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### Ruth Klüger, Ruth Beckermann and Jewish “Counter-Memory” in Austria

This presentation suggests that until the 1980s, there was no sustained counter-voice to Austria’s national memory of victimization in regard to WW II and the Holocaust. Since then, several female authors and filmmakers of Austrian-Jewish descent have questioned and complicated this national memory considerably. I focus in particular on the work of Ruth Beckermann, postwar author and filmmaker, daughter of Holocaust survivors (and her works Unzugehörig: Österreicher und Juden nach 1945, Die Papierene Brücke, Jenseits des Krieges ), and Ruth Klüger, a Holocaust survivor of Austrian descent who survived several concentration camps before emigrating to the U.S. after the war, only to “return” to in the form of her groundbreaking German-language memoir weiter leben: Eine Jugend in 1992.

While of different generations, and speaking from different locations, I will show that these two authors’ works have much in common and can be seen as representing a collective voice that combines a critical female outsider’s perspective, resulting in the articulation of an important “counter-memory.” This kind of memory serves as an important corrective on Austria’s national war memory that excludes both Austrian culpability, and a Jewish perspective, and allows for a gendered perspective only when it deals with non-Jewish “gentile” victims.