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The Kreisky Era in Austria – Book Review

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German Studies Association

The Kreisky Era in Austria by Günter Bischof; Anton Pelinka; Oliver Rathkolb

Review by: Harry Ritter

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zuzuordnen. Haubl nutzt szenische Interviews und "szenisches Verstehen" als methodische Mittel, Hartmann stellt in seiner (Freudschen) "Gegenübertragungsanalyse" der Werbekritik seine persönliche Anzeigenrezeption und ihre Tiefenwirkung voran. Nichtüberraschend gehören die Literatur und die Bildsemiotik zu einem bevorzugten methodischen Instrumentarium. Im Anschluß an Peirce und Eco (H. V. Geppert, L. Vogt), hinsichtlich der "Rahmenanalyse" (A. Günther) und der Entzifferung der "Körpersprache" (C. Schmiedke-Rindt) an Erving Goffman und orientiert an den Theorien Baudrillards oder Barthes (A. Hirsland) exemplifizieren die Autoren mögliche Interpretations- und Erklärungsstrategien der jeweiligen Anzeigen—deren Themenpalette von Autos und Mode, über technische Geräte bis zu Möbeln, Zigaretten und Alkohol reicht.

Im Unterschied zu Auffassungen, welche die Werbeästhetik dem Bereich der Kunst zuordnen, beschränkt sich für die Hrsg. die Werbeanalyse nicht allein auf ästhetische und deskriptive Kriterien sondern unterliegt auch normativen und außerästhetischen, d.h. Ideologie- und moralkritischen Maßstäben. Diese Auffassung durchzieht leitmotivisch alle Beiträge, die durch ein—für Sammelbände ungewöhnlich—einheitliches Literatur-, Personen- und Sachverzeichnis gewissermaßen zusammengefaßt werden und die Lektüre und ihre wissenschaftliche "Verwertung" sehr vereinfachen.

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Günter Bischof, Anton Pelinka, and Oliver Rathkolb, eds. *The Kreisky Era in Austria (Contemporary Austrian Studies, 2)*. New Brunswick, N.J., and London: Transaction Publishers, 1994. Pp. 267. Paper \$30.00.

This group of essays is an effort to "suggest themes and a framework for the first solid scholarly assessment of [Bruno] Kreisky's life and times" (4). The volume is just a beginning, however, for (as the editors acknowledge) its focus is strongly on only one period of Kreisky's life and times, his chancellorship from 1970 to 1983. The collection includes (among others) chapters on "Kreisky and the Jews" by Herbert Pierre Secher, "The Foreign Policy of the Kreisky Era" by Otmar Höll, "Austro-Keynesianism Reconsidered" by Kurt W. Rothschild, and "Bruno Kreisky: Perspectives of Top Level U.S. Foreign Policy Decision Makers" by Oliver Rathkolb. Also included are a number of essays and book reviews dealing with contemporary Austrian history and politics but not directly related to Kreisky's career. The most interesting of these are a cluster of papers by Emil Brix, Franz Cede, Günter Nenning, and Josef Leidenfrost on the meaning of Austrian neutrality following the collapse of Soviet Communism (originally presented at the 1992 German Studies Association Conference in Minneapolis), and an excellent review essay by John Haag on recent historical studies of the Austrian Jews. Haag's

contribution supplies broader context for the thought-provoking essay by Secher on Kreisky's problematic relationship to his own Austro-Jewish heritage.

Generally speaking, the essays are useful and the book represents a successful first step toward the much larger task of charting the full meaning of Kreisky's career for modern Austria. There are, however, two notable omissions. First, there is no chapter which supplies a concise overview of Kreisky's life, from beginning to end. Instead there is a two-page appendix of biographical data regarding Kreisky, plus a theoretical article by Peter Malina on some of the problems of historical biography, with occasional reference to the particular case of Kreisky.

While Malina's piece is informative and suggestive, it is no substitute for the survey of Kreisky's life which should logically appear at the beginning of the anthology. A second oversight is the fact that there is very little mention of Kurt Waldheim in the book. Since World War II, two Austrian statesmen have gained world renown (or notoriety, as the case may be): Kreisky and Waldheim. After long years of preparation, both achieved global fame in the "Kreisky era," the 1970s and 1980s. Despite the fact that one spent World War II as a Jewish exile in Sweden and the other served as a German officer in the Balkans, their post-war ideas about Austria and world affairs seem to have been parallel in many ways. In all likelihood their careers cannot be fully understood without reference to one another. An essay on "Kreisky and Waldheim" would have been a welcome substitute for the rather forced comparison of Carinthia's Jörg Haider and Louisiana's David Duke, which does appear in the volume.

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Wolfgang Hardtwig and Heinrich August Winkler, eds. *Deutsche Entfremdung: Zum Befinden in Ost und West* (Beck'sche Reihe 1032). Munich: C. H. Beck, 1994. Pp. 164. Paper DM 19,80.

This is a collection of lectures delivered at Berlin's Humboldt University in the winter of 1992–93. The editors—well-known historians—have taken little effort to transform this series of lectures into a coherent volume. Apart from a perfunctory two page introduction, there is no attempt to draw parallels or to point out differences between the views of a rather motley group of authors. These are two writers having suffered persecution in the former GDR (Jürgen Fuchs and Helga Schubert), two journalists from the West (Peter Bender and Peter Merseburger), two members of parliament from the East (Wolfgang Thierse (SPD) and Rainer Eppelmann(CDU)), and a theologian and transient politician (Richard Schröder). Why these seven? I have no clue. Fuchs and Schubert offer their recollection of the past and their bitterness is apparent. Too many of those who have participated in the