

**Staging the German Nation:
Caroline Pichler's *Heinrich von Hohenstaufen*
and *Ferdinand II***

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Neben diesen großen Ereignissen von weltgeschichtlicher Wichtigkeit gingen denn auch die kleinen Angelegenheiten der einzelnen ihren stillen Gang fort und wirkten, von den großen bedingt und geleitet, auch auf die einzelnen verschiedentlich ein. Und so verdenke man es mir nicht, wenn ich unmittelbar nach jenen merkwürdigen Auftritten meiner selbst und meines Stückes, *Heinrich von Hohenstaufen*, das auf eine gewisse Weise nahe damit zusammenhing, erwähne.

(Pichler, *Denkwürdigkeiten* 2: 3)

On 27 October 1813, Caroline Pichler's drama *Heinrich von Hohenstaufen, König der Deutschen* premiered at the Hofburgtheater in Vienna. The first performance of the play, written earlier that year, commemorated the German victory over Napoleon at Leipzig 16–18 October 1813. A prologue, added specifically for the premiere and spoken by the famous actress Johanna Franul von Weissenthurn, celebrated the dramatic reversal of fortune of the "German" armies and hailed the achievement of Francis I with the deferential "Gott möge unsern Kaiser uns erhalten!" (*Heinrich von Hohenstaufen* 8). The play, which enjoyed twenty-seven performances between October 1813 and January 1814, captured the patriotic sentiments of the Viennese population, as Pichler recounted in her memoirs: "Und bei dem erhöhten Gefühl des Publikums wurde jede Stelle, die sich—und auch oft ohne meine Absicht—auf die Lage Deutschlands und seine Stellung gegen den gewaltigen Eroberer deuten ließ, mit lautem Beifall aufgenommen" (*Denkwürdigkeiten* 2: 5). Pichler later remembered that the play's depiction of a German king's valiant battle against an Italian-born emperor had struck a chord among the otherwise apolitical Viennese population.

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Caroline Pichler-Greiner (1769–1843) saw her fortune tied to the political fate of her native Austria. The Greiner family was closely allied to the Habsburg monarchy and belonged to the enlightened cultural elite in eighteenth-century Vienna.¹ Pichler's mother, a correspondent of Lavater and Leibniz, had been educated personally by Empress Maria Theresa and served at court as the empress's reader and secretary. Pichler's father, Franz Sales von Greiner, and her husband, Andreas Pichler, served as privy councillors at the same court. Swept up in the euphoria of Napoleon's defeat, Pichler, like many of her contemporaries, wondered what the future of Europe might look like, and *Heinrich von Hohenstaufen* was the first of a number of public ruminations in which she reflected on Austria's place in the territorial redistribution to come after Napoleon's fall.²

Deeply shaken by the repeated French occupation of Vienna in 1805 and again in 1809, Pichler hoped for a strong, unified "Teutschland" that could defend its citizens against future incursions by outside forces, and she was not alone in her call for a unified German-speaking nation-state. Appeals to "nation, national identity, and national duty" had begun to appear in the media as early as 1806, when the Holy Roman Empire ceased to exist (Häusler 226; Hagemann 31–32, 43), and Pichler, like many scholars and writers, turned to the past to investigate whether the German-speaking lands could, indeed, become united.³ However, within a short, three-year period, the author's thinking on nation and nationalism underwent a fundamental shift which mirrored the political opportunities and defeats of the time. In 1813, sensing that national sentiment was in favor of a unified German nation under Habsburg rule, Pichler advocated for such an idea in *Heinrich von Hohenstaufen*;⁴ by 1815 her last play, *Ferdinand II*, jettisoned the idea of German nationhood and focused rather on questions of the cohesion and political legitimacy of the Habsburg monarchy. By then Pichler had come to realize that the heterogeneous Habsburg monarchy was not willing to engage in nation-building—indeed, that the concept "nation" could jeopardize the very existence of the Habsburgs.

My reading of these two plays challenges earlier appraisals of Pichler as apolitical and complacent.⁵ *Heinrich von Hohenstaufen* and *Ferdinand II* reveal the extent to which the author was politicized by the French occupation and the Wars of Liberation, and how she contributed to the public discourse on nationalism from a specifically Austrian point of view. The official reactions to Pichler's plays confirm how political and timely they were: *Heinrich von Hohenstaufen* was staged with the explicit support of the monarchy in a time of war—indeed, the entire Habsburg court attended the staging of the play (*Denkwürdigkeiten* 2: 4)—while *Ferdinand II* did not even pass censorship in its original form. Before examining the evolution of Pichler's concept of "nation" and "nationalism," however, we must consider the rapidly evolving meaning of "nation," "ethnicity," "citizen," and, for that matter, "Austria" around her in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

German Nationalism in Transition

For much of the eighteenth century, “nation” indicated a geographic origin and not a nation-state (Walter-Klingenstein 166–67; Hagemann 29–30). Indeed, the two largest German-speaking states, Prussia and Austria, were multi-lingual, multi-ethnic agglomerations of land belonging to local dynasties (Blackbourn 20). In particular, the Habsburg monarchy was an entirely amorphous entity which included a dozen ethnic groups for which no unified name existed (Bodi 282, 445). This is reflected in the use of the term “Austrian” at the end of the eighteenth century: while “Austria” referred primarily to the geographic area of lower Austria and Vienna, the adjective “Austrian” designated what belonged to the Habsburg monarchy (Walter-Klingenstein 179). This changed during the Napoleonic occupation of Europe. Napoleon’s attempts at extending the French legal and administrative systems to the occupied territories created a consciousness of difference from France and similarity within the German linguistic group; nationalism, therefore, arose through resistance to Napoleon.⁶

While many of the dynastic powers in the German-speaking territories were only too happy to take advantage of these newly developed national sentiments when raising troops for the Battle of Leipzig (1813), nationalism mostly threatened their hold on power. This was particularly true for the territorial agglomeration belonging to the Habsburgs (Bodi 443, 445), yet like Prussia, the Habsburgs made skillful use of it as well. In 1809 Archduke Charles, crossing into Bavaria (allied with Napoleon), announced: “Unsere Sache ist die Sache Teutschlands. Mit Oesterreich war Teutschland selbständig und glücklich; nur durch Oesterreichs Beystand kann Teutschland wieder beydes werden” (quoted in Häusler 227). It is not surprising that after the Congress of Vienna (1814/15) appeals to “Teutschland” were again severely censored when they threatened the expansion and consolidation of the various monarchies.

Pichler’s use of “Vaterland,” “Heimat,” and “national” reflects the state of flux these terms were in, as well as her own changing ideas about their meaning (Jensen 257). Sometimes she used them interchangeably, as in *Heinrich von Hohenstaufen* and, many years later, in her essay “Über Vaterlandsliebe” (1838), where they referred to either Austria or an (imagined) German nation. At other times she distinguished between an Austrian “Vaterland” or “Heimat” and a German nation, as, for example, in *Ferdinand II*, which was written at a time when appeals to “nation” would no longer pass the censor. In order to speak of “nation,” many writers turned from present to past history; in her memoirs Pichler recalled, “Man suchte Halt und Trost in der Betrachtung der Vergangenheit” (*Denkwürdigkeiten* 1: 307). Historical research, therefore, acquired an entirely new and political meaning, and while contemporary political problems could not be addressed, political conflict in the dynasties of Hohenstaufen, Babenberg, and Habsburg could be used to illustrate the present.

Pichler, Cultural Nationalism, and History⁷

Pichler's contemporaries acknowledged widely that she was instrumental in the rediscovery of national history as the hostess, friend, and esteemed colleague of Lorenz Haschka (1749–1827), author of the Austrian national anthem, and historiographer Joseph Hormayr (1772–1848), often considered the father of Austrian historicism. Hormayr had begun visiting Pichler's salon in 1801, and their professional collaboration intensified in 1804 (*Denkwürdigkeiten* 1: 539–42, n. 406; Glossy 219–25) as Hormayr, who edited a number of journals devoted to historical subjects, came to depend on Pichler to provide him with articles, in particular about the history of women.⁸ His understanding of historiography inspired Pichler in her choice of material, and her dramatic rendering of historical material served to exemplify his theoretical demands for a national Austrian literature (*Denkwürdigkeiten* 1: 539–40). Dedicated to reclaiming Austria's illustrious history from anonymity, Hormayr saw his work as political and sought to create a sense of national identity and patriotism among his compatriots, believing that the best way to achieve this was by disseminating historical knowledge through literature and the arts. In a letter dated 28 December 1814, upon reading Pichler's *Ferdinand II*, Hormayr summarized what he saw as their successful collaboration:

Wie anders als mit Lust und mit Stolz kann ich darauf hinschauen, daß meine Ansichten, ja meine Worte einem solchen Kunstwerk manchen ergreifenden Zug und die echt nationale Richtung gaben. Gerne bescheide ich mich mit dem materiellen Verdienste des Orgeltreters an dem majestätisch dahinrauschenden Getön, obgleich Ihre allzu große Bescheidenheit und partheiische Freundschaft mir gern eine höhere Stelle vergönnen möchte. Ja das war mir eine meiner Lieblingsideen, die Anwendung der redenden und bildenden Kunst auf vaterländische Gegenstände, die Potenzierung des geschichtlich Wahren durch das Schöne. (quoted in Glossy 260)

Both Pichler and Hormayr saw themselves involved in a partisan project: to write national history from a decidedly Austrian and Catholic point of view.⁹

The preface to *Ferdinand II* encapsulates Pichler's theory of historiography. There she explained to her readers that traditionally history had been in the hands of Protestant writers who, living in countries where church censorship had been relaxed, had benefited from the free exchange of Enlightenment ideas. Not hampered by dogma and censorship like their Catholic colleagues, these Protestant scholars had had ample opportunity to pursue their scholarship, deepen their knowledge, and publish their ideas; therefore, their ideas dominated, and little historical research from a Catholic point of view was available. For example, Pichler found that Protestant interpretations of the Reformation were not chal-

lenged until 1809, when Austria's first history, written by Franz Kurz, an Austrian, was finally published.¹⁰ Pichler's aim in collaborating with historians Hormayr and Kurz was to help rectify this situation for her native land by writing history from a determinedly Austrian and Catholic point of view, thereby creating a specifically Austrian national canon.

Hormayr and Pichler, both concerned with creating a distinctive national identity among their fellow Austrians, saw theater as the perfect vehicle for realizing their political objectives.¹¹ Indeed, drama was so important for Hormayr that he tried his hand at writing historical plays—only to realize that he lacked dramatic talent (see Glossy 224). As his most talented ally, Pichler's dramatic efforts were instrumental in creating and popularizing national discourse among a broad segment of the Austrian population, and Hormayr was quite clear about Pichler's importance to the common project: "Sie [haben] zu dem großen Zwecke beigewirkt [...], die Kunst mit der Historie zu vermählen, die Kunst zu nationalisieren" (letter to Pichler dated 25 October 1815; quoted in Glossy 287).

In her plays *Heinrich von Hohenstaufen* and *Ferdinand II* Pichler chose two different historical periods to explore ideas of "nationhood": the Middle Ages and the Reformation. In both of these works territorial integrity and the political legitimacy of the ruler are at stake, just as they were during the years when she wrote them. The historical conflict between Henry, King of medieval Germany, and his father, Frederick II, Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire, reminded Pichler of Napoleon's attempts to centralize power in Europe. In her memoirs she recounted, "Ich entwarf den Plan zu meinem 'Heinrich von Hohenstaufen', in dessen Verschlingungen ich passenden Raum für vieles, was damals mich und Tausende mit mir bewegte, zu finden dachte" (*Denkwürdigkeiten* 1: 427). The same applies to *Ferdinand II*: "Mancher einzelne Zug," she wrote, "in den Umständen der Begebenheit sowohl als in des Kaisers Charackter erlaubte mir Anspielungen auf unsere damalige Zeit, wo auch Österreich aus großer Bedrängnis durch Gottes Fügung war gerettet worden und auf unsern Kaiser Franz" (2: 39). In her preface to the play, Pichler was even more explicit, stating that she had deliberately selected a moment in the history of the house of Habsburg when dynastic power was threatened. In her opinion the constitutional crisis facing her protagonist, Ferdinand—he was on the brink of being deposed from his ancestral lands in Bohemia, Hungary, and Moravia in 1619—mirrored the dangers the Habsburg monarchy faced in 1805 and 1809. The monarchy, Pichler claimed, was saved each time by the loyalty of the Viennese population:

Wem sind nicht die Jahre 1805 und 1809 lebhaft im Gedächtnisse, wo ein furchtbarer, und bis dahin stets siegreicher Feind einen großen Theil der Monarchie besetzt und die Hauptstadt erobert hatte? Aber in diesen drey Epochen kamen dem Muth und der Festigkeit der Fürsten überall liebende, treu ergebene Unterthanen entgegen; auf ihren Beystand konnte der Regent rechnen, und so wurde die Ge-

fahr des Vaterlandes zum rührenden Triumphe der Bürgertreue und Fürstenliebe. (*Ferdinand II* 7)

Pichler used the past to comment explicitly on the present.

During the stormy three-year period from 1813 to 1815, Pichler and Hormayr came to differ in one decisive area. Hormayr insisted that objectivity and historical accuracy were imperative for the historian while claims of truth had no place in either drama or literature. For him historical drama was bound solely by the laws of literary aesthetics. In 1813 Pichler's *Heinrich von Hohenstaufen* exemplified Hormayr's tenet: in order to evoke the similarities between Heinrich's struggle against the emperor and the allied struggle against Napoleon, Pichler took liberal poetic license with the historical data. The play unapologetically supports Henry's point of view and portrays the rebellion of the Hohenstaufen king, the elected leader of medieval Germany, as a just one. It focuses on Henry and his attempts to carve out a German nation from the larger empire, and denounces the centralizing strategies of the Holy Roman Emperor, who is compared to Napoleon. Pichler deliberately omitted, for example, that the factual Henry entered into a treacherous alliance with the Lombard League against the emperor, and that Henry died in prison many years after he lost the decisive battle against the emperor. In the play Henry sacrifices his life for the German cause rather than give up his dream of building a German nation.¹² Historical accuracy clearly was not important to Pichler when crafting *Heinrich von Hohenstaufen*.

However in *Ferdinand II* in 1815, Pichler departed significantly from her earlier casual use of historical data. Here she scrupulously documented every historical fact with extensive footnotes.¹³ In her preface she mentioned that the play was based on historical facts established in various distinguished sources, including Schiller's *Geschichte des 30jährigen Krieges*, Arndt's *Ansichten und Aussichten der deutschen Geschichte*, and Hormayr's *Plutarch*, and she also consulted primary sources made available in Kurz's *Beyträge zur Geschichte des Landes ob der Emms (Ferdinand II 13–18)*. Her own sole contribution to the material, she said, consisted of humanizing this despised Austrian ruler through psychological insight. In the preface she claimed, "Jede seiner Äußerungen bey nahe kann mit historischen Daten belegt werden, kein Zug ist erfunden, und in den Gemüthsarten der geschichtlichen Personen sowohl als in dem Gange der Handlungen nichts erdichtet, außer der ganz episodischen Liebe St. Hilaire's und Mariens" (20). She continued that only three characters were fictionalized: St. Hilaire, for whom no historical data was available, and two marginal characters who had no bearing on the political events in the play (22). The divergence from her earlier method of loosely sticking to the historical facts is certainly connected to the hostile political climate in which the play was written and to the play's explosive topic: a monarch's loss of power.

By insisting on historical “truth” in *Ferdinand II*, Pichler transgressed Hormayr’s call for separation between the disciplines of history and literature, fact and fiction. In the preface she even went so far as to insist that ideological manipulation is present in all writing of history—that all historical writers, whether they write historical fiction or historiography, emphasize historical data to fit their ideological purposes and are thus biased in their selection and presentation of historical material; accordingly, she used the words “Schriftsteller” and “Geschichtsschreiber” interchangeably:

Selbst bey dem besten Willen [...], und dem aufrichtigsten Streben nach Unpartheylichkeit müssen jene gewaltigen Einwirkungen, denen kein menschliches Herz widerstehen kann, den Geist des Schriftstellers doch einigermaßen bestimmen, [...] so wenig als ein katholischer und Österreicherischer Geschichtsschreiber über die Reformation völlig partheylos wird schreiben können. [...] Und die Wahrheit dürfte dann für den aufrichtigen Forscher in der Mitte liegen. (12–13)

The historical truth, Pichler concluded, must ultimately be left to the interpretation of the reader.

This fundamental shift in Pichler’s use of historical data—on the one hand claiming that *Ferdinand II* was historically accurate, on the other insisting on the inherently ideological nature of all historiography—was certainly a response to the changed political landscape in 1815. While under attack by Napoleon, the Habsburgs had welcomed calls to national unity, even references to “Teutschland” under Habsburg rule, in order to defeat the French, but by 1814, when Pichler was writing *Ferdinand II*, the suppression of national sentiment had begun. Hormayr, who had been incarcerated by Metternich for his involvement with the Tyrolean liberation movement, clearly analyzed the political backlash in a letter to Pichler on 28 December 1814:

Überall möchten wohl die jetzt von Norwegen bis Sizilien aufstrebenden Ideen von konstitutionellen, repräsentativen Gouvernements, gemäßigter Preßfreiheit, Responsabilität der Minister bessern Eingang finden als bei uns [in Austria], vielmehr einen Triumph des Obskurantismus bewirken, wie in den Jakobinerzeiten. [...] Das Gottesgericht von 1812 bis 1814, theilweise unendlich groß und erhaben, zerbröckelt sich gleichwohl in den Resultaten gar sehr. (Glossy 262–63)¹⁴

After reading Pichler’s play, Hormayr was quite convinced that it would not see staging (Glossy 265–66). According to him difficulties included “das Wiederaufwecken des bereits eingeschlummerten Religionshasses, des Sektengeistes, die auch noch so leise Berührung gewisser Thronzwise, ständiger Rechte,

der Geist des Aufruhrs, vorzüglich das in der That etwas starke ‘Ferdinande, non subscribes?’ möchten vielleicht nicht unbekannte, wenn auch noch so grundlose, Apprehensionen erwecken” (Glossy 266). References to a German-speaking Austrian nation were no longer welcome, and reminding the Habsburgs that they were in power by the grace of their loyal Viennese population could be construed as criticism of the regime. By adhering strictly to historical facts, Pichler may have been attempting to insulate herself against charges of inciting rebellion. Furthermore, in this climate of increasing fear and oppression the extensive preface to *Ferdinand II* acquired additional meaning: Pichler’s elaborate calls for caution when reading historiography alerted readers to the manipulation she believed inherent in all political and historical writing.¹⁵

Changes in Pichler’s Understanding of “Nation”

Between the writing of the two plays under discussion, Pichler’s understanding of “nation” similarly underwent considerable reinterpretation, which is most clearly seen in her stance toward the role of language in a quest for national unity. In 1813, with the endorsement of the ruling house of Habsburg, Pichler defined the German nation as a linguistic community that encompassed those lands where German was spoken.¹⁶ Austria was thus perceived as part of a medieval German nation that was repeatedly under Habsburg stewardship. Pichler expressed her definition of such a German nation in her *Denkwürdigkeiten*: “Dahmals [1806] galten wir auch für Deutsche, eine Benennung, die man uns früher und auch jetzt wieder in so mancher Beziehung vom Norden und Westen aus nicht immer zugestehen will” (1: 425–26).

In *Heinrich von Hohenstaufen* this linguistic community is juxtaposed to the Italian-speaking administrative elite of the Holy Roman Empire, yet the nascent German nation Henry seeks to create is fragmented, weak, and marred by conflict. While the political actions of the Holy Roman Emperor threaten the territorial integrity of the emerging German nation, the play identifies a lack of German harmony as the true cause of the German disintegration. Henry laments, “Als Deutsche nicht mehr treu zu Deutschen steh’n, / Und nur nach eig’nem engen Vortheil dürsten, / Parteyung sehe ich, Haß und inn’re Kriege” (60). The play is a plea for Henry to create a strong, centrally administered nation that severely curbs the privileges of the German princes, hence demanding sacrifices from the petty rulers of the various German principalities for the good of the larger German nation.¹⁷ Rudolph of Habsburg, Henry’s page and ancestor of Francis I, is the mouthpiece of this idea:

Was soll das ew’ge Schrey’n nach Deutscher Freyheit,
Ihr eifrig Wachen über jedes Recht?
Der Deutsche soll nicht frey seyn und frey bleiben;
Nur sie soll ihres Königs Wille nicht
Anhalten können zu geschwornen Pflicht,

Und hemmen ihres Übermuthes Treiben.
 Das ist die Freyheit, die sie heiß verlangen,
 Und das Verderben unsers Vaterlandes! (17)

In this play the shaping of the outer boundaries is determined by inner cohesion, and inner cohesion is achieved by cultural means.

In 1815 the scrupulously researched *Ferdinand II* abandoned the idea of German nationhood and dealt exclusively with questions of cohesion and political legitimacy in the Habsburg monarchy, reflecting the changed political realities at the time. In the complicated negotiations at the Congress of Vienna, the Habsburg monarchy decided to concentrate on its large land holdings in the east and move its power base from southern Germany to northern Italy.¹⁸ In the future, Austria's influence on the other German-speaking countries would be diplomatic, and Prussia emerged as the pre-eminent German military power (Blackbourn 92). Pichler no longer attempted to conjure a German nation modeled on a medieval German federation, but focused rather on the threatened disintegration of the Habsburg monarchy.

At the center of the play is the rebellion of Hungary, Bohemia, and Moravia against Ferdinand. The German language, such an important bond for the German nation in Pichler's previous play, still has an important role in *Ferdinand II* as the native language of Austria. King Ferdinand lives in Vienna, speaks German, and has a special bond with the Viennese population. Yet the German nation is invoked only in passing in the prediction that Ferdinand will be voted Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire in the future, which will tie his ancestral lands to a larger German entity. With this play Pichler effectively fulfilled Hormayr's call for a specifically Austrian national literature, for she was no longer concerned with an imaginary German nation, but solely with Austria. This change is signified by a lexical shift: "nation" has been replaced by "fatherland," "Germany" by "Austria" (*Ferdinand II* 3). Pichler had sanitized her play of all mention of "Teutschland"; while the larger Habsburg Empire was at stake, Pichler had turned her attention to Austria, and more specifically to Vienna, for which she demanded a special place in the larger heterogeneous unit.

Reception and Political Content

The political nature of these two plays is illuminated by the very different official responses they elicited: only *Heinrich von Hohenstaufen* enjoyed public success. According to Pichler this was entirely due to timing. The play was selected to celebrate the victorious battle of Leipzig and rode on the nation's wartime euphoria and patriotic sentiment; its prologue and last act unabashedly celebrated Austrian military superiority, the house of Habsburg, and its emperor, Francis I. While many critics later alleged that it had been written exclusively for the victory celebrations, Pichler insisted that she had spent most of 1813 writing the play (*Denkwürdigkeiten* 2: 6–7), which seems credible since a close

analysis shows that the last act and the prologue must have been written after the victory of Kulm, replacing, as they do, the image of a fractured and weak German union with an illustration of how a German nation ruled by Francis I might come into existence (“Überblick” 38).¹⁹

In sharp contrast, despite the patronage of Josef Schreyvogel and Pichler’s personal appeal to Metternich, *Ferdinand II* never saw the stage in its original version. It was produced in 1816 in Graz under the innocuous title *Wankelmuth und Vertrauen* and later in Vienna as the much changed *Christian, König von Dänemark*, but Pichler distanced herself emphatically from this mutilated version of her play (*Denkwürdigkeiten* 2: 52–53, 445–47). Censorship extended even to the printed version of *Ferdinand II*²⁰ and to Pichler’s memoir. Hormayr, who had published an announcement of the play, was forced to review it unfavorably and wrote apologetically to Pichler, “Sie können sich wohl denken, da Sie mich so lange Jahre kennen, daß ich am Schluß der Anzeige Ihres herrlichen Ferdinand nicht würde des Teufels Advokat geworden seyn, wenn ich eine andere Wahl gehabt hätte, als entweder dieses zu thun oder aber die ganze Anzeige unterdrückt zu sehen” (Glossy 297). After this experience Pichler decided not to write drama again despite Hormayr’s pleas to the contrary. Likewise, while discussion of *Ferdinand II* spans several letters in the Pichler/Hormayr correspondence, Pichler kept the incident to a terse two pages in her memoirs, published more than thirty years later. Even then the censor expunged all reference to the ban on *Ferdinand II*. A letter signed by Metternich stated, “Freilich wäre es noch besser, wenn die umständliche Erzählung des Faktums, von dem hier die Rede ist, ganz unterbliebe und der Umstand, daß die Aufführung des Stückes Ferdinand II. auf der Hofbühne nicht gestattet wurde, nur in Kürze und mit Weglassung aller verletzenden Details bezeichnet werden sollte” (*Denkwürdigkeiten* 1: xlvii–xlviii). Obviously Pichler’s historiographical work was politically explosive.

The Familial, the National, and the Political

In general Pichler’s writing is not considered political and critics focus on the personal conflict depicted, undoubtedly due to the gendered norms at work when evaluating women’s writing. Often such texts are read through the lens of domestic fiction;²¹ however, closer examination of the familial vignettes in Pichler’s plays reveals that these are used to encapsulate her political thrust; for example, while the last act and the prologue of *Heinrich von Hohenstaufen* are entirely positive, the intervening four acts give voice to Pichler’s concern that a German nation might not come into existence owing to the German princes’ dynastic concerns. In the deeply feudal—i.e., pre-national—world of *Heinrich von Hohenstaufen*, the public and the familial could not be separated, and the personal outweighed the political. Heinrich and Frederick are not just Holy Roman Emperor and vassal, but also father and son; Heinrich and Frederick the Warlike are not just allies in a common struggle against central power, but also brothers-

in-law. The intimate dissonances so prominent in Pichler's play should not be viewed as the inability of the female author to depict matters of the state, but as Pichler's analysis of the problems facing a potential German nation.²²

Personal conflict dominates the play's every action. Henry defines himself politically as king of the German nation in the first act of the play but eventually replaces his political identity with a familial one. He loses the deciding battle with his father when he shows himself unable to commit parricide. Precisely Henry's inability to distinguish between the political and the familial precipitates his fall and the victory of the Holy Roman Emperor, who sacrifices his intimate feelings to political expediency. But Henry is not the only character who thinks of politics in terms of a family affair. The collaboration between Henry and his brother-in-law Frederick the Warlike hinges entirely on the stability of Henry's marriage, not on Frederick's commitment to an imagined German nation. Henry's refusal to validate an illicit affair of Frederick's with a young bourgeois woman leads to Frederick's decision to change allegiances, showing him to be committed less to the idea of a German nation than to his own individual desires, and so the business of the state is subsumed under the personal politics of its ruler.

The close intersection of the political with the familial is of course crucial to a system of hereditary monarchy. Family alliances are also political alliances. In contrast, political nationalism, the project on which Henry and Frederick the Warlike attempt to embark, extricates the individual from the religio-dynastic order and seeks to establish a legal-rational state based on equal citizenship rights (Hutchinson 8). Obviously Pichler was not able to think in terms of individual citizenship rights, but the implications of building a German nation are apparent in the play. Religio-dynastic relations would have to be subordinated to political expediency. For this reason the play's first four acts are dystopian in nature. Only the appended fifth act and the prologue create the fiction of a miraculous German nation that will be led by the Habsburg rulers; however, nothing in the play's Hohenstaufen core indicates the possibility of uniting the diverse German states under Habsburg rule. Indeed, young Rudolf, the Habsburg representative in the play, has no specified role in the struggle.

In her memoirs Pichler claimed that *Heinrich von Hohenstaufen* failed as a play, and she attributed this failure to a lack of dramatic talent shared by all women (*Denkwürdigkeiten* 2: 33). Although her claims to modesty and lack of talent must be evaluated with an eye to the self-censure at work,²³ the centrifugal forces active in the play form an interesting tension. Despite its stated intent, it cannot portray Austria as the dominating force in creating a German nation because of the dynastic nature of the Habsburg monarchy, nor can the play view a German nation in political terms. In the end, Henry's failure to unite the German states into a cohesive body does not lie in his inability to rouse the various German princes for the *idea* of a German nation—indeed, he succeeds in rallying an army against the emperor. Rather, the feudal structures Henry avows do not al-

low for the separation of the political from the familial, of the state from its ruling families. No direct relationship of the individual to the state can be created.

The political nature of *Ferdinand II* is immediately apparent in its preface, where Pichler stated that she purposely chose a moment in history,

in welchem es sich um nichts Geringeres als um die Erhaltung oder den Sturz des regierenden Hauses, um die Erhaltung oder den Sturz der herrschenden Religion, um die Zerstückelung oder Integrität des Österreichischen Staates, um unsre ganze Existenz und Bedeutung in dem Europäischen Staatenverein, und somit in der Weltgeschichte handelte. (6)

The “Austrian state” mentioned here is not one united by homogeneous populations, but rather an empire troubled by religious and ethnic conflict. Overall, the play chronicles the collision of two mutually exclusive political systems. Under the older dynastic system the ruler’s legitimacy is derived from divinity, not from populations, who are viewed as subjects, not citizens (Anderson 19), while the rebellions of three ethnic provinces against a “foreign” ruler hint at the nationalist movements to come in the nineteenth century. The play indicates that these ethnic groups no longer viewed Ferdinand as their legitimate leader owing to his intrinsic “otherness”: he was Catholic, not Protestant; he spoke German, not their national languages; and he lived in Vienna. What legitimized Ferdinand as the ruler of “Austria” delegitimized him as the ruler of Hungary, Bohemia, and Moravia. Thereby nationhood entered this last play through the back door, so to speak. While the disintegration of the empire is forestalled owing to the loyalty of the Viennese population and the bravery of one man, St. Hilaire, the play cannot show a reconciliation of the various ethnic groups or the rebels’ acceptance of the monarch. Rather, it ends with a reference to Ferdinand’s subsequent election as Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire, a hopelessly outmoded entity that no longer existed by 1815, nor was to be reinstated.

While Pichler remained a life-long supporter of the Habsburg monarchy, her play gives voice to the clashing of old and new ideas. Unlike the rebellious provinces, St. Hilaire and the Viennese population undoubtedly favor Habsburg rule, but Ferdinand’s predicament allows for a rebalancing of power. At the precise moment when things look bleakest, one of the characters offers to save Ferdinand and brushes aside as unfeasible the monarch’s dependence on royal Bavarian troops (104). In fact, the Bavarian forces of Ferdinand’s brother-in-law do not reach Vienna in time to defend the embattled ruler, and the successful defense of ruler and city is left to its general population. In the end St. Hilaire and the Viennese are the true heroes of the play. The success and survival of the Habsburg monarchy is therefore made contingent on the loyalty and sacrifice of its population, a marked negation of the “automatic legitimacy of sacral monarchy” (Anderson 21). The play thereby reflected the general mood of 1813/14,

when it was hoped that the reorganization of society would codify an alliance by consensus of citizens and ruler. In Pichler's view "nation" and "fatherland" had to be created through cooperation between the ruling family and those ruled.²⁴

The implications of the play are clear: Pichler was effectively saying that her Austrian fatherland was rescued through the direct intervention of its citizens and not through traditional aristocratic means such as treaties, marriages, or imperial armies. *Ferdinand II* indicates that this contribution changes the relationship of the population to the state and the ruler who embodies it. Thereby "nation," a term Pichler so carefully avoided in the play, made its return, but what emerged as a "nation" was Austria. That entity, united by language, custom, and religion, and represented by a broadly supported ruler, appeared as the only union where political consensus was possible. The play warned acting Emperor Francis I of the dangers inherent in the dynastic-political model, where dynastic claims win out over the national sentiment of ethnic populations.

In these two plays, Pichler's particular skill—portraying personal relationships—was used effectively to address political issues such as the legitimacy of authority, popular representation, and national identity. Pichler charged that in the German-speaking lands dynastic concerns of the rulers won out over national ones to the detriment of the population. While Henry fails in establishing a German nation for his subjects owing to his dynastic loyalties and his inability to view himself as solely tethered to a German nation, Ferdinand must learn that in the future he would do better to rely on the loyalty of his indigenous population, the Viennese. Both plays reveal that national populations in the nineteenth century had become a force to reckon with. While deeply loyal to the Habsburgs, this Austrian author claimed that a system of government based on the ancien régime would not protect her native Austria against future invasion and ethnic strife.

Conclusion

Using historiography, especially historical research on Austria proper, Caroline Pichler inserted herself into the popular discourse on nationalism and nation-building. The two plays under discussion here trace her journey from advocating for a German-speaking nation under Habsburg auspices to a realization of the inherent instability of the Habsburg agglomeration of lands, showing that in the aftermath of the Napoleonic occupation and the Wars of Liberation, the citizenry was gaining an entirely new understanding of political and territorial formations and their role within these. As a matter of fact, the meaning of "state" had changed: subjects now viewed themselves as citizens of distinctive political and national units (Hagemann 33), as did Pichler.

Historiography and its popularity in the nineteenth century point to another important point regarding female writers: while women's access to the public sphere and the outside world in general was restricted, historical research, carefully undertaken in the privacy of their homes, allowed Pichler and others to

delve into topics of a political nature that were otherwise off limits to them. By using historical events, historical time, and historical places in their fiction, women writers could explore topics taboo in their own time. Thus Pichler was able to write about a successful battle against Napoleon and the missed political chances at the Congress of Vienna. The newly available historical records copiously quoted in *Ferdinand II* expanded the horizons of both the writer and her readers to include political matters previously closed to them.

Pichler's training in domestic fiction and her focus on interpersonal relationships contributed to her insight into the dynastic political system as one based on such relationships. The plays under discussion here reveal that without formal academic training, women writers in the early nineteenth century were able to absorb and represent political trends in the air.

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NOTES

I am grateful to the anonymous readers of my original manuscript for their helpful comments. My thanks also go to Peter McIsaac and Sarang Joshi, who graciously read earlier versions of this paper. Their thoughtful comments and questions greatly contributed to this work. All errors are of course mine.

1. Pichler grew up surrounded by famous intellectuals, among them Georg Forster, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Antonio Salieri, Franz Joseph Haydn, and Lorenz Haschka, and published her first poem at age twelve. The talented Caroline was given a careful and extensive education, and her home became a cultural center in Vienna. It was generally understood that a visit to that city was not complete without a visit to Pichler—indeed, she and St. Stephan's Cathedral were considered cultural landmarks there (Glossy 219). Yet by her death in 1843 she was largely forgotten as a writer, and today she is mostly remembered for her salon and her memoir, *Denkwürdigkeiten aus meinem Leben*.

2. The older Pichler wrote in her memoirs that the years between 1812 and 1815 were the most productive of her career (*Denkwürdigkeiten* 2: 29). During that time she wrote eight dramatic works: *Germanicus* (1812), *Heinrich von Hohenstaufen* (1813), *Das befreite Deutschland* (1813), *Mathilde* (1814), *Rudolf von Habsburg* (1814), *Wiedersehen* (1815), *Amalie von Mannsfeld* (1815), and *Ferdinand II* (1815). Pichler herself considered *Heinrich von Hohenstaufen* and *Ferdinand II* her most important plays.

3. Karen Hagemann argues that the unified German nation desired by many of Pichler's contemporaries was not centrally organized and hierarchically administered like, for example, the French nation; rather, they hoped for a federa-

tion of German states under royal guardianship (29). Pichler credited the efforts of Romantic critics such as Friedrich and August Wilhelm Schlegel and the nascent nationalist movements in the various European countries for inspiration and leadership (*Denkwürdigkeiten* 1: 306–07, 331). Meanwhile, attempts at creating unity and a national identity were undertaken in Prussia by Baron vom Stein and his followers, and artists and intellectuals were invited to help shape this new mentality (see Johnston).

4. The same is true for her cantata, *Das befreite Deutschland* (1813), commissioned by rich patron Johannes Trost and set to music by Ludwig Spohr (*Denkwürdigkeiten* 2: 417), which presented its audience with contemporary history in allegorical form. The first act depicts the German acquiescence to French rule in 1812/13, while the second portrays a mythical union of all members of the German population to defeat the French army.

5. In much of traditional scholarship, Pichler is perceived as uncritical, unreflected, and unpolitical. For Burkhard Bittrich and Waltraud Heindl she exemplifies the conservative Austrian civil servant class par excellence: Bittrich suggests that Pichler's nationalism can be explained simply by reference to Austria, its Habsburg rulers, and the country's national religion, Catholicism (167), while Heindl views her as primarily concerned about the domestic sphere (197, 204). Recently scholars have begun to address Pichler's use of historiography for the construction of an Austrian national identity (Garrard 1996; Gilleir 2002); however, her use of the stage for political purposes and her many essays addressing current events have not been systematically examined.

6. Recently scholars have begun to argue that nationalist thought in fact did not originate solely in the resistance to Napoleon, but that questions of nationhood were discussed as early as the 1500s. New for the nineteenth century was the yoking of nationalism to the "Volk" (see Hagemann 56).

7. Within Pichler's extensive body of work, investigations of the past are consistent topics after 1808; indeed, her novel *Agathokles*, written in 1808 as a response to English historian Eduard Gibbons, helped make the historical novel popular in the German-speaking world (Mühlberger/Habitzel 9).

8. Between 1807 and 1813 Hormayr edited the *Österreichischer Plutarch*, and he founded the *Archiv für Geographie, Historie, Staats- und Kriegskunst* in 1810 and the *Taschenbuch für die vaterländische Geschichte* in 1811. He was particularly keen on Pichler writing about the lives and achievements of historical women for his *Archiv* and prodded her repeatedly to contribute articles about historical topics important to female readers (Glossy 242).

9. Their approach might be labeled "cultural nationalism," which seeks the moral regeneration of a community at times of crisis by creating the myth of a glorious past (see Hutchinson). Owing to the supposed apolitical nature of cultural nationalism, women may be part of the nationalist movement despite their prescribed place in the domestic sphere; indeed, as hostesses of and participants in the semi-public sphere of the salon, where political ideas fermented in the

early nineteenth century, women like Caroline Pichler and Rahel von Varnhagen among many others played a significant role in shaping an imagined nation.

10. Pichler wrote, “Die Beyträge zur Geschichte des Landes Österreich ob der Enns von dem verdienstvollen Geschichtsforscher und Chorherrn des Stiftes St. Florian, Herrn Kurz, entwickeln eine Menge bisher unbekannter—oder übersehener Motive, welche die Handlungsweise Rudolph des Zweyten, Mathias, und Ferdinand des Zweyten bestimmen mußten” (*Ferdinand II* 13). She is referring to Kurz.

11. Theater in Vienna enjoyed wide popularity among a population that was considered ill-educated and loath to read (Glossy 218). As writers and censors knew, theatrical performances were open to all who paid admission and, therefore, could influence people of all classes (Yates 25). For this reason theater was considered particularly dangerous and was restricted through strict censorship laws everywhere. A memorandum written by the Vienna censor Franz Karl Hägelin outlined the dangers of theater as follows: “Der Eindruck des [Theaterstücks auf der Bühne] ist unendlich stärker als jener des [gedruckten Dramas], weil das erstere Augen und Ohren beschäftigt und sogar in den Willen des Zuschauers treten soll, um die beabsichtigte Gemüthsbewegung hervorzubringen, welche die bloße *Lecture* nicht leistet. Die Bücherzensur kann Lesebücher restringiren und folglich solche nur einer gewissen Gattung von Lesern gestatten, da hingegen das Schauspielhaus dem ganzen Publikum offen stehet, das aus Menschen von jeder Klasse, von jedem Stande und von jedem Alter besteht” (“Memorandum setting out ground rules for censorship in Hungary [1795], incorporating principles effective in Vienna,” *Jahrbuch der Grillparzer-Gesellschaft* 7 [1897]: 298–340 [excerpt from pp. 301–01]; quoted in Yates, 25, 246–47).

12. Pichler’s strategy was similar in her cantata. Contrary to fact, *Das befreite Deutschland* describes the Wars of Liberation as a popular uprising against an overpowering enemy and conveniently elides the fact that the French armies had been decimated in their campaign in Russia. Similarly, the cantata remained silent about internal German divisions and political disagreements.

13. Compare Hagemann’s description of this phenomenon for Prussia and the southern German states (43–44).

14. Hormayr was under house arrest in Brünn and was not given permission to return to Vienna until 1816. Because Metternich deeply mistrusted him, he could not continue his career as a historiographer, and in 1828, deeply disappointed and embittered, he followed a call to Munich to serve the Bavarian king (Glossy 226–34).

15. In her approach Pichler may be viewed as an early representative of the type of history Leopold von Ranke would advocate later in the century. Presenting history “wie es eigentlich gewesen” became a powerful antidote to the lies and political manipulation to which the German population was subjected (see Ranke, and also Rüsen 48, 101).

16. This can best be seen in her cantata. As in the earlier *Heinrich von Hohenstaufen*, *Das befreite Deutschland* defines the German nation as bound by the German language: “Wo deutsche Sprache klingt, da sey / Das deutsche Volk auch ewig frey!” (261). The cantata mentions only in passing that this linguistic German nation consisted of different political units. Indeed, danger to the German nation emanated not so much from the French imperial army as from Napoleon’s attempts to make French the lingua franca in Europe. Moreover, the cantata echoed popular sentiment in assigning blame for Germany’s disastrous situation not to dynastic politics and inferior military skills, but to the incursion of foreign customs, foreign fashion, and foreign language.

17. Reinhard Rürup writes that, indeed, contemporaries counted on the monarchs as allies in the struggle against the old order and the inherited privileges of the church, the aristocracy, and the guilds (3).

18. Anderson (quoting Oscar Jaszi) gives a useful overview of the Habsburg monarch’s titlature: “Emperor of Austria; King of Hungary, of Bohemia, of Dalmatia, Croatia, Slavonia, Galicia, Lodomeria, and Illyria; King of Jerusalem, etc.; Archduke of Austria [sic]; Grand Duke of Tuscany and Cracow; Duke of Loth[a]ringia, of Salzburg, Styria, Carinthia, Carniola, and Bukovina; Grand Duke of Transylvania, Margrave of Moravia; Duke of Upper and lower Silesia, of Modena, Parma, Piacenza, and Guastella, of Ausschwitz and Sator, of Teschen, Friaul, Ragusa, and Zara; Princely Count of Habsburg and Tyrol, of Kyburg, Görz, and Gradiska; Duke of Trient and Brizen; Margrave of Upper and Lower Lausitz and in Istria; Count of Hohenembs, Feldkirch, Bregenz, Sonenberg, etc.; Lord of Trieste, of Cattaro, and above the Windisch Mark; Great Voyvod of the Voyvodina, Servia ...etc.” (20).

19. *Das befreite Deutschland* did not fare so well. The cantata was staged only in Thuringia in 1815 and came to Vienna in 1819, where it was performed among a small circle of music lovers.

20. Often dramatic texts circulated in their unpublished form, or, if they were published in other German states, were read and performed at home among friends. The extensive footnoting of *Ferdinand II* points to the fact that Pichler expected the drama to be read rather than staged. I am grateful to Peter McIsaac for pointing out this aspect of Pichler’s writing to me.

21. Barbara Becker-Cantarino, for example, finds, “[Pichler’s] concept of history was a non-tragical, sentimental one; she understood history as a shift between human relationships and conflict. These conflicts became the center of her dramas, rather than actual political or historical events; in any case, after 1815 censorship would not have allowed plays with political implications to be performed” (427). Contemporary critics seem to support Becker-Cantarino’s view. The prominence given to the personal rather than the political in *Heinrich von Hohenstaufen*, for example, was noticed and criticized by the reviewers. A review in *Der Sammler* condemned the depiction of Frederick the Warlike’s illicit affair with a bourgeois woman as unsavory, and another critic thought the sub-

plot surrounding Henry's marriage unnecessary (*Denkwürdigkeiten* 2:415–16, n. 15).

22. The euphoric ending of *Das befreite Deutschland*—the united German effort succeeds in driving the French forces across the Rhine River and pursuing them to Paris—cannot hide Pichler's political concern about a German future. On the one hand she worried about future German territorial integrity and exhorted Swedish, Russian, and English dynasties not to lay claim to German territory as had happened during the Reformation (255). European freedom, she maintained, was symbolized by Germany's territorial freedom (257). Such demands for territorial integrity were, of course, anathema to the intermarried European aristocracy and its understanding of land as personal property. On the other hand, Pichler also questioned Germany's inner cohesion for successful statehood. The cantata denounced the dynastic political system of the past and exhorted the rulers to loyalty and honesty: "Die Menschheit selber ist veredelt, / Der Eigensucht, der kleinen, engen Staatskunst / Verbrauchte Schlacken fallen von uns ab: / Ein heilig Band der Treu und Redlichkeit / Verknüpft die Fürsten, und die Völker lernen, / Daß Menschlichkeit und Tugend an ihr Ziel / Weit sich'rer und weit rühmlicher gelangt" (263). Again, the question of how these goals were to be accomplished was left open.

23. For a long time she believed that her memoirs would never be published, but when her daughter's financial needs became more pressing, Pichler reworked her autobiography substantially so that it might pass censorship. Subsequently, she destroyed many of the original letters and diaries (Blümml Ivi–lvii). Susanne Kord calls the *Denkwürdigkeiten* a "fictional Auto/Biography," and Antonie Alm-Lequeux questions whether the memoirs should be viewed as a "Selbstbekenntnis" at all.

24. The same is true for *Das befreite Deutschland*, where the loosely defined "German nation" is saved by its population.

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