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Aimé Knepper's *Enrôlé de force* and Luxembourg's *Mischkultur*

Although its tiny size makes it easy to dismiss as a quaint curiosity, the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg is the home to culture whose mixedness is unique in Europe. Aimé Knepper's 1984 memoir *Enrôlé de force: Déserteur de la Wehrmacht* is an important literary exemplar of what Luxembourgers call "Mischkultur," or mixed culture. This is a term that is typically used to discuss the country's education system, which gradually moves from instruction in

Luxembourgish (in early childhood), then to standard German (in primary and early secondary), and then into French (throughout secondary). This linguistic mixture is the subject of a rich scholarly literature in educational studies. But it is also a useful way of understanding Luxembourgish culture as a whole, very much including its literature. Knepper's *Enrôlé de force* is an important example for that literary tradition because it is written in French (something that is itself relatively unusual in the country's literature) but it has as its subject the degree to which the occupying Nazis considered the inhabitants to be basically German, something that the locals resisted in every way that they could. Although the Luxembourgish language seemed to provide a sense of distinctiveness, the fact is that it is a Germanic dialect, one that is not exactly mutually comprehensible with standard German but is not also so distant from it. French, on the other hand, being as thoroughly a part of Luxembourgers' culture as it has long been, allowed them to manifest a substantial linguistic difference from those occupiers and thus give the lie to the sense that they were just another part of the great German race that was finally being unified under the Reich. *Enrôlé de force*, a memoir of a young man's conscription into the German army and the long road he took to sneak his way out of it, is thus an important exemplar of this influence of Mischkultur on the evolution of Luxembourgish identity. The European ideal of "In varietate concordia" is nowhere more visible than in the Grand Duchy, and Knepper's memoir, although it is clearly a minor work in terms of aesthetic complexity, warrants a central place in discussions of this key *problématique* in post-WWII European culture.