effects of “flight and expulsion.” Unlike Adele, the main character in *Staubzunge*, however, none of the characters in *Steiners Geschichte* attempt to deal with Steiner’s Nazi past. That this important part of Steiner’s story is left untold and its traces are literally thrown out by the main character is a problematic presentation of the memory of “ethnic Germans” in Austria.

At the level of the reception in the Austrian press, Sukare’s *Staubzunge* received the most positive reviews both quantitatively and qualitatively. This finding seems to indicate that the co-responsibility thesis of Austrian memory as advocated by *Staubzunge* is, in fact, the most mainstream narrative of Austrian memory. At the same time, however, the lack of condemnation of Vasak’s narrative approach in the press also might reveal that the narrative of historical innocence is still acceptable in today’s Austria. But given the very small number of three reviews of Vasak’s novel, this extrapolation is also a tenuous one to make.

Ultimately, the reviews of Vasak’s and Schmitzer’s novels noted a shift towards increased interest in the subject of “flight and expulsion.” As mentioned in the introduction, between 2014 and 2016 there were indeed five novels²⁹² published by Austrian authors that thematize the subject. In their argument, it is finally becoming more mainstream to discuss the “flight and expulsion” of ethnic Germans in Austria, which was a history long left to the far

²⁹² In addition to the four novels discussed in this chapter, Corinna Antelmann’s *Hinter die Zeit* (2015) also deals with the topic.

right. While my initial research indicates that there were a number of other novels written on the subject in the 70s and 80s, the Austrian press' assertion of a shift in the discourse would be in line with the idea that the co-responsibility thesis' rise to prominence has finally displaced the incompatibility of the Altösterreichische narrative of victimhood with Austria's former official victim myth (as the first victim of Nazism). In other words, the framework of complicity and co-responsibility may make it easier for ethnic Germans to be recognized as Austrian and not Othered as German. As counterintuitive as it may seem, the admission of guilt and complicity as demonstrated in Sukare's novel may make it easier for "ethnic Germans" to write about their unique form of victimhood and be seen as authentically Austrian. Instead of affirming old stereotypes that view "ethnic Germans" in Austria collectively as German Nazis, the admission of co-responsibility for Nazi crimes may today be the most mainstream approach to the past in Austria and represent the most authentic way to tell the story of "flight and expulsion" in the Alpine Republic. Indeed, the overwhelmingly positive and enthusiastic reception of Hanna Sukare's *Staubzunge* as an award winner at the Salzburger Rauris seems to lend credence to this idea.

CHAPTER 5: THE PRESENCE OF THE PAST: “THE REFUGEE/EXPELLEE GAZE” IN TRAVELOGUES BY ILSE TIELSCH AND KARL-MARKUS GAUß

At one point in her 1994 autobiographical novel *weiter leben*, the Holocaust survivor and Germanist Ruth Klüger critiques the inability of concentration camp museums such as Dachau to make the past present and reveal the horror and suffering that occurred at these places during the Second World War. Instead of leaving with a visceral emotional experience, some visitors to the museum dangerously leave with a trivialized notion of the concentration camp as the clean, orderly museum of today, rather than the horror of yesterday. In this context, she proposes the neologism “Zeitschaft” to describe a place in (a specific) time. She writes:

Sicher helfen die ausgehängten Bilder, die schriftlich angeführten Daten und Fakten und die Dokumentarfilme. Aber das KZ als Ort? Ortschaft, Landschaft, landscape, seascape – das Wort Zeitschaft sollte es geben, um zu vermitteln, was ein Ort in der Zeit ist, zu einer gewissen Zeit, weder vorher noch nachher.²⁹³

Here Klüger points out that the photos, facts and films assist in conveying the meaning of what happened at Dachau, but as remediations or representations of the past they ultimately fail to provide experiential presence to the contemporary place. It is exactly this quandary of an inaccessible past and the experience of “Zeitschaft,” or a specific place in time, that lies at the heart of this chapter. While the previous chapter’s examination of contemporary Austrian literature sought to tease out the differing narrative approaches to the past at the present moment of the novel’s writing, this chapter analyzes post-Waldheim travelogues to investigate how the present of the trip is narrated through the lens of memory and/or postmemory. In other words, it is not the narrative reconstruction of the past per se that is under investigation in this chapter, but rather how the present moment of the trip is challenged by the nostalgic desire for “the presence

²⁹³ Klüger, *weiter leben*, 78.

of the past.” This approach is informed by insights from the iconic turn and visual studies and literary scholar Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht’s concept of “presence” in particular. Drawing on these insights, I propose the term “refugee/expellee gaze,” to capture a particular way of looking that sees past the present and is dominated by memory or postmemory.

In my argument, the “refugee/expellee gaze” is motivated by dyadic drives that rely on the desire to see and the fear of looking, respectively. Consequently, I term these drives the *scopophilic* and *scopophobic* impulses. The scopophilic impulse is the driving force behind German-speaking refugees’ (or their descendants’) return to their former (postmemorial) Heimat. It is motivated by nostalgia, *Heimweh* and the desire to see and experience the past. As such, it is ultimately a longing for the “presence” of the past. The scopophobic instinct, on the other hand, is characterized by a “mysterious timidity”²⁹⁴ or fear of experiencing the past’s absence in the present and the deconstruction of the Heimat of memory. It results in the avoidance of the topic by some German-speaking refugees and their descendants, as will be shown through the case of Karl-Markus Gauß, who instead focuses on various forgotten and disappearing minorities across Eastern Europe today. Moreover, it should be stressed that the “refugee/expellee gaze” is not a singular way of looking but an approach to the present rooted in memory/postmemory, such that oscillations in the underlying scopophilic and scopophobic impulses result in vast differences in attention to the present.

Overattention to the scopophilic impulse, as in the case of Tielsch, can result in a field of vision attuned only to remnants of the lost German or Austrian past that systematically ignores the othered Czech present. In contrast, overemphasis on the scopophobic impulse, as in the case

²⁹⁴ Karl-Markus Gauß describes his “mysterious timidity” in the following way: “Eine rätselhafte Scheu hielt mich davon ab, der ich doch von der Geschichte dieser Region schon als Kind erzählt bekommen und die Namen der Dörfer und kleinen Städte, Kikinda und Palanka, Werschetz und Hodschag, Kubin und Filipowa, wie in einem Zauberspruch hersagen konnte.” Gauß, *Zwanzig Lewa oder tot*, 76.

of Gauß, can result in an avoidance of the personal or familial past in favor of other considerations.²⁹⁵ In constructing this model of the refugee/expellee gaze, this chapter makes more general observations that are not uniquely specific to Austrian memory culture or “flight and expulsion” in Austria. Although this chapter uses examples by Austrian authors, i.e. Ilse Tielsch and Karl-Markus Gauß, and seeks to analyze the treatment of memory/postmemory of “flight and expulsion,” I consider this final chapter to be also a more general contribution to memory studies.

The chapter begins with theoretical considerations before moving on to close readings of texts by Ilse Tielsch and Karl-Markus Gauß that delineate their opposing ways of looking, or making the past present, during their trips. As part of the theoretical section, I consider the following: first, the genre of travelogue within the context of “flight and expulsion” and then nostalgia’s visual dimension. Thereafter, building on the work of historian Andrew Demshuk’s concepts of “Heimat of memory” and “Heimat transformed” on the one hand, and Germanist Yuliya Komska’s concept of nostalgic bifocalism, on the other, I develop my concept of the “refugee/expellee gaze.” Finally, I employ the idea of the “refugee/expellee gaze” to Ilse Tielsch’s travelogue *Zerstörung der Bilder* (1990) and Karl-Markus Gauß’ travelogues *Die versprengten Deutschen* (2005) and *Zwanzig Lewa oder tot: Vier Reisen* (2017) to explore their differing approaches to “flight and expulsion.”

²⁹⁵ In the case of Gauß, these “other considerations” are the search for remnants of an idealized vision of the nonnational past, nearly utopian in its reconstruction, i.e. a Central European identity that defies national categorization.

I. Defining Literary Return Narratives or *Wiederbegegnungsliteratur*

In terms of generic form, the travelogues under analysis in this chapter can be categorized as a specific form of travel memoir that Louis Ferdinand Helbig has described in his survey of “flight and expulsion” in German language literature as *Wiederbegegnungsliteratur*, or literature dealing with the “re-encounter” of the lost home. Helbig views *Wiederbegegnungsliteratur* as a new generic form, arising from return journeys to the former home, once this was permitted (usually about 30 years after the end of the war, according to Helbig).²⁹⁶ Beyond this thematic focus of *Wiederbegegnungsliteratur*, Helbig does not ascribe generic conventions to the “new genre.”

In her dissertation “Geopolitical Transformation and Nostalgia: Literary Return Visits to Former East Prussian Homes,” Meghan O’Dea has examined literary return narratives, both physical and imagined, within the context of German-speaking refugees and expellees from East Prussia. Her analysis identifies nostalgia as an important and defining feature of the genre. She argues that “return visits attempted to fulfill a curiosity and longing to ‘re-experience’ one’s past located in territories outside post-World War II Germany.”²⁹⁷ In her analysis, O’Dea has fruitfully problematized the concept of nostalgia and deconstructed oppositional binaries like those of Svetlyna Boym’s restorative and reflective nostalgia to show how nostalgia works within these novels in complex ways that defy simple categorization as positive/negative types.

While O’Dea does not offer an alternative conceptualization of nostalgia, I argue that the idea of longing for “the presence of the past” offers one way to reconsider nostalgia. Building on O’Dea’s observation that return visits attempted to “fulfill a curiosity and longing to re-experience one’s past,” I argue that it is the “presence of the past” that “expellees” sought (i.e.

²⁹⁶ Helbig, *Der Ungeheure Verlust*, 264.

²⁹⁷ O’Dea, 59.

the immediacy and materiality of being that appeals directly to the senses) and it was this that drove them abroad in search of it in the space of their former homes. In fact, it is here that my analysis of *Wiederbegegnungsliteratur* distinguishes itself fundamentally from that of O’Dea. While she lumps both physically undertaken and imagined return journeys into the same category of literary return narratives, I make a distinction between the two and only examine those texts that are based on actually embarked-upon journeys. I make this distinction because my approach emphasizes the tension between the present seen and the past (re)imagined, the slippage between vision and memory. As such, my approach draws on insight from the visual turn that recognizes the agency of objects, the lives of images, and their dialogic ability to affect us in unexpected ways.

Weary of the linguistic turn and the claim that no worldly object can ever be available in an unmediated way to human bodies and minds, there exists a nonhermeneutic movement within the iconic turn. Thinkers like Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht and Eelco Runia, for example, foreground perception as a method of knowing the world in a way that may sidestep the function of language and provide more direct access to the real. In *The Production of Presence: What Meaning Cannot Convey*, Gumbrecht distinguishes between “meaning cultures” and “presence cultures” or those that focus more on subject-centered interpreting and reading of the world and those that are more rooted in material immediacy and sensory experience and that prefer a more dialogic interaction with the world. He is quick to point out that these models are not pure types but represent alternative approaches that allow for oscillation between presence and meaning effects. In Gumbrecht’s estimation, however, Western culture is dominated by the meaning-based approach, while he diagnoses an increasing yearning for presence effects. “Presence effects have so completely vanished that they now come back in the form of an intense desire for presence –

one reinforced or even triggered by many of our contemporary communication media.”²⁹⁸ In this way, Gumbrecht posits the nostalgia of the postmodern condition as a yearning for presence, immediacy and a sensory mode of accessing the world. Rather than the retrospective taming of images and objects with meaning that subjects them to the author’s interpretation and which occurs within the context of the imagined journey, the real undertaken journey is open to the unpredictability of “presence” and its potentially disruptive effects. The narrative remediation of the experience as text may introduce similar taming effects to that of the imagined journey; it is thus only the actually undertaken journey that offers the possibility of the potentially harrowing experience and its transposition into narrative form. Consequently, my analysis limits itself to travelogues or works of *Wiederbegegnungsliteratur* that are based on journeys actually taken and critiques the presentation of the present and the role of the filter of memory.

II. Presence: Nostalgia’s Forgotten Visual Dimension Between Space and Time

Coined by the Swiss medical student Johannes Hofer in his 1688 dissertation, the term nostalgia is the Greek popularization of the German compound Heimweh. In fact, both the Greek and German are compound words that link “home” (i.e. “Heim” or “Nostos”) with “pain” (“Weh” or “Algia”). For Hofer writing in the seventeenth century, Heimweh or nostalgia was primarily a spatial longing for the native land that he diagnosed among Swiss mercenaries in the Thirty Years’ War. However, the extensive changes wrought on the landscape and in human relations by modernity, postmodernity and the acceleration of history in the past two centuries has led to the impression that time (and not space) is the limiting dimension in accessing a place in time. As such, scholars in the proceeding centuries have “uncoupled longing from its spatial

²⁹⁸ Gumbrecht, 20.

coordinates, to locate it in time. They have transformed ‘nostalgia’ from an individual pathology into a social symptom.”²⁹⁹ Rather than a curable disease afflicting individuals, nostalgia has become an incurable condition.³⁰⁰ Consequently, longing has, according to Komska, “...taken on the meaning of a ‘universal experience’ and become a ‘feature of global culture.’”³⁰¹

Yet, in a close reading of Hofer’s original dissertation, Komska has also discovered another central aspect of nostalgia that has been neglected in the modern shift away from the spatial and toward a greater emphasis on nostalgia’s temporal dimension and its characterization as a postmodern condition. This second, forgotten aspect of nostalgia is its visual dimension. “Nostalgics, in Hofer’s description, forever zoom in on the picture of the ‘Native Land.’ But the resulting ‘images of Heimat’ ...are, in his opinion, not in the least poetic. They are as concretely physical as vision itself.”³⁰² According to Komska, Hofer diagnoses the obsessive fixation on the image of Heimat and the corresponding “compulsive visual surplus” not merely as a mental process, but also a physical one “that finds an additional outlet in ‘Sehsucht’ [sic] or addiction to seeing...”³⁰³ Similar to my chapter on German-speaking refugee and expellee heterotopias and the construction of memorials and religious pilgrimage sites along the Austrian-Czech border, Komska has also shown how “expellee” nostalgia “builds towers” and “viewing platforms” along the German-Czech border and transforms the nostalgic image into actual vision or the “Blick in die Heimat.”

In my chapter dealing with German-speaking refugee heterotopia and pilgrimage sites, I argued that the performative dimension of culture and religious liturgical ritual allowed German-

²⁹⁹ Komska, 205.

³⁰⁰ Boym, xviii.

³⁰¹ Komska, 206.

³⁰² Ibid., 206.

³⁰³ Ibid., 206-7.

speaking refugees to transport themselves thorough space and time and revisit the reimagined Heimat of memory. In this chapter, I expand on that idea to argue that it is precisely these material, sensory aspects of ritual or the “Blick in die Heimat” that fulfills the nostalgic desire to make the “past present.” Indeed, the concept of presence unifies these, in the postmodern era, seemingly disconnected spatial and temporal poles of nostalgia in the experience of “Zeitschaft” or the sensory experience of seeing the past.

III. The “Refugee/Expellee Gaze”: Experiencing the Past and Looking Past the Present

Die Eltern hatten es, so lange sie lebten, abgelehnt, das Land, das ihnen Heimat gewesen war, zu besuchen, sie wollten es, wie sie betonten, in Erinnerung behalten, wie sie es gekannt hatten. In Wahrheit fürchteten sie den Schmerz, den ihnen eine solche Besuchsreise bereitet hätte.³⁰⁴

In this quote from Ilse Tielsch’s *Zerstörung der Bilder*, Tielsch describes why her parents never embarked on a similar journey to the one that she was currently undertaking in 1990 to their shared familial, former home in Czechia. In all likelihood, Tielsch’s parents had already heard (either from media reports, friends or German-speaking refugee newspapers) about the degree to which their former home had been transformed into the present, post-Communist Czech place and therefore feared seeing and experiencing firsthand the changes that their former home had undergone. Instead, they sought solace in their memories of the past and their idealized construction of the “Heimat of memory.”

Along these lines, the historian Andrew Demshuk has introduced the concept “Heimat transformed” to describe “expellees’” perceptions and imaginings of the changes wrought on the landscape of their former homes. Focusing on the case of German “expellees” from Silesia, Demshuk argues that the “Heimat transformed” concentrated on undesirable changes (portraying

³⁰⁴ Tielsch, *Zerstörung der Bilder*, 50.

the Heimat as “ruined”) and was associated with negative stereotypes of Poles, racism, and anti-Communism. Demshuk contrasted the “Heimat transformed” with the “Heimat of memory,” an idealized memory of home that was reconstructed in texts and memorial practices. In his argument, the dialectic between these two images of Heimat assisted “expellees” in recognizing that the former home was lost forever and, in emphasizing the impossibility of return, helped them come to terms with their loss.

At this point, however, it is important to note that Demshuk’s “Heimat transformed” and “Heimat of memory” are both imagined cultural constructions of the past. Indeed, Demshuk makes this clear himself: “The Heimat transformed developed in correspondence with the Heimat of memory and was just as constructed.”³⁰⁵ Yet, it could be argued that the “Heimat transformed” is even more constructed than the “Heimat of memory” as many “expellees” never experienced the “Heimat transformed” firsthand. Consequently, these German-speaking refugees’ conception of the “Heimat transformed” was based entirely on the accounts of others. In fact, while the idealized “Heimat of memory” shared some basis in German-speaking refugees’ experience and memory, the “Heimat transformed” was, for many “expellees”, entirely constructed and based on the secondhand accounts of others. This distinction is important because the idea of the “Heimat transformed” as Demshuk describes it is, in fact, the cultural construction among German-speaking refugees that circulated in newspapers and other media and that was laced with longstanding anti-Slavic racism, political bias and which was largely devoid of presence. Although Demshuk does not distinguish between German-speaking refugees’ cultural construction of the “Heimat transformed” and the actual experiences of individual “expellees,” he does note the unpredictability of “presence effects,” particularly

³⁰⁵ Demshuk, *The Lost German East*, 13.

personal contact with Poles, when “expellees” describe their own experiences in the “Heimat transformed.”

The racism and mistrust that filled expellees' accounts tended to shift at the moment when they made personal contact with Poles, often on their old property. Usually undesired at first, this impromptu interchange introduced a healing, human element on soils that had recently known such interracial violence.³⁰⁶

Thus, it may be useful to distinguish between the negatively connotated, cultural construction of the Heimat transformed among German-speaking refugees and their own experiences in the “Heimat transformed.” Introducing the term “Heimat disfigured” to describe the negatively connotated cultural construction of Heimat may help dispel any mistaking of “expellees’ ” cultural construction for their own experiences of the “Heimat transformed.” Indeed, Demshuk’s conflation of the two³⁰⁷ downplays the role of presence effects and disguises how the cultural construction of the “Heimat disfigured” added another layer of expectation to German-speaking refugees’ return trips, thereby also influencing their trip planning, the objects of their attention, and their own perceptions of the “Heimat transformed.” Thus, for my analysis, I distinguish between the culturally constructed concept of the “Heimat disfigured” and the actual experience of the “Heimat transformed.” In other words, I understand the “Heimat transformed” as a physically transformed place that actually exists in reality and not just in the minds of German-speaking refugees.

Demshuk’s concepts of “Heimat transformed” and “Heimat of memory” are innovative and extremely helpful in understanding how, on a social level, German-speaking refugees and expellees integrated into West German society. The cultural imagining of the “Heimat

³⁰⁶ Ibid., 213.

³⁰⁷ A good example of the conflation that I am describing can be found in Demshuk’s introduction of the concept of the “Heimat transformed.” He states: “This other half of the Heimat’s dual image should be read as ‘reality’ only insofar as it reflects how ‘expellees’ constructed the reality that they perceived in Polish Silesia.” See Demshuk, 21.

transformed” assisted German-speaking refugees in accepting the impossibility of return, coming to terms with the loss of their “Heimat” and finding solace in memory. It provides less insight, however, into the mechanics of this process on an individual, psychological level. Thus, a close reading of texts in the genre of *Wiederbegegnungsliteratur* that are based on real, not imagined journeys, such as Tielsch’s *Zerstörung der Bilder* can provide new insights into the dynamics of memory.

The concept of the “refugee/expellee gaze” provides an alternative model for thinking about how memory and nostalgia affects what we do – our perceptions, decisions, and actions. Its underlying scopophilic and scopophobic impulses determine not only what German-speaking refugees see but whether they even decide to look. Indeed, I argue that the “fear of pain” that Tielsch diagnoses as the reason for her parents’ refusal to return to their former home is rooted in this scopophobic instinct. While there are certainly many other racist and political motivations for ignoring or not engaging with the “Heimat transformed,” the scopophobic instinct has specifically to do with memory. This is not a fear of seeing the Heimat transformed per se, but of having one’s memories overwritten, reinscribed with a new reality in which one no longer belongs. It is the fear of seeing and experiencing one’s past excised from history and having one’s identity disconnected from the world. It is thus the fear of absence and the loss of identity.

The scopophilic impulse, on the other hand, is the nostalgic desire for presence, the will to see and re-experience one’s past. It is the desire for a sense of continuity and wholeness with one’s past and identity. These impulses determine what German-speaking refugees both look for and what they look past. It establishes the visual field of their perception and their pattern of looking. Yet, as previously argued, vision is a dialogical, unpredictable, and contingent

experience of reality. Traveling to the former home requires a certain openness on the part of “expellees” to the other, incalculable side of this visual encounter.

The incongruence between memory and vision, the slippage between seeing and remembering, is an almost certain consequence of the return visit and one that many German-speaking refugees have described as traumatic. For Tielsch, it results in the “destruction of images,” the title of her travelogue. Of course, the images that Tielsch describes as being destroyed are not physical images but her past childhood memories.

In her examination of the role of Bohemian German “expellees” in constructing the iron curtain between Bavaria and Czechia, Yuliya Komska has also noted “expellees” unique way of looking. She defines the slippage between “expellees” vision and memory as “nostalgic bifocalism.”³⁰⁸ But her analysis is confined to the iron curtain and how German-speaking refugees constructed it along the Bavarian-Czech border by building watchtowers and looking into their former home (*der Blick in die Heimat*). The travelogues that she considers deal with travel *to* the border and the act of looking *into* Heimat but her analysis does not consider travel *beyond* the border. Despite nostalgic bifocalism and the disconnect between vision and memory, the act of looking into the Heimat from a watchtower constitutes a position of greater power and security than the more precarious subjectivity of travel into the Heimat. Travel into the Heimat requires greater openness to having one’s memory challenged and a more dialogic experience of vision. As such, Komska’s “nostalgic bifocalism” is focused on the position of the subject (the “expellee” viewer) and thus overestimates nostalgia’s scopophilic power. Thus, while entirely appropriate for her focus on the iron curtain, Komska’s nostalgic bifocalism is not appropriate

³⁰⁸ “The dyad of the look into the Heimat and the Heimat’s mental image, best described as nostalgic bifocalism...draws attention to the kinds of physical settings and related written sources that put pressure on stark East/West dichotomies, structurally predicated on the dynamic of ‘the gaze.’” See Komska, 184-5.

for my analysis of travel beyond the border. Nostalgic bifocalism underestimates the scopophobic fear of absence, the potentially debilitating experience of suddenly having one's memories overwritten and entering a world that is eerily familiar, but to which one does not belong. In short, the refugee/expellee gaze is more than a constant searching for vestiges and remnants of the past in a way that looks past the present; it is a method of experiencing the "presence" of the past that requires confronting the present in ways that are sometimes unexpected.

In what follows, I show how the refugee/expellee gaze determines Tielsch's experience of the present. Rather than focus on how the past is constructed through narrative, I analyze the relationship between the present and the past in the text to show both sides of the conversation between author/subject and image/object/memory. In doing so, I demonstrate how images of the "Heimat transformed" unexpectedly come alive by triggering memories, how they demand agency and legitimacy and structure the text.

IV. Ilse Tielsch's *Zerstörung der Bilder* (1991) and the "Refugee/Expellee Gaze"

Ilse Tielsch was born in the small town of Auspitz (today Hustopece, Czechia) in 1929 as a citizen of the first Czechoslovak Republic to German speaking parents, who were themselves born as citizens of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Following the Munich Agreement in 1938, the remainder of Tielsch's childhood was spent under Nazi rule until 1945 when she, alone, fled the approaching Soviet front on one of the last trains to Austria. There she spent the remainder of 1945 on the farm of a relative in Upper Austria until she realized that her parents were alive and

moved to Vienna to be with them.³⁰⁹ This harrowing experience of the flight marked a caesura in Tielsch's life that she has repeatedly described as the "fracture or tear [Riss] of her existence."³¹⁰

The experience of "flight and expulsion" has been a central theme of Tielsch's literary work, particularly during the 1980s as she wrote her epic trilogy *Die Ahnenpyramide*, *Heimatsuchen*, and *Die Früchte der Tränen*. According to Tielsch, this decade-long preoccupation with the topic began as an attempt to answer a questionnaire sent from the Austrian federal government, asking private citizens to define "what Heimat means today" in less than thirty lines.³¹¹ In later interviews, Tielsch described how she tore up the questionnaire but took up the challenge by writing *Die Ahnenpyramide*, albeit with over four hundred pages instead of a mere thirty lines. Later still, Tielsch described writing her trilogy as a form of "self-prescribed therapy" that in the end proved counterproductive.³¹² Rather than bridging this "gap" in her identity, the process of writing and describing this fissure concretized it and made it a defining feature of her life.

Ich versuchte, mir meine Vergangenheit zu erschreiben, um den Riß, der zwischen den beiden Teilen meines Lebens entstanden war, zu schließen, aber gerade das konnte mir nicht gelingen. Dadurch, daß ich die Tatsache dieses Risses beschrieb, bezog ich ihn in meine Bücher ein.³¹³

Like her trilogy, Tielsch's return to her former home as depicted in her 1991 travelogue *Zerstörung der Bilder* represented another attempt to bring wholeness to her life. In *Zerstörung der Bilder*, Tielsch describes her return to the geographic location where her life was torn in two. At this point of convergence between childhood past and present past, at the train station where

³⁰⁹ Abret, " 'Das Vergangene Ist Unser Schatten.' Das Erzählerische Werk von Ilse Tielsch," 126.

³¹⁰ See Tielsch, *Von der Freiheit schreiben zu dürfen*, 50; Tielsch, *Zerstörung der Bilder*, 47-9.

³¹¹ Abret, " 'Das Vergangene Ist Unser Schatten.' Das Erzählerische Werk von Ilse Tielsch," 132.

³¹² Tielsch, *Von der Freiheit schreiben zu dürfen*, 50.

³¹³ *Ibid.*, 50.

she boarded the train in April 1945 during her flight to Austria, Tielsch searches for continuity and a bridge between her bifurcated childhood past and present past.

Dann wenig später, stehen wir auf dem Bahnhof, R. und ich, von dem ich damals, im April fünfundvierzig, weggefahren bin. Hier müßten sich die beiden Teile meines Lebens aneinanderfügen, der kurze Teil, der damals geendet hat, und der viel längere, den ich seither gelebt habe.³¹⁴

Here, at the geographic location of departure, Tielsch expects to find not her past per se, but rather her past as embodied in her fictional alter ego and protagonist of her novels, Anni. In writing her novels through the perspective of Anni, Tielsch's past – or at least the past of her childhood, that which is situated on the other side of the “rift” – becomes a disembodied, third-person experience. Rather than remembering and seeing through the eyes of her childhood self, Tielsch sees her (fictional) self from the third person perspective:

Anni müßte auf mich zukommen, das Mädchen aus meinem Roman, ich sehe, wie sie dasteht, ein bißchen unsicher, ein bißchen trotzig entschlossen, ganz so, wie sie immer gewesen ist. Sie steht zwischen dem Koffer mit der Ziehharmonika und... Sie müßte sich umdrehen, Koffer und Ziehharmonika stehenlassen auf mich zukommen, in mich hineintreten, mit mir zu einer Person verschmelzen, unsere Vergangenheit zu einer gemeinsamen Vergangenheit, unsere Gegenwart zu einer einzigen Gegenwart machen. Der Riß müßte sich schließen, der meine Existenz vor mehr als fünfundvierzig Jahren von der ihren getrennt hat.³¹⁵

Here, Tielsch employs a technique that she often used in her trilogy, whereby her protagonist would bring family photos to life by entering them.³¹⁶ In these instances, the two

³¹⁴ Tielsch-Felzmann, *Die Zerstörung der Bilder*, 47.

³¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 47-8.

³¹⁶ See Kleiber, “Ilse Tielschs Grenzüberschreitungen,” 3. “Dort, wo keine Erinnerung vorhanden ist, weil sie nicht vorhanden sein kann oder will, und Ilse Tielsch auch keinen individuellen, d.h. anekdotischen und differenzierten Zeugenbericht besitzt, greift sie auf die ihr eigenen Technik des Heraufbeschwörens zurück, die z.T. in einem tranceartigen Zustand, z.T. auch nur dank ihrer aus dokumentarisch abgesicherten Phantasie genährten Einfühlungsgabe erfolgt. In jedem Falle vertieft sie sich dann in eine Zeichnung, oder taucht in ein Photo ein. Mit Hilfe einer Lupe, deren Wirkung oft noch mit einem Augenglas verstärkt wird, überwindet sie den üblichen Abstand zwischen dem Betrachtenden und dem betrachteten Bild, wechselt von einem objektiven, überlegenen Blick auf einen Gegenstand zu einem subjektiven Rundblick auf eine unmittelbare Welt über. Dann wird das Bild plastisch, d.h. ‘dreidimensional,’ und die sich somit selbst in Szene setzende Autorin vollbringt gleichzeitig einen Sprung in die Vergangenheit, überlistet die Zeit.”

dimensional photographs, frozen in time,³¹⁷ serve as portals through which the narrator Anni is able to travel to events of which she has no personal memory and, using her creativity and imagination as well as other historical sources, fill in the gaps of the stories told to her by her family and thereby construct her coherent narrative.

In this case however, it seems Tielsch expects Anni to time-travel in the opposite direction – forward to the present – and not through the typical two-dimensional image of a photo or drawing. The train station is certainly not an image and not frozen in time as a photograph. Yet, the appearance of the train station gives Tielsch the impression that nothing has changed. “R. hat den Wagen vor dem Bahnhofsgebäude abgestellt, wir sind ausgestiegen, und ich habe mich umgesehen. Wenn die Erinnerung mich nicht betrogen hat, ist hier alles unverändert geblieben.”³¹⁸ In other words, the image of Tielsch’s memory does not appear to conflict with the image of the present Czech place; this appearance of continuity in space and time seems to present Anni the opportunity to travel through the portal and enter Tielsch’s present world. Yet, agency has been bequeathed to Anni and the memories that the train station triggers (i.e. the “memories” of Anni) are actually the constructed images of Tielsch’s novels, certainly very similar to the authentic events but nonetheless memories of memories as seen from the third person.

It is this lack of agency that marks a major difference between Tielsch’s travel memoir and her previous work, both in terms of the structure of memory and its transmission as well as at the level of the text and its structure. In *Zerstörung der Bilder*, Tielsch no longer constructs the

³¹⁷ Xenia Srebrianski Harwell describes this technique as transforming two-dimensional space of the photograph into living three-dimensional space, bringing the past to life in what is sometimes a “mimetically godlike creative role.” See Srebrianski Harwell, “Remapping and Repopulating the Geographical Past,” 146.

³¹⁸ Tielsch, *Zerstörung der Bilder*, 9.

narrative with the help of both archival memory (or “storage memory” as Assmann calls it,³¹⁹ i.e. photos, newspaper articles) and communicative memory, i.e. the stories told by her parents. Instead, it is now the memorial objects and images themselves that structure the narrative and trigger or conjure up memories. Due to the traumatic experience of “flight and expulsion,” the loss of Heimat, and the burden of the postmemories from her parents, the images that Tielsch encounters in Czechoslovakia,³²⁰ her former home, have taken on lives of their own, offering up an alternative reality to the images of memory, often competing with them and in some cases destroying them (as the title suggests).

Indeed, one major difference between Tielsch’s trilogy of novels dealing with “flight and expulsion” and her travel memoir is that in *Zerstörung der Bilder*, the images of the “Heimat transformed” have taken on lives of their own and demand agency and legitimacy.³²¹ Rather than Tielsch being the authorial constructor and restorator of the Heimat of memory, whereby Tielsch is able to bend images to her interpretive will (as in her novels), here it is the images of the “Heimat transformed” that attack Tielsch, trigger other memories, and structure the work. The memoir is constantly jumping from the present return journey to past memories and is then interrupted by quotes and historical facts and details.³²² Moreover, Tielsch feels compelled to start over multiple times: “Ich muss anders beginnen”³²³ and later, directly after realizing her

³¹⁹ See Assmann, *Shadows of Trauma*.

³²⁰ *Zerstörung der Bilder* was published in 1991, two years before the Velvet Divorce and the dissolution of Czechoslovakia into the Czech Republic and Slovakia. Some of the trips incorporated into the work took place during the Communist era; however, the major trip at the start of the work took place on June 16, 1990 shortly after the borders had opened and at a time of transition and hope for a better future.

³²¹ Only upon occasion is Tielsch able to use a remembered photo to ground herself and open a portal to the past herself. “Ich falle durch die Jahrzehnte zurück, erinnere mich an das Kind, das ich gewesen bin. Auf einer kleinen Schwarzweißfotografie kann man es sehen...” See Tielsch, *Zerstörung der Bilder*, 41.

³²² Helbig refers to this strategy of providing historic details and quotes in the context of her trilogy as a kind of montage technique that attempts to provide a grand representation of the region. “Beide Romane sind durch einen überwältigenden Materialreichtum gekennzeichnet, beide versuchen durch Montagetechnik und Einstreuung von historiographischem Detail eine Gesamtdarstellung der jahrhundertelangen kulturellen Präsenz der Deutschen zwischen mittlerer Donau und oberer Oder.” See Helbig, *Der Ungeheure Verlust*, 196.

³²³ Tielsch, *Zerstörung der Bilder*, 17.

life's tear [Riss] will not be stitched at the train station, "ich muss doch noch einmal anders beginnen."³²⁴

Moreover, Tielsch is continually assaulted by "images" which are in fact flashbacks, triggered by objects and places that she remembers, although often differently. She describes being attacked by memories – not only of her family's "flight and expulsion" but also ordinary family memories:

Ich hatte auch nicht vorgehabt, daran zu denken, dass auf der Straße, auf der wir jetzt fahren, vor genau fünfundvierzig Jahren, sogar auf den Tag genau, meine Eltern gegangen sind, als sie die Stadt und das Land verließen, um niemals mehr wiederzukommen, aber jetzt denke ich es doch. Ich muss auch daran denken, dass wenige Wochen später die alten Großeltern hier gingen, mit der jüngeren Tochter, zwei kleine Kinder.... Vor ihnen waren schon viele gegangen, nach ihnen würden noch andere gehen. Ich habe diese Bilder nicht mit Absicht beschworen, aber hier auf dieser Straße, die ich so gut kenne, auf der ich selbst so oft gegangen bin, die ich mit meinem Fahrrad befahren habe, drängen sie sich mir auf. Ich kann meinen Gedanken nicht befehlen, sie gehorchen mir nicht, sie haben sich selbstständig gemacht.³²⁵

Upon arriving at her childhood home, Tielsch is assaulted by other memories. "Jetzt überfallen mich Bilder...die Bilder fallen über mich her, sie bedrängen mich. Man kehrt nicht ungestraft dorthin zurück, wo man Kind gewesen ist."³²⁶ These memories are seemingly benign images of her family celebrating Christmas, their cast-iron oven and the sounds of the piano; yet, she describes the return of the images as a violent experience. Her husband "R." takes photos of the house as part of a documentation of the "slow death of a house." Then, suddenly, Tielsch is attacked by other memories, in this case, postmemories from her parents' expulsion from her childhood home. "Jetzt überfällt mich ein Bild, das ich nicht selbst mit meinen Augen aufgenommen habe, das aus Erzählungen anderer entstanden ist, mich jedoch die Jahrzehnte

³²⁴ Ibid., 50.

³²⁵ Ibid., 53-4.

³²⁶ Ibid., 54-5.

hindurch verfolgt hat...sei froh, dass du das nicht gesehen hast, sagte die Mutter, als sie mir davon berichtete, aber ich sehe es doch.”³²⁷

One result of Tielsch’s attention to memory and postmemory on the trip is a disinterest in engaging with the locals and “newly” inscribed Czech places. When visiting her grandfather’s former home, for example, Tielsch has no desire to get to know the people who now live there. “Auch dieses Haus hat man verändert, man hat ihm ein Stockwerk aufgesetzt, die Fenster vergrößert und den Mauern einen neuen, hellen Anstrich gegeben. Ich will nicht wissen, wer jetzt darin wohnt.”³²⁸ Similarly, Tielsch recalls the old town swimming pool, which she describes as “the paradise of her childhood summers” and here too, Tielsch “...will auch nicht wissen, wie das neue Bad aussieht, das man anstelle des alten Schwimmbads gebaut hat.”³²⁹

The emotionally laden memories of spaces that Tielsch recognizes but that have been transformed block emotional engagement with the new meanings in the present. The cognitive dissonance between the remembered images of places and the changed images of those “same” places seems to have a competitive component that results in the “destruction of [the old] images.” For example, while on the way to visit Karlsbad, Tielsch and her husband drive at night through a landscape of postmemories, based on family stories. They want to return during the day but then realize that that would be dangerous. “Wir müssen noch einmal hierherkommen, sage ich, doch schon während ich es sage, weiß ich, dass wir damit die Bilder, die wir uns aus den Namen und aus den Erzählungen der Alten zusammengeträumt haben, zerstört werden. Hier hat man bewußt Vergangenheit zu löschen versucht.”³³⁰

³²⁷ Ibid., 56-7.

³²⁸ Ibid., 61.

³²⁹ Ibid., 61.

³³⁰ Ibid., 113.

The seemingly irreconcilable images of home as well as the locally triggered memories and postmemories result in a lack of engagement with the Czech present as well as an overemphasis on the negative. "...[W]ir suchen Vergangenheit, aber wir finden nichts von alledem, was den mitgebrachten Bildern entsprechen könnte. Überall Grau, selbst dort, wo man neue Farben verwendet hat."³³¹ In the only academic article on Tielsch's *Zerstörung der Bilder*, Thomas Krause notes this tendency in the work to overemphasize the negative in the contemporary Czech place.³³² He also distinguishes between negative observations of the contemporary place that are grounded in evidence and those filtered by memory:

Erzähltechnisch steigen die negativen Erfahrungen proportional zur Zeit des Aufenthaltes in Böhmen und Mähren an, ein Hinweis darauf, dass sich die bitteren Erinnerungen als übermächtig erweisen. Die Bilder der Kindheit sind tatsächlich zerstört, doch ist hier zu unterscheiden zwischen denjenigen Reiseerfahrungen der Ich-Erzählerin, denen nachprüfbar und erfahrbare Beobachtungen zugrunde liegen (beispielsweise bei der Beschreibung schmutziger Industriereviere in Nordböhmen), und denjenigen, in denen der Schmerz über den Verlust der Heimat und die Rückschau in die Kindheit Wahrnehmungen so filtern, dass Vorstellung einer Überbewertung des Vergangenen und Unterbewertung des Jetzigen entsteht. Dabei fällt auf, dass diese Vorstellung in den letzten Kapiteln des Buches fast leitmotivisch wiederholt wird.³³³

In the end, Tielsch's nostalgic longing for the presence of the past turns out to be primarily a scopophilia for a cultural construction of Germanness. Quoting from Goethe's diary when he visited the region as proof of the beauty of the lost "cultural landscape," Tielsch argues, "Eine Kulturlandschaft wurde hier für alle Zeiten vernichtet, mit der Vertreibung der Menschen, die hier gelebt hatten, war sie dem Untergang geweiht.... In der Erinnerung der von hier Vertriebenen, die jetzt verstreut in allen Teilen Deutschlands leben, besteht das Egerland weiter

³³¹ Ibid., 102.

³³² Krause, "Die 'Andere Landschaft': Ilse Tielsch auf den Spuren der Kindheit," 115. Krause points out, "Gerade weil die Aufnahme dieser Bilder durch das einschneidende Erlebnis der Vertreibung besonders gesteuert werden, gelingt es Ilse Tielsch nicht, Strukturen kultureller Bezugssysteme zwischen Tschechen und Deutsche zu hinterfragen. So sieht sie in den Städten, die vor dem Zweiten Weltkrieg zwei- oder sogar mehrsprachig waren, fast ausschließlich Reste deutscher Kultur, vernachlässigt aber die tschechische oder jüdische. Andererseits werden 'exotische' Begegnungen notiert."

³³³ Ibid., 117.

als eine Landschaft, die es nicht mehr gibt.”³³⁴ Consequently, as one contemporary review points out, Tielsch finds “no bridge from yesterday into today, no bridge to the people that now live in Czechoslovakia.”³³⁵

Another review points out that what Tielsch ultimately seeks in the travel memoir is “the connection between past and present, which we call continuity.”³³⁶ In my argument, however, this is not continuity in the linear sense of teleological meaning but rather “wholeness” and connectedness with her past experiences. Indeed, what seems to be most bothersome to Tielsch is not the “tear” in her identity but the loss of connection that “Heimat” provides and particularly the loss of the Moravian “cultural landscape.”³³⁷ In *Zerstörung der Bilder*, Tielsch defines Heimat as a space both in reality as well as in memory and postmemory:

Heimat, das war im Grunde jener überschaubare, mit Schritten durchmessbare Raum, in dem das Leben mit allen seinen Schwierigkeiten und Freuden sich ereignete, in dem auch schon das Leben der Eltern und Großeltern, abgelaufen war... ihre Bilder sind uns geblieben, sie haben sich zu einer Art Traumbild verdichtet. Der Lebensbereich, den wir Heimat nannten, konnten in diesen Bildern unverändert beschworen werden. Jetzt, dieses Land bereisend, stellen wir Veränderungen fest, die Traumbilder stimmen nicht mehr, die alten Bilder decken sich nur noch in kleinen Teilstücken mit der Wirklichkeit.³³⁸

As Tielsch points out, the images of the “Heimat of memory” could be conjured at will but after their (partial) “destruction” through the images of the “Heimat transformed,” the last connection to the space of her childhood (i.e. the remembered Heimat) seems to be lost. However, just before the final page, Tielsch stumbles upon “Eine Wurzel, eine Spur, die in die Vergangenheit zurückführt, ich habe sie nicht absichtlich gesucht, ich bin durch einen Zufall

³³⁴ Tielsch, *Zerstörung der Bilder*, 120.

³³⁵ See “Rückkehr in verlorene Heimat” in *Wiener Zeitung*, 29 Nov 1991, pg. 15.

³³⁶ See *Voralberger Nachrichten Bregenz*. 22 Feb. 1992, pg. G5.

³³⁷ Quoting from Goethe’s diary when he visited the region as proof of the beauty of the lost “cultural landscape,” Tielsch then argues, “Eine Kulturlandschaft wurde hier für alle Zeiten vernichtet, mit der Vertreibung der Menschen, die hier gelebt hatten, war sie dem Untergang geweiht... In der Erinnerung der von hier Vertriebenen, die jetzt verstreut in allen Teilen Deutschlands leben, besteht das Egerland weiter als eine Landschaft, die es nicht mehr gibt.” Tielsch, *Zerstörung der Bilder*, 120.

³³⁸ *Ibid.*, 97-8.

hierhergekommen, jetzt halte ich fest, was ich sehe...”³³⁹ Like a Stolperstein, Tielsch stumbles upon the village where her great-grandfather met and married her Czech great-grandmother and ran his Gasthaus.³⁴⁰ For Tielsch, it is these threads connecting the past to the present that represent the best chance for the future of the Austrian-Czech relationship and that give her hope for the future of Europe. Indeed, the most often quoted excerpt from *Zerstörung der Bilder* by reviews in Austrian newspapers was this very point:

Das Wissen um Vergangenes kann belasten, so sehr es die Zusammenhänge erhellen kann. Sich vor den Belastungen zu drücken, indem man sich nicht um das Vergangene kümmert, ist eine Versuchung. Uns und unsere Kindern nützt nur ein Strich unter die Vergangenheit, und das auf beiden Seiten, schreibt eine in der CSRF lebende Deutsche in einem Leserbrief einer Zeitung, die man mir zugeschickt hat....Man kann, denke ich, diesen Strich nur ziehen, wenn man sich über das Vergangene kennt, wenn man sich über das Vergangene so gründlich wie möglich informiert hat, und dies auf beiden Seiten. Man darf über das Vergangene nicht hinwegsteigen, als wäre es nicht gewesen.³⁴¹

Tielsch highlights the importance of remembering and points out that while forgetting may seem to be a solution, it is in fact a risky temptation. Tielsch too searches for connections to the past on her trip, connections that she describes as “threads” that tie her to a past from which she was torn away by the experience of “flight and expulsion.” Indeed, in one of the memoir’s few reflections on the future and using this same metaphor of the thread, Tielsch argues that the future of the Austrian-Czech relationship depends on remembering, reconnecting and retying torn threads. “Geduld und Ehrlichkeit auf beiden Seiten werden notwendig sein, um die abgerissenen Fäden wieder zu knüpfen. Man wird sich auf die richtigen Knoten besinnen

³³⁹ Ibid., 163-4.

³⁴⁰ Ibid., 164-5. “Nein, ich hatte nicht daran gedacht, dass wir über Nemicce kommen würden, und es ist ja auch nicht wichtig, dass wir hierhergekommen sind. Das Gefühl, dass ich dennoch empfinde, hat mit dem eingangs erwähnten Riss zu tun, der mein Leben in ungleiche Teile teilt und mich von meiner Vergangenheit abgetrennt hat. In diesen kleinen Ort führt, wie nach dem südmährischen Dürnholz, einer der Fäden zurück, die mich trotzdem mit ihr verbinden.”

³⁴¹ Ibid., 124-5.

müssen, solche, die vielleicht halten. Sicher ist, dass es uns nicht weiterbringen kann, wenn wir die Vergangenheit ignorieren, als habe es sie nicht gegeben.”³⁴²

Despite the gesture of reciprocity in coming to terms with the past, Tielsch’s travelogue makes no mention of either Nazi perpetration against Czechs or Jews or ethnic German complicity but frequently references the tremendous loss for the cultural landscape of Czechia that the expulsion of the German speaking population represented. The work was certainly published at a moment of great geopolitical change and hope for the future, but all responsibility for change seems to be directed towards Czechoslovakia. Drawing on the metaphor of the “house of Europe,” Tielsch condescendingly argues that her former home is now desolate and located “deep in the basement.”³⁴³ Moreover, she presumptuously questions how Bohemia can make it to the top rooms of the house. Later, Tielsch argues that the time has come to realize the dream of the European house but still maintains her doubts (after her experiences visiting her former home) that she will see the work of the European project completed:

Es wird Zeit, dass die Bauarbeiten an dem Haus, von dem wir träumen, vorangetrieben werden. Die Kellerwohnungen sind zuzuschütten. Aber wenn ich mit offenen Augen durch dieses Land gehe, das einst mein Land gewesen ist, frage ich mich, ob die Hoffnungen darauf, dass dies in absehbarer Zeit wirklich gelingen könnte, zu Recht bestehen.³⁴⁴

Despite her expressed hope for a brighter future for her former home, when Tielsch sees how the remains of the past have been “deleted” she remains skeptical of even this possibility.³⁴⁵

³⁴² Ibid., 166.

³⁴³ Ibid., 82. “Böhmen jedenfalls, das habe ich mit meinen eigenen Augen gesehen, ist augenblicklich tief unten im Keller untergebracht, und dies auf der Schattenseite.”

³⁴⁴ Ibid., 88.

³⁴⁵ Ibid., 109. “Block an Block ragen diese furchtbaren Häuser, düstere Waben, ein bedrückender Anblick.” Ibid., 112. “Nein, es gibt keine Fahrten in der Vergangenheit mehr, was wir durchfahren ist Gegenwart, die Vergangenheit ist schon lange gelöscht. Vielleicht gibt es noch eine Zukunft für dieses Land. Aber wenn es sie geben sollte, wann kann sie beginnen?”

Ultimately, Tielsch's lopsided attention to memory prevents her from seeing and emotionally engaging with not only the present, but also the future of her former home.

V. The Second Generation: Karl-Markus Gauß

In 1954 Karl-Markus Gauß was born in Salzburg to a family of Danube Swabians as the first family member to be born in Austria. His parents and older siblings were from the Vojvodina region (today in Serbia) and arrived as stateless persons in Austria in the aftermath of the Second World War. It was not until shortly before Gauß' birth in Salzburg that they received Austrian citizenship.³⁴⁶ Gauß' father became a teacher for a local high school and worked both as an editor of a local "expellee" newspaper (*Vertriebenenzeitung*) and for a refugee relief organization.

Karl-Markus Gauß writes primarily as an essayist and public intellectual with regular columns not only in the Austria newspapers, *Die Presse* and *Salzburger Nachrichten* but also in the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, *Die Zeit*, *FAZ*, and the *Neue Züricher Zeitung*. He is the recipient of numerous prizes for his work, such as the Johann-Heinrich-Merck prize of the German Academy for Language and Literature and an honorary doctorate from the University of Salzburg for his literary work. He is perhaps best known for being the editor-in-chief of the prominent literary magazine, "Literatur und Kritik." In that role, he has placed particular emphasis on publishing literature of Central and Eastern European authors; and, in a similar manner, his own literary work can be understood as an effort to "excavate" and rehabilitate forgotten Central and Eastern European authors and "save" concepts such as "Mitteleuropa" from the revanchist right. Austrian

³⁴⁶ Gauß, Karl-Markus. *Das Erste, was ich sah*, 24. "ICH WAR DER EINZIGE GEBÜRTIGE ÖSTERREICHER der Familie. Die Eltern und Geschwister hatten jahrelang als Staatenlose in einer Barackensiedlung für Heimatvertriebene am Stadtrand gelebt. Die Staatsbürgerschaft erhielten sie erst, kurz bevor ich zu ihnen stieß."

Germanist Daniela Strigl argues that for Gauß, dealing with literature is a political process: “Von Anfang an versteht Gauß seine Beschäftigung mit Literatur als eine politische, ohne darüber das ästhetisch Besondere zu vernachlässigen. Die Germanistik....ist für ihn eine ‘archäologische Disziplin’, als solche wird sie zum Regulativ in einem fehlgesteuerten Prozess der Kanonisierung.”³⁴⁷

As a second-generation German-speaking refugee, Gauß has no personal memories of his family’s former home. Nonetheless, he describes being intimately familiar with postmemories of his family’s former Danube Swabian home. Even though not based on firsthand experience, I argue that postmemory still has implications for the refugee/expellee gaze, that is, for the way in which German-speaking refugees’ descendants see the family’s former home and whether they choose to look. In this sense, they are still driven by the same scopophilic and scopophobic impulses as the first generation.

In the case of Gauß, I argue that the scopophobic drive dominates his engagement with the familial past and can be read both in his avoidance of his familial home in the Batschka (despite his mother’s repeated pleas to visit) and in his refusal to travel there until after his mother’s passing. Nonetheless, the scopophilic drive manifests itself in his obsession with finding, visiting and giving voice to Eastern Europe’s various forgotten minorities. His search for the presence of Eastern Europe’s nonnational, multiethnic past is thus arguably a form of acting out the familial past and attempting to make it present through parallels.³⁴⁸

In the following section, I will examine the topos of “flight and expulsion” in three of Gauß’ travel memoirs: primarily in *Die versprengten Deutschen* (2005), but also in *Zwanzig Lewa oder tot: Vier Reisen* (2017) as well as, to a lesser extent, in *Die Donau hinab* (2009). In

³⁴⁷ Strigl, “Karl-Markus Gauß,” 3.

³⁴⁸ See Dutch historian Eelco Runia’s conceptualization of “presence” in history. See Runia, “Spots of Time.”

doing so, I consider Gauß' exploration of "flight and expulsion" to be a particularly indicative form of acting out the familial past. As such, I will begin by examining Gauß' narrative approach to the memory of "flight and expulsion" and investigate the manner in which Gauß "looks" at and portrays contemporary minority cultures in these travelogues.

A major component of Gauß' work that has been central to his archeological and rehabilitative goals has been his essays and travelogues based on his travels to the furthest-flung corners of Central and Eastern Europe. The focus of Gauß' travels is on minorities and the marginalized; for example, in *Die sterbenden Europäer* (2001), Gauß visited Sephardic Jews in Sarajevo, Sorbians in Germany, Poland and the Czech Republic, Gottscheers in Slovenia and Croatia, Albanians in Calabria and Aromanians in Macedonia. Similarly, in *Die Hundeesser von Svinia*, Gauß spends time among the poorest of the poor in Europe, a group of Roma in Eastern Slovakia that are so impoverished that they are hatefully called the "dog eaters" by other Roma. Gauß' travel reports and memoirs accomplish this "excavation work" while focusing on the literary and historical achievements of the region (and peoples) and "without falling into the journalistic trap" of reducing people to eternal victims by only showcasing their misery.³⁴⁹

One common thread in Gauß' work that has been seldom highlighted in reviews is his Danube Swabian heritage and – to an even lesser extent – his writings on the "flight and expulsion" of German-speaking refugees from Eastern Europe. His first major, book-length treatment of the topic came in 2005 with *Die versprengten Deutschen: unterwegs in Litauen, durch die Zips und am Schwarzen Meer*. As such, Gauß began to deal with the topic relatively late in his literary career (unlike Ilse Tielsch, who almost exclusively dealt with the topic throughout her career) and at around the same time that left-leaning scholars and authors such as

³⁴⁹ Strigl, "Karl-Markus Gauß," 6.

Günter Grass began to increasingly deal with the topic in Germany (e.g. *Im Krebsgang*, 2002). Yet, he did so in his own style and largely within the format of his travel reports. Given his previous work on minorities in Eastern Europe (and perhaps also because of his liberal political views), Gauß “was permitted,” according to Daniela Strigl, to write about the “scattered and disappearing Germans” of Eastern Europe without being decried as revanchist. “Als ein Akt literarischer Gerechtigkeit ermöglichte es ihm eine Fortsetzung [of *Die sterbenden Europäer* with *Die versprengten Deutschen*], die man einem anderen vielleicht als revanchistisch angekreidet hätte.”³⁵⁰

Die versprengten Deutschen is divided into three sections, each of which deals with trips taken to a particular region, i.e. Lithuania, Slovakia, and Ukraine. In the section dealing with the German minority in Lithuania entitled “Abschied in Heydekrug – Bei den zerstrittenen Deutschen Litauens,” Gauß visits what he describes as four different groups of Germans in Lithuania. As background to my analysis of Gauß’ narrative approach to “flight and expulsion” and the presence of the past, I briefly summarize his description of these four groups before moving on to my analysis in the next section.

The first group are called “Wolfskinder” and are children (now adults) that were born in East Prussia but were lost, abandoned or otherwise separated from their German parents during the “flight and expulsion” of the Germans from the region during the last days of the war. These children were then adopted by Lithuanian families and in many cases forgot their German heritage and native language, while others remembered or, like Luise Quietsch, were periodically “haunted by memories and images of a past that no one believed really existed and she herself was not entirely sure happened.”³⁵¹ The second group described by Gauß are the few hundred

³⁵⁰ Ibid., 6.

³⁵¹ Gauß, *Die versprengten Deutschen*, 20.

remaining “Lithuanian Germans,” who are descendants of medieval German colonists. Most of them were deported to Germany by Nazi Germany during the war (“Heim ins Reich”). Gauß describes most of the members of this group that he met as “not having forgotten that Hitler betrayed them for strategic reasons and tore them from their Heimat and are consequently immune to greater German illusions [gegen großdeutsche Illusionen gefeit] and thoroughly patriotic Lithuanians, embittered in an almost ethnic Anti-Communism that has morphed into a vehemently anti-Russian affect.”³⁵²

Consequently, the second group is described as having a predisposed dislike for the third group, i.e. the Russian Germans, who they view as Russians and not as Germans. These Russian Germans are the descendants of German colonists that settled in Russia following the invitation of Tsarina Catherine the Great in 1763, and who then, two hundred years later during the fall of the Soviet Union, moved as far westward as possible.³⁵³ The final (fourth) group are the people of the Klaipėda Region (“Memelländer”), who are described by Gauß as the only minority to maintain a form of regional identity. He describes this group as historically bilingual (Lithuanian and German) with a “kind of floating folk tradition” [eine Art schwebendes Volkstum] and nonexclusive identity politics. Gauß views this rediscovery of the “old, floating folk tradition between German and Lithuanian culture” as less of a reaction to globalization than as an attempt to “pick up a regional tradition, wherein the European future seems to lie.”³⁵⁴

This latter example is characteristic of a political dream that seems to run like a thread through Gauß’ Eastern European travel memoir. One goal of his travels seems to be to discover and highlight regions and minorities that defy nationalism and national categories of

³⁵² Ibid., 39.

³⁵³ Ibid., 39.

³⁵⁴ Ibid., 42.

identification. In a review of the book in the *Berliner Zeitung*, Mathias Schnitzler also points out this trend: “Dabei hat Gauß selbst einen Traum, der viele seine Bücher durchzieht, nämlich die Vorstellung, es könne Gruppen von Menschen geben, die sich der nationalen Identifizierung entziehen und zur nationalen Inbesitznahme nicht taugen.”³⁵⁵ In his historical introductions and overviews of the various regions and peoples he discusses, Gauß consistently points to nationalism as the enemy of diversity in multiethnic and multicultural areas. For example, when introducing the history of ethnic Germans in Spis, historically part of Upper Hungary (today Eastern Slovakia), Gauß makes this very argument against nationalism.³⁵⁶

Thus, when visiting the “Memelländer” or German minority of the Klaipėda Region, Gauß neither hides his political convictions nor his desire to discover the nonnational remnants of Eastern Europe, despite two centuries of nationalism and the ensuing divisions, deportations and expulsions of othered minorities. In his own words, Gauß maintains: “...und deswegen schien ihr gefährlich, was mir gerade anziehend erscheint: die Vorstellung, es könne Gruppen von Menschen geben, die sich der nationalen Identifizierung entziehen und die zur nationalen Inbesitznahme nicht taugen.”³⁵⁷

VI. Karl-Markus Gauß’ Approach to “Flight and Expulsion”

While both Ilse Tielsch und Karl-Markus Gauß’ trips to Eastern Europe were driven by a desire to find remnants of the past, their itineraries were steered by differing approaches.

³⁵⁵ Schnitzler, Mathias. *Berliner Zeitung*. 6 Apr 2006, pg. 31

³⁵⁶ Gauß, *Die versprengten Deutschen*, 92. He argues: “Dieser Vielfalt eine Ende zu bereiten, war das Ziel des ungarischen Nationalismus...dieser Kampf wurde nicht nur ökonomisch und bürokratisch geführt, sondern schnitt auch durch die Brust ungezählter Menschen, die sich entschieden sollten, was ihre Vorfahren als Entscheidung weder abverlangt worden war noch überhaupt verständlich gewesen wäre: sich nämlich national zu definieren in einem Raum, in dem ein jeder sich in verschiedenen Sprachen unterhalten konnte.”

³⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 68.

Tielsch's itinerary was determined by the scopophilic impulse of the refugee/expellee gaze to find remnants of her Heimat and personal past. Gauß' approach and travel route, on the other hand, was steered by literature and driven by his desire to find remnants of nonnational minorities. Multiple reviewers point to his recurring critique of nationalism and desire to find remnants of the multiethnic nonnational "schwebende Volkstum." For example, Richard Wagner wrote in the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* that, "Gauß gehört nicht zu den immer öfter auftretenden Verstehern. Er bringt sein westliches Rüstzeug eines linksliberalen Intellektuellen ausdrücklich mit. So schwärmt er von einem 'schwebenden Volkstum' das er im Grenzgebiet zwischen Deutschen und Litauern, vor allem in der Memelregion, historisch belegt weiss."³⁵⁸ Similarly, Dietmar Krug, writing in *Die Presse*, contends that Gauß "...continually describes the evidence of a 'schwebendes Volkstum' that existed in the pre-national era[;] ...the 'Schwebende' that Gauß so treasures also leaves its mark on his narrative style."³⁵⁹

Gauß' approach to finding remnants of the past also differs significantly from that of Ilse Tielsch in its primary focus on interviews and the stories of the minorities now living in Eastern Europe. Rather than material objects, the centerpiece of Gauß' travels are the people that he meets and the stories that they tell. In this manner, Gauß legitimizes the experiences of these nearly forgotten minorities. He empowers them and gives them a voice through his platform as a prominent Austrian author and literary critic.

Yet, in retelling the difficult lives and experiences of many of these embittered individuals, Gauß inevitably comes across problematic or even hateful viewpoints. As a result, the question arises how to properly represent these problematic viewpoints without

³⁵⁸ See Richard Wagner, "In den Karaoke-Kirchen: Karl-Markus Gauß sucht und findet 'Die versprengten Deutschen.'" *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*. 3 Sep. 2005, pg. 46.

³⁵⁹ See Dietmar Krug, "Was ein Wolfskind träumt." *Die Presse*. Wien. 22 Oct. 2005, pg. 9. Translation mine.

delegitimizing or undermining their perspectives and experiences. For example, after meeting with a “Wolfskind” in Lithuania, Gauß mentions to her that he has a meeting with the director of the Jewish Museum in Vilnius, the “House of Tolerance.” Gauß describes how the “Wolfskind” then reacts, embittered, saying that, “he [the director] will have beautiful things to tell” and then Gauß proceeds to directly represent her perspective by quoting it in the form of a long monologue.³⁶⁰ Gauß shows how the “Wolfskind” uses sarcasm to undermine the experience of Jewish victimhood in comparison to her own experience. Irena, the “Wolfskind”, argues that the Jewish director will say that, “...it is a tragedy, how poorly things are going for them. So poorly, that they get museum after museum and wherever they want a brand-new synagogue. So poorly, that presidents of every country first visit the Jewish museum...and their buildings are in the best condition...”³⁶¹ She further argues that she was denied her German citizenship as a Spätaussiedler because, according to the response that she received from the German Interior Minister, she already voluntarily emigrated from Germany to Lithuania (when she was a lost child or “Wolfskind”) but that every Lithuanian Jew who ever wanted to move to Germany gets German citizenship. According to Irena, Germany abandoned her but “...the next German president that comes to Vilnius will visit the Jewish synagogue and donate a bunch of money, but to us, in the local club chapter of “Wolfskinder,” it will just be too far. So, I won’t say anymore because it is dangerous to speak the truth, it is better to keep everything to oneself, I’ve already said too much.”³⁶²

Gauß’ response to this explosive monologue and the problem of representing such perspectives without fueling anti-Jewish resentment on the one hand and delegitimizing the

³⁶⁰ Gauß, *Die versprengten Deutschen*, 25. Translation mine.

³⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 26. Translation mine.

³⁶² *Ibid.*, 26. Translation mine.

experience and perspective of “Wolfskinder,” on the other, is to provide thorough contextualization. Contextualization is the second step of Gauß approach to representing flight, expulsion, and German victimhood and he does so on two levels. Firstly, he provides historical contextualization at the level of social and historical processes and secondly, he provides contextualization from below in that he interviews other minorities (such as Jews or Roma) and thus directly represents their perspectives as well. Through interviews of various minorities, Gauß offers multiple perspectives and juxtaposes them without privileging one over the other.

In the first step, Gauß acts preemptively by providing the larger historical context before introducing the “Wolfskinder” themselves, who then tell their own stories and relate their own perspectives. Gauß points out, for example, that while the “Wolfskinder” romanticize the few years that they lived in East Prussia and imagine them as fairytale-like places, these were in fact the very same years that German troops conquered Europe and National Socialism brought death to millions. Jumping back and forth between the macro and micro level, Gauß still maintains that for the “Wolfskinder” those years were the best years of their lives—and for some of them, the only good years. As a result, according to Gauß, they view the destruction of East Prussia and its separation from Germany in 1945 to be the cause of their misery. “Das Verbrechen war für sie nicht der faschistische Staat, der Europa mit Vernichtung überzog, sondern daß er, zu ihrem Unglück – und zum Glück der Menschheit – 1945 zerschlagen wurde.”³⁶³

³⁶³ See Gauß, *Die Versprengten Deutschen*, 19. “Diesen Wolfskindern erklären sich die wenigen Jahre, die sie in Ostpreußen gelebt haben, zur märchenhaften, an verwunschenen Orten verbrachten Vergangenheit; es waren die Jahre, da die deutschen Truppen Europa eroberten und der Nationalsozialismus Abermillionen Menschen den Tod brachten, aber es waren für die verlorenen Kinder Ostpreußens zugleich die besten Jahren, für manche die einzigen guten....Daß dieser Staat mit seiner ostpreußischen Provinz seit 1945 nicht mehr existiert, begreifen sie nachträglich als Ursache ihres Elends. Das Verbrechen war für sie nicht der faschistische Staat, der Europa mit Vernichtung überzog, sondern daß er, zu ihrem Unglück – und zum Glück der Menschheit – 1945 zerschlagen wurde.”

In this case, Gauß jumps back and forth between his understanding of the individual and social levels and thus synthesizes what I described as his typical two-step process of contextualization that draws on both a substantive knowledge of history and a variety of perspectives from interviewed individuals. Moreover, Gauß' own voice and perspective are also not entirely absent in his continual critique of nationalism and desire to find examples of a multiethnic, nonnational "schwebendes Volkstum." Returning to the case of Irena's angry and bitter monologue, Gauß does not spare the reader his perspective and, before juxtaposing her perspective with that of a Jewish museum director in the next chapter, first proceeds to portray his reading of her emotions. Gauß describes how he perceives her to walk away in a sudden and completely unexpected rage and how he would bear witness to several similar cases over the coming weeks, in which, "...a feeling of bitterness and disappointment would abruptly boil over in otherwise peaceful, friendly people..."³⁶⁴ Gauß' diagnosis of these individuals' sudden episodes of "desperate rage" is a lack of recognition of their victimhood and the injustice that they have suffered. He sees this desire for international recognition of the victimhood of the various minorities in Eastern Europe that all suffered injustices as having a competitive component and leading to a sort of battle over victimhood.

Es war die verzweifelte Wut all dieser Menschen, daß es ihnen nicht gelungen war, die Welt von ihrem Leid, von dem Unrecht, das sie erlitten hatten, in Kenntnis zu setzen und vor einer mächtigen Instanz, der Uno, der Europäischen Union, der Weltöffentlichkeit, der Geschichte selbst, als Opfer, als das wahre Opfer in der opfervollen Geschichte des 20. Jahrhunderts anerkannt zu werden.³⁶⁵

The second step that Gauß takes to contextualize flight, expulsion and German victimhood, is the juxtaposition of other minority perspectives from below. Indeed, after listening to the sad and bitter stories of the "Wolfskinder" who all seemed to think that they

³⁶⁴ Ibid., 26.

³⁶⁵ Ibid., 27.

above all “had to pay the bill” for Germany’s war crimes and were often jealous of the recognition of the suffering of other minorities, Gauß visits the Jewish museum in Vilnius and spoke with the director to gain his perspective. The director Emanuelis Zingeris’ responded, saying:

Dieses Land wird nie zur Ruhe kommen. Verstehen Sie, alle sind hier vollauf damit beschäftigt, die eigenen Wunden zu zählen. Niemand hat ein Interesse daran, die Vergangenheit wirklich aufzuarbeiten. Es gibt nur ganz wenige, die sich dieser Aufgabe stellen, die anderen manchen mit bei diesem litauischen Karussell: Wer hat mehr gelitten, wer hat größeren Ruhm als Opfer verdient? Was uns weiterhelfen könnte, wäre alleine die Wahrheit, also historische Arbeit, und dann die Bereitschaft der Leute, sich der historischen Wahrheit auch zu stellen.³⁶⁶

In a similar fashion to how he represented the viewpoint of Irena, Gauß then quotes a long monologue from Zingeris in which he presents his interpretation of the history of Lithuania in the twentieth century, while also sarcastically pointing out, how some Lithuanians allegedly accuse the Jews of being guilty for making the Lithuanians guilty (for helping to murder the Jews). According to Gauß, this was clearly not the first time that Zingeris had dealt with this topic, and he spoke visibly irritated and as if he had already explained this point to numerous museum visitors.³⁶⁷

In this manner, Gauß provides contextualization on both the individual level of various minorities as well as in larger historical facts and events. Gauß’ approach to searching for remnants of the past is largely based on the stories and perspectives of the various people and peoples that he meets but it also extends to visiting other material sites of memory such as cemeteries, museums and clubs. Unlike Ilse Tielsch, whose trip to her former home was steered by memory and who in turn looked through the filter of memory, Gauß’ trip to Lithuania, Slovakia and Ukraine is steered largely by scholarly literature. In fact, in the travelogue’s

³⁶⁶ Ibid., 30.

³⁶⁷ Ibid., 32.

afterword, Gauß makes clear which literature he draws upon. In the case of Lithuania, for example, he points to two German historians that have independently written important books on the Kleipedia region. “Ohne Kenntnis ihrer Bücher hätte ich mich nicht auf die Reise nach Litauen gemacht.”³⁶⁸

VII. Looking Past Familial Past: Karl-Markus Gauß and the Postmemorial Gaze

Whereas Ilse Tielsch’s return to her former home was very much a personal journey and a direct and difficult engagement with the memories of her past, Gauß’ travels to the “versprengten Deutschen” represents an indirect engagement with his own familial story of “flight and expulsion” from the Vojvodina. Gauß is not searching for remnants of a lost Heimat but for the remnants of a Central European alternative to nationalism, his beloved “schwebende Volkstum.” As a result, he not only looks at material objects but engages with the people living there – something that Tielsch’s memories prevent her from doing.

In *Die versprengten Deutschen*, Gauß’ engagement with his personal and familial past is explored only by implication. By indirectly drawing parallels to other German minorities living in isolated communities throughout Eastern Europe, Gauß explores his own Danube Swabian heritage. An example showing that Gauß also considered the Danube Swabians to be “versprengte Deutschen” can be found in an intertextual reference in Gauß’ *Die Donau hinab: Ein Donauausflug von A bis Z*.

The book is a collection of places of memory or “Erinnerungsorte” dealing with the Danube river, organized alphabetically but still in essay form. The travelogue is a mental map of sorts, a web of Gauß’ associations with the Danube. It is composed mostly of literary authors,

³⁶⁸ Ibid., 230.

historical figures and – to a large extent – familial memory. “D” stands, for example, for “Donauschwaben,” and “F” for “Futog,” the neighborhood in Novi Sad where Gauß mother grew up and that he visited in *Zwanzig Lewa oder tot*. Under the entry “Donauschwaben” Gauß writes: “...die Donauschwaben, die erst spät in der Geschichte auftauchen, bereits wieder aus dieser verschwunden sind. Dort, wo ihr historisches Siedlungsgebiet war, leben, *versprengt*, nur mehr wenige von ihnen; in Deutschland und Österreich wiederum, wo sich 1945 hunderttausende ansiedelten, sind deren Kinder und Kindeskinde längst in der Landesbevölkerung aufgegangen.”³⁶⁹ By extension, then, Gauß’ *Die versprengten Deutschen*, can be interpreted as an exploration of his familial past through parallels that seek to find other examples of a multiethnic, nonnational past.

Gauß notes his Danube Swabian heritage in many of his works and it clearly plays an important role in his life. But despite traveling all over Eastern Europe, visiting all sorts of forgotten minorities he never makes it to the Batschka until after his mother’s death. This avoidance of his family’s former home frustrates his mother but Gauß later explains that it was a “mysterious timidity” that prevented him from going.³⁷⁰ Specifically, Gauß points out how he held a sort of mental map and postmemorial Heimat within himself, concocted from the various stories he repeatedly heard as a child. “Eine rätselhafte Scheu hielt mich davon ab, der ich doch von der Geschichte dieser Region schon als Kind erzählt bekommen und die Namen der Dörfer und kleinen Städte, Kikinda und Palanka, Werschetz und Hodschag, Kubin und Filipowa, wie in einem Zauberspruch hersagen konnte.”³⁷¹ Consequently, one can gather that Gauß, despite being

³⁶⁹ Gauss and Thanhäuser, *Die Donau hinab*, 13.

³⁷⁰ In *Zwanzig Lewa oder tot*, Gauß makes note of his mother’s complaint: “Meine Mutter hatte es in ihren letzten Lebensjahren gekränkt, dass ich, der ich auf so viele Reisen ging und über Volksgruppen in Kalabrien und der Lausitz, in Litauen und Mazedonien schrieb, deren Namen kaum jemand kannte, ausgerechnet das Land meiner Vorfahren, die Batschka, nie aufgesucht hatte.” See *Zwanzig Lewa oder tot*, 76.

³⁷¹ Gauß, *Zwanzig Lewa oder tot*, 76.

of the second generation and never having been expelled himself, also suffers from fear of seeing and experiencing the “*Heimat transformed.*” I have described this phenomenon as the scopophobic component of the “refugee/expellee gaze,” which results in visceral emotional and psychological reactions during Tielsch’s return journey in *Zerstörung der Bilder*. Moreover, for some “expellees” (such as Tielsch’s parents), the scopophobia is so strong that it prevents them from ever returning to their former homes. Gauß attempts to explain his “mysterious timidity”:

Vielleicht war diese ferne Welt, die meine Eltern mit sich nach Österreich genommen hatten, in meiner Kindheit zu gegenwärtig gewesen, als dass ich mich dem Schock aussetzen wollte, den es gewiss bedeutet haben würde, wenn ich selbst in Augenschein genommen hätte, wovon mir so viele Anekdoten erzählt worden waren. Was ich von früh an als Bild in mir trug, wollte ich nicht ganz anders in der Wirklichkeit vorfinden.³⁷²

Here Gauß describes the mental map of his family’s former home in the Batschka that he received in the form of postmemories as an “image” that shaped his identity, particularly in childhood. But going to the Batschka and seeing a reality that does not match up and that in fact conflicts with his inherited postmemories – i.e. seeing the “Heimat transformed” – would be a psychologically difficult journey. As a result, it is not until his mother dies that the scopophobic component of the refugee/expellee gaze gives way to the scopophilic component and Gauß finally travels to his mother’s former home. Indeed, it is perhaps for this very reason that Gauß finally makes the trip, for the scopophilic component of the refugee/expellee gaze is, at least for Tielsch, about reconnecting with the past, experiencing the presence of “Heimat of memory,” and finding remnants and connections that lead back to it. By experiencing his mother’s home, whose image Gauß has carried within him since he was a child, Gauß is reconnecting with his mother.

³⁷² Ibid., 76.

Yet, Gauß' trip to the Batschka turns out to not result in a traumatic dealing with the "Heimat transformed" or a radically different reality than that which was described to Gauß as a child. In fact, Gauß is astounded to find everything exactly as his mother described. "Jetzt aber, vier Jahr nach ihrem Tod, stand ich in der Kirche von Futog, und alles war genau so, wie es mir meine Mutter erzählt und ich es mir 50 Jahre lang ausgemalt hatte."³⁷³

Still, Gauß' chapter dealing with the Batschka is just one of four chapters (or travel destinations) in his latest travel memoir, *Zwanzig Lewa oder tot*. Moreover, it hardly deals with "flight and expulsion," the former Danube Swabians that lived there or his family's history at all. Only the frame story of about four pages deals with Gauß' personal familial connection to the region; the rest of the chapter is about the Serbian author Aleksander Tisma as well as other local authors (Laszlo Vegel and Danilo Kis). In the *Passauer Neue Presse*, Andreas Wirthensohn writes in his review of the book:

Viel ist von der Donau die Rede, dem 'Fluss meiner Kindheit und aller Erzählungen.' Und die Reise zu den Donauschwaben in der serbischen Wojwodina ist vor allem ein Ausflug in die Heimat der Mutter. Das Seltsame dabei ist, dass Gauß ausgerechnet dieser Reisebericht am wenigsten gelungen ist. Er verharrt fast ängstlich in historischen Ausführungen und bei den Schriftstellern Aleksander Tisma und Danilo Kis, während die Mutter eigenartig fern und ungreifbar wirkt. 'Öffne die Augen und du wirst sehen: Hier bist du daheim.' Dieser Satz des kroatischen Dichters Slavko Mihali, der dem Buch vorangestellt ist, bleibt in Novi Sad und Umgebung unerfüllt, weil Gauß gerade hier, wo es vielleicht zu unmittelbar um das eigene Herkommen geht, seine Augen eher nach innen wendet.³⁷⁴

Rather than looking for traces of his mother's past and Danube Swabians, his engagement with his postmemorial Heimat seems to focus on its multiethnic and literary character. As Gauß has shown in *Die versprengten Deutschen*, contextualization is important, and interviewing other local minorities is an efficient way to reveal multiple perspectives. However, when his own

³⁷³ Ibid., 77.

³⁷⁴ Andreas Wirthensohn, *Passauer Neue Presse*. 8 Jun 2017, pg. 28.

personal story, or that of the Danube Swabians is largely absent, the contextualization appears to actually be an avoidance of a deeper engagement with his own family history.

Indeed, in *Zwanzig Lewa oder tot*, Gauß seems to be haunted by the ghost of his mother's past. In the frame story, he is standing in the Catholic church, where his mother went to church as a child. While doing so, he has a vision of his mother as a young girl in her First Communion dress. Perhaps constructed from stories he was told and maybe even a photograph, Gauß describes in great detail how he "sees" her walk down the aisle with a First Communion candle.³⁷⁵ In a way haunted by the ghost of his mother's past, Gauß' mother then proceeds to speak to him, telling him, "See, now you actually came here!"³⁷⁶

Perhaps it is his mother's haunting presence or the eerie congruence of his postmemorial Heimat and the present reality that inhibits further engagement with his personal connections to the Batschka. At the end of the frame story, his mother's ghost returns in her First Communion dress to smile at her son and feels confirmed in her conviction that "she knew better than me [Gauß], what was right for me." Gauß concludes his travelogue, saying that his mother's ghost, "fasste mir jäh die Gewissheit ans Herz, dass die Zeit, mich darüber zu ärgern, unwiderruflich dahin war."³⁷⁷ Whether this statement is foreshadowing further engagement with his family's past and the history of Danube Swabians or simply a light-hearted depiction of a mother-son relationship remains to be seen.

In the end, Gauß' short travel report about his family's former home and lost Heimat appears to be lacking in serious engagement with his personal past and his inherited postmemories. Rather than looking for familial traces or engaging with (post)memories, he meets

³⁷⁵ Gauß, *Zwanzig Lewa oder tot*, 75.

³⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 75. Translation mine.

³⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 101.

and talks with local authors and engages with literature and the region's various other non-German ethnicities.

In conclusion, Tielsch and Gauß' travelogues offer two diametrically opposed approaches in attending to the "presence" of the past. Despite their vastly contrasting experiences as members of different generations (the former having lived through the war, and the latter only born in the postwar era), the past affects what both authors see and decide to look for, and it does so arguably to the same extent. In that sense, generational difference does not seem to have a decisive effect. Indeed, I argue that both authors experience the "refugee/expellee gaze," albeit in contrasting ways. Tielsch is driven primarily by the scopophilic component and a search for Germanness. Gauß' pursuit of evidence of a nonnational past and avoidance of his family's former home could be interpreted as a manifestation of the scopophobic instinct and an understanding of Austrianness that is not defined directly by its opposition to Germanness,³⁷⁸ but that nonetheless offers an indirect contrast. This conception of Austrianness relies on excavating the enduring legacy of Eastern Europe's multiethnic Hapsburg past and reflecting on its relevance for the EU and the European present. While Tielsch's scopophilia drives her to focus on objects and images of the past, Gauß' scopophobia moves him to focus on people and the present. More balance between the two approaches would allow for a greater engagement with the presence of the familial past and the family's role (both in terms of culpability and victimhood) in the region and its history.

³⁷⁸ German-speaking refugees and expellees were othered as culpable and German in the immediate aftermath of the Second World War in Austria, while Austrianness was defined in oppositional victimhood to German culpability.

CONCLUSION

This dissertation maintains that the memory of German-speaking refugees has remained a marginalized discourse throughout Austria's postwar history. Drawing on Oliver Marchart's concept of historical-political memory, Chapter 1 points to four reasons why the memory of German-speaking refugees can be considered a "memory of dismissal" that threatened the existential conditions of the Second Republic.³⁷⁹ Through close readings of memorials, cultural practices, and literature, I have demonstrated the implications of this marginalization not only for the memory of German-speaking refugees but also for mainstream, hegemonic Austrian memory.

In terms of the implications for mainstream Austrian memory culture, Part I's analysis of regional and local memorials reveals that the German-speaking refugee discourse is most accepted within the context of religious nationalism (the Kreuzbergkirche Carinthian Regional Memorial) or Pan-German nationalism (the Deutsch-Untersteirer monument in Graz). In Chapter 1, I demonstrate the symbiosis of nationalism and Catholic narrative frameworks in devotional rituals such as the Stations of the Cross at the Klagenfurter Kreuzbergkirche and the Seven Sorrows of Mary at the Maria Taferl pilgrimage church (and Lower Austrian Regional Memorial). In this context, I argue for the integrative power of the trope of sacrifice (i.e. Christ's passion). In the homogeneously Catholic context of postwar Austria, Christ's passion serves as a victimhood narrative that brings together disparate and contradictory memories of victimhood,

³⁷⁹ These four reasons are outlined in the introduction. The first two explanations are interrelated and tied to domestic (1) foreign policy (2) considerations in Austria's unique Cold War context. The third reason is essentially the institutional implication of the first two reasons for German-speaking refugee political organization and ensured the continued tabooization of the memory beyond the Cold War. Finally, the fourth reason weighed the refugees' economic cost against their presumed economic value. This economics-based approach to the German-speaking refugee "problem" contributed to the building of an Austrian national myth that viewed the integration of (German-speaking) refugees as a success story.

including victims of Nazism, victims of the war against Nazism, and even German-speaking refugees. Rather than religious nationalism, it is pan-German nationalism at work in the keynote dedication speech of the Untersteirer “expellee” memorial at the Grazer castle in 1970, whereby the Untersteirer German-speaking refugees were welcomed to Graz not as fellow Austrians but as fellow Germans. In all other analyzed cases in Part I, however, the more visible the German-speaking refugee memorial was, the starker the public responses of defacement were. In this sense, the more local German-speaking refugee memorials analyzed in Chapter 2 represent Foucauldian heterotopias and thus an unwanted “deviancy” along Austria’s rural margins. These local German-speaking refugee memorials exist primarily in churches, in cemeteries, and along the border with Czechia.

Rather than memorials, Chapter 4 analyzes the reception of contemporary Austrian literature that deals with the memory of German-speaking refugees. This analysis also provides some insight into the acceptance of this discourse – at least on the level of the intellectual elites (i.e. literary critics and journalists). The unanimously positive reviews of Hanna Sukare’s prize-winning novel *Staubzunge* reveal how mainstream this novel’s approach to narrating the past (i.e. the co-responsibility thesis) is in today’s Austria. Unlike the other novels analyzed in Chapter 4 that did not investigate or thematize complicity, the reception of Sukare’s *Staubzunge* indicates that presenting German-speaking refugee victimhood within the context of Austrian complicity is the most mainstream way to narrate this memory. At the same time however, the lack of reviewers’ criticism of the unbalanced and uncritical presentation of “ethnic German” victimhood in some of the other novels indicates the continued acceptance of discourses of historical innocence and universalized victimhood.

Secondly and beyond the implications for mainstream Austrian memory culture of German-speaking refugee memory marginalization, this dissertation makes some observations and arguments regarding the nature of the German-speaking refugee memory itself. Part I focuses particularly on the processual aspects of culture through an analysis of the uses of German-speaking refugee memorials in, for example, liturgical ritual and pilgrimage. In this context, I argue that the past of postwar German-speaking refugees in Austria became inaccessible in both its temporal and spatial dimensions. Consequently, nostalgia for the presence of the past manifested itself along the Austrian section of the Iron Curtain as a series of watchtowers, replica shrines, and pilgrimage sites. Moreover, German-speaking refugees invoke the power of liturgical ritual at German-speaking refugee pilgrimage sites to bend space and time in order to visit the Heimat of memory. The liturgical climax of these “expellee” pilgrimages sacralizes vision through the “Blick in die Heimat”, rather than through the physical touching of a devotional object as is typical of Catholic pilgrimage shrines. Yet, the endurance of the “expellee” pilgrimage after the Cold War into the present suggests that these sites and these copies of devotional images have taken on lives of their own and have become, at least in some ways, more real than their original inspirations.

Similarly, Chapter 5 draws on insights from the iconic turn and from thinkers such as Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht to reconsider nostalgia as longing for the experiential presence of the past. In my analysis of travelogues by Ilse Tielsch and Karl-Markus Gauß, I develop my own concept of the “refugee/expellee gaze” to describe their unique way of looking at their (families’) former homes through the filter of memory. In my argument, the “refugee/expellee gaze” is motivated by dual drives that rely on the desire to see and the fear of looking, respectively. Consequently, I term these drives the scopophilic and scopophobic impulses. The

“refugee/expellee gaze” thus reveals one way that nostalgia affects not only what German-speaking refugees perceive, but also whether they even decide to look in the first place.

Finally, this dissertation shows how memory works in differing ways in the various media and cultural practices analyzed in Parts I and II. Thus, my dissertation emphasizes the importance of a “media of memory” approach to analyzing collective memory. Part I’s diachronic analysis demonstrates, for example, that memorials are far from the static, ossified representations of collective memory that they are often made out to be; on the contrary, they evolve dynamically and are, at least sometimes, responded to publicly as contested sites of memory (e.g. through defacement or debates in newspapers). Even regional memorials such as the Carinthian Regional Memorial Site at the Klagenfurter Kreuzbergkirche do not solely actualize memory collectively. Instead, they oscillate between collective and individual actualizations of memory, as in the case of the Kreuzbergkirche’s Stations of the Cross.

The regional memorials examined in Chapter 2 constitute more hegemonic representations of Austrian World War II memory than the more local German-speaking refugee memorials examined in Chapter 3. Consequently, Chapter 3 adopts a bottom-up, democratic approach to examining the memory of German-speaking refugees in Austria. The memorials examined in Chapter 3 were built, designed, and erected by German-speaking refugees themselves with minimal elite interference or curation. As such, they represent one of the most unfiltered media of memory. In contrast, the German-speaking refugee literature analyzed in Part II has already been curated by elites and the gatekeepers of memory, such as publishers and editors.

Nonetheless, literature also represents a particularly powerful medium in its ability to make history emotionally accessible (through the memory of others). Narrative’s power to make

the past present and negotiate new identities and subjectivities can foster understanding and empathy. On the other hand, the uncritically presented past can perpetuate hateful perspectives and lopsided views of history. Accordingly, the literary critic can play an important role as an advocate of ethical thinking. This argument is in line with Alison Landsberg's concept of prosthetic memory and the idea that each individual's reading experience is a negotiation between the memory presented in the novel and the individual's own experiences. According to Landsberg, mass media (including literature) promote the adoption of "prosthetic memories" through "transferential spaces", where people can enter experiential relationships with events through which they did not live and gain knowledge that would otherwise be difficult to obtain through mere cognitive means. The processual and sensually immersed knowledge gained via these "transferential spaces" is similar to Gumbrecht's nonhermeneutic "presence effects" which appeal directly to the senses as well as the emotional connection and reflective stance characteristic of Boym's concept of reflective nostalgia. Texts that exhibit these characteristics can thus play an outsized role in creating counterhegemonic public spheres that promote empathy and social responsibility, and that challenge normative conceptions of the past.

As I argue throughout this dissertation, the memory of "flight and expulsion" in Austria has been a particularly marginalized and politicized memory throughout the history of the Second Republic and thus been given relatively little attention by scholars or in published literature. This dissertation contends that it is time for these memories to be taken seriously and not be dismissed as uncritical or as otherwise problematic representations of the past. At the same time, the memories cannot be accepted as-is without placing them in their historical context. Thus, an analysis of the media of memory, their narrative strategies, and the role that memory plays in making the past present is timely and important.

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