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Patterns in creativity : an examination of Viennese culture and politics at the turn of the century

Allen Nolan Hauser
Portland State University

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An Abstract Of The Thesis Of Allen Nolan Hauser for the
Master of Arts in History presented January 8, 1988.

Title: Patterns in Creativity: An Examination of Viennese
Culture and Politics at the Turn of the Century.

APPROVED BY MEMBERS OF THE THESIS COMMITTEE:

Michael Reardon, Chairman

Louis Elteto

Jon Mandaville

Franklin West

This examination explores the Viennese cultural milieu at the turn of the century in an effort to show the commonality of backgrounds and interests among those who created the culture during that period. In this the study aims at illustrating the similarities among those artists, intellectuals, and politicians in spite of the fact that their ideas helped lay the basis for the breakdown in

integration of twentieth century culture which was illustrated by Carl E. Schorske in his Fin-De-Siecle Vienna: Politics and Culture. All this is in pursuance of the overall issue of the origin of the ideas which have dominated this century, an issue dealt with only tangentially in this study.

In order to carry out these aims and in order to make the study comprehensible for those uninitiated in the study of the Habsburg Monarchy or its intellectuals, this examination focuses heavily on describing the setting of Vienna in the late nineteenth century and introducing those who are the focus of this examination. After a lengthy presentation of background material, this study examines the common themes which were of creative importance in Vienna at the turn of century. This examination concludes with an analysis of the common backgrounds of these individuals and why they were inspired to act as they did. This section also deals with the broader issue of the effect of their ideas during the twentieth century, though only in the broadest of terms.

This then is the nature of this thesis which aims to show that there existed a commonality of interests among those involved in the creation of culture in Vienna at the turn of the century and that their ideas, though well-intentioned, have been used in this century to foster programs which are in many respects antithetical to the original intent of the Viennese intellectuals.

PATTERNS IN CREATIVITY
An Examination of
Viennese Culture and Politics at the Turn of the Century

by
ALLEN NOLAN HAUSER

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

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in
HISTORY

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TO THE OFFICE OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH:

The members of the Committee approve the thesis of
Allen Nolan Hauser presented January 8, 1988.

Michael Reardon, Chairman

Louis Elteto

Jon Mandaville

Franklin West

APPROVED:

Bernard V. Burke, Chair, Department of History

Bernard Ross, Vice Provost for Graduate Studies

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PROLOGUE

We live in a time period when an increasingly large percentage of the populace, especially within the United States but quite probably in much of the rest of the world, knows virtually nothing about politics, government, science, literature, history, philosophy, and so on. One repeatedly hears of studies which show that most Americans do not even know which states constitute the United States, much less understand the functioning of our governmental system, whether in practice or in theory. When pressed, most people in this country will reveal that they do not truly understand what is meant by such basic terms as democracy, communism, or fascism. We live in an age which is ostensibly ruled by science and technology, yet very few, in positions of power or otherwise, understand the workings of either. At the present, virtually all human life could be eliminated in a matter of a few score minutes, yet hardly anyone understands the how behind the workings of nuclear weapons and their transport devices or the why behind the ideological situation which makes their usage a possibility. This is a dangerous situation.

The world as we now know it is ruled by science and technology, yet it is also ruled by ideology. What makes our present condition frightening is that it is also ruled through ignorance. Too many people do not care how things

work, merely that they do. In the same fashion they do not seem to care how they came to think the way they do or why, but simply believe that they know what is right and true. Maybe we can survive our ignorance, perhaps we can not. At least we ought to try to understand how we came to be in such a situation and, it is just possible, such an understanding might help us to avert what could be impending catastrophe.

This does not sound much like history, but it is. Scholarly works are supposed to be detached, but why? Of course everyone in the world of scholarship realizes that detachment provides a more objective treatment of whatever subject is being examined, yet we also all realize, I believe, that everything done by man is ultimately subjective and can not be otherwise. That is, at least the essence of, what Ernst Mach tried to show through his examinations. While this may all sound like word games, it was Ludwig Wittgenstein who showed that words were themselves flawed by subjectivity, that they have no objective existence. Therefore language itself is a medium which makes true detachment something of an impossibility. All this aside, what use is history if we can not use it to learn something about ourselves.

One might ask where this is all leading, and so they should--that more than anything else is what should be explained before any human act. I am setting out to examine

one small piece of the much larger puzzle of how the world of the present has gotten to where it currently is. In endeavoring to do so I have chosen to examine what was going on in terms of ideas in Europe during the last turn of the century. I have chosen to examine this period because it was during this time that many of the ideas and ideologies which have dominated this century first were openly exposed to the light of day. This is not to say that they did not originate at an earlier time, most of them did, yet around the turn of the century they became openly and often widely accepted. What am I talking about? I am referring to things like fascism, communism, and modern democracy. I speak of the birth of our modern culture. It is of course impossible for me, or probably any other one person, to fully comprehend the events and developments of this period. I have as a result chosen to examine one small fragment, unique and yet in many respects hopefully representative of the whole.

In his work, Fin-De-Siecle Vienna: Politics and Culture, Carl Schorske set out to investigate the origins of our own century's a-historical culture and in doing so chose Vienna at the turn of the century as the subject of his investigation. He felt that Vienna, with all its great intellectual innovators, provided one with the perfect setting in which to examine the breaking away from historical traditions among creative individuals, since that

was in many respects the essence of Viennese innovation during that particular time period. Throughout his work, which is in fact a number of related essays, Schorske paints a picture of the increasingly a-historical nature of Viennese creative culture. His work is enthralling and it appears that Schorske himself, having proclaimed to have had no particular training or expertise as a historian of the Habsburg Empire, found his subject matter compellingly fascinating for reasons other than his originally stated purpose for examining Vienna. It is this fascinating quality of Viennese creative thought at the turn of the century, built on the forward-looking, highly interrelated nature of Viennese creative culture at the time, which perhaps more than anything else has made Schorske's work both widely known and highly influential and has made the study of Viennese culture at the turn of the century increasingly popular among individuals in practically every area of intellectual endeavor. As in the case of many others, Schorske's work has inspired my own research.

After having read Schorske's work and after having visited Vienna, I too have been compelled by a fascination with the city which has repeatedly drawn my intellectual interest back to it. When trying to decide upon the specifics of my thesis topic, somehow my thoughts once again gravitated towards Vienna and its creative culture at the turn of the century. As a result, I decided that my thesis

would focus on two aspects of Viennese creative culture at the turn of the century which I felt warranted further examination: the setting in which the culture was created and some of the motivating factors behind the innovation which was taking place. Whereas Schorske and others had focused on what was being created and how it led towards our own late twentieth century culture, I decided that it was equally as important to investigate the motivational origins of turn of the century culture as well as the broadly-based themes in creativity which inspired such activity. Moreover, I concluded that it was just as important to emphasize the areas of conformity within what was taking place creatively as it was to emphasize the areas of contention. With these broad goals in mind, I set out to explore what I could of the material available locally on Viennese culture and the individuals who created it.

What I discovered, as far as material for my thesis was concerned, was at the same time encouraging and disheartening. While I found an ample number of monographs in the Portland State University library on most of the individuals whom I had initially chosen to examine, as well as extensive presentations of their own works, I also discovered that the amount of material available was prohibitively large for the amount of time I had available if I were to deal with everyone I had originally intended to examine. Consequently, individuals such as Ernst Mach,

Ludwig Wittgenstein, Hugo von Hofmannsthal, Koloman Moser, and Josef Maria Olbrich, as well as many others, had to be virtually ignored because I simply did not have enough time available in writing a Masters thesis to adequately assimilate the works of these individuals. To a certain extent the same holds true for individuals like Sigmund Freud and Arthur Schnitzler who, though included in my presentation, were by no means examined as completely as I might have wished and as they undoubtedly deserve. Since this is in many respects a very preliminary study into the field I plan to make my life's work, one must bear with what is my still extremely limited knowledge of the vast expanse of my chosen subject area.

While I found that my own knowledge of the subject I had chosen to examine was severely limited as I made my search for materials, I also discovered that, as far as the PSU facilities were concerned, there existed a dearth of materials which were principally historical in nature or which examined the Viennese cultural milieu as an integrated whole. This meant that the materials which would have been the most useful in making this particular study were virtually unavailable to me. Although this was rather disappointing, I was consoled by the fact that this also probably meant that the topic I had chosen to examine had not already been over-done by other researchers, at least not in this country. As a result I was unable to rely

heavily upon the interpretations of others in writing this thesis and was forced instead to make my own analysis of the situation. Though to a certain extent this was exciting, I still would have preferred to have felt some of the surety which comes from using someone else's evaluations, especially when I had to deal with topics such as the correspondence between architecture and painting--a subject with which I am not entirely familiar.

There were, in spite of all the limitations in the material I was able to obtain locally, a number of works which aided me in the development of my ideas concerning the correspondence between the various areas of creativity. One such work was William J. McGrath's Dionysian Art and Populist Politics in Austria. The value of this work to my own study was that it illustrated the close intellectual relationship between the founder of the Social Democratic Party, Viktor Adler, and the conductor-director of the Vienna Opera, the composer Gustav Mahler. More importantly on a thematic level, McGrath's work emphasized to me the importance of Nietzsche, especially in his early writings, on the ideological development of Viennese creative culture. By using the basis set by McGrath, I was able to extend my own investigation into the works of others and find similar relationships to the one he stressed between Mahler and Adler. As a result of his work, as well as a subsequent dipping into the writings of Nietzsche, I was

able to discover a basic impetus towards the creation of a unified culture for the modern world within the works of those I examined for this study.

Aside from the writings of McGrath and Schorske, there were a number of other works which I found useful in examining the patterns of Viennese creativity. One of these was Edward Timms' work Karl Kraus, Apocalyptic Satirist: Culture and Catastrophe in Habsburg Vienna. In this work, aside from examining Karl Kraus, Timms' explored, to a certain extent, the highly interrelated nature of the Viennese cultural milieu at this particular time period--a study I found very useful is setting the basis for further investigation. Another such work was The Man Without Qualities by Robert Musil. While I had intended to examine Musil as part of my investigation, I was surprised to discover how insightful this particular work was concerning the factors which shaped Viennese culture as well as in providing an understanding of what the creators of Viennese culture were trying to accomplish through their works. More than perhaps anything else, my discovery of the writings of Robert Musil were the most intellectual stimulating find of my examination and one which is deserving of further research.

Perhaps most important of all the works I examined in presenting me with the necessary information to gain a basic understanding of the Viennese intellectual milieu was

William M. Johnston's The Austrian Mind: An Intellectual and Social History, 1848-1938. This work, by illustrating a large number of the intellectual trends within the Habsburg Monarchy, helped to guide my own thinking in many respects. I also found Johnston's work comforting in that it presented material covering areas of Austrian thought other than those with which I had dealt. This material frequently further supported my own conclusions concerning intellectual trends which I had made on the basis of my own examination of the works produced by the various individuals I had chosen to study for this investigation. While our particular emphases are in different areas, there is much in Johnston's work which is closely followed by my own thinking.

In my attempt to gain a more complete understanding of the environmental setting of the latter half of the nineteenth century which shaped the lives of those I was investigating, I found a number of works particularly useful. One such work was The Viennese Enlightenment, edited by Mark Francis. In this work one finds an examination of some of the factors which molded the Austrian mind-set. While not using the actual material presented to any great degree, I still found a number of the basic ideas presented in the work, especially the one concerning the role of the educational system, to be very important to keep in mind when considering the factors which shaped the culture of Vienna.

Another work which I was useful, in spite of its brevity, was Arthur May's Vienna in the Age of Franz Josef. This work provides the reader with a vivid picture of Vienna and its development during the years from 1848 to 1918. Such a presentation is integral to the understanding of Viennese culture during this particular time period. Through this work May shows both what the city was and what it became during the latter half of the nineteenth and early years of the twentieth century. His book, though it contains no pictures, is a highly visual presentation. It is essentially a description of the city, both its glittering facade and its filthy underpinnings, which illustrates for the reader what it was like to be in Vienna during that time period.

The one work which is perhaps potentially the most helpful presentation on the Habsburg Monarchy now available is the massive, multi-volume study put out by the Austrian Academy of Sciences and edited by Adam Wandruszka and Peter Urbanitsch entitled Die Habsburgermonarchie 1848-1918. These works, which I believe are not yet complete, examine in great detail virtually every facet of the monarchy-- racial, political, economic, religious, social, and so on. While the sheer size of these works is somewhat prohibitive, if one is willing to examine its myriad of individual articles and essays, one can find a very competent presentation of the Habsburg Empire.

The one major problem which arose in the course of my research was my inability to find in the Portland State library relevant articles in periodical journals. While I am certain that there exists a body of such material which would have been highly useful in my examination, it does not appear to exist in any quantity in the English-language historical journals. Although I was able to ascertain from the bibliographies of works such as Janik and Toulmin's Wittgenstein's Vienna that relevant English-language periodical material did exist outside the bounds of the historical journals, I found that the material I garnered in this fashion was too specific to the particular field of study from which it originated (for instance philosophy in the case of Wittgenstein) to be of any particular use for the study I envisioned. The same held true for the material I was able to find through the use of compendiums of periodical literature in the areas of Music, Art, and Architecture. Whereas there were plenty of articles dealing with the works of those I wished to examine, nearly all of it was of little use to a study which was not overly concerned with the technical aspects of what had been created. As a consequence I had to rely almost entirely on monographs in the writing of this thesis.

Once I had ascertained what material was available and had evaluated how much could be accomplished within the given time constraints, I set out to give shape to my

examination. Heavily influenced by the areas of concentration within Schorske's work, I decided to focus upon the fields of art, architecture, music, literature, and politics. While I would like to have been able to deal with other areas such as philosophy and science, which were very crucial it seems in the development of Viennese culture, the present limitations of my knowledge precluded any but the most superficial of examinations, a danger it would appear is present in any effort at assimilation. In spite of my inability to deal directly with these subjects, I found that the interest of the individuals I had chosen to examine often were heavily influenced by science and philosophy.

In the area of the visual arts, I chose to examine Gustav Klimt, Oskar Kokoschka, and Egon Schiele. While I could have accomplished nearly as much by dealing with merely the first two, I felt that Schiele should not be entirely neglected just because he died young. In the field of architecture, I chose to examine Otto Wagner, Josef Hoffmann, and Adolf Loos. In music I selected Gustav Mahler and Arnold Schoenberg. In all of these areas so far mentioned, those chosen were not only representative of their respective field, but they also represented the developmental stages within those particular fields during the course of the period 1888 to 1918. By illustrating the commonality of interest among these individuals, even when their particular stylistic programs were violently at odds

with one another, I felt that it would be possible to better illustrate just how pervasive the overriding ideals of this time period was.

I chose to include politics in this study in part because Schorske had done so and in part because Viktor Adler (and to a certain extent Theodor Herzl) were intimately bound to what was going on in Viennese high culture. Even Lueger, Vienna's own demagogue, was intimately associated with some of the city's creative elite such as Otto Wagner. What is of greater importance is that those I selected represented each of the major political forces which originated in Vienna at that particular time. Moreover they represented political forces which have thus far dominated European politics in the twentieth century. They are Georg von Schoenerer and Pan-Germanicism, Viktor Adler and Austro-Marxism, Theodor Herzl and Zionism, and Karl Lueger and Christian Socialism. These persons combined illustrate the concerns of the residents of the Habsburg Monarchy during its last thirty years.

The final four creative minds I included in this examination could, in certain respects, all be called writers. In fact, if one were to list the principal reasons why they are each remembered today, their writings would figure prominently if not exclusively on the list. These individuals are Arthur Schnitzler, Robert Musil, Karl Kraus, and Sigmund Freud. I emphasized the importance of the

writings of these individuals on why they are remembered because most people familiar with these four would label Freud a doctor or a scientist rather than a writer. To do so neglects the fact that he gained renown, not as a result of his medical abilities, but rather as a result of his publications on psychoanalysis and the human subconscious. Moreover, his similarity to the other three above-mentioned writers is striking. Of the four, three were of Jewish descent, three studied human psychology, two were practicing doctors and had studied under the same teachers and worked in the same clinic, and all four were, at one time or another, despised by the Viennese public for works they had published. Kraus and Freud were given especially harsh treatment by the Viennese press, which refused to mention their names in print and thus attacked them with their silence (perhaps the safest way to attack Kraus since he would invariably turn journalists words back against them). Overall these four "writers" present a good sampling of Viennese intellectual thought during this period.

In organizing my examination, I envisioned presenting my material much in the fashion of a play. I would first present my introductory remarks; then I would describe the setting in which the action took place; this would be followed by an introduction of the principal characters; upon completion of the introductions I would present a synopsis, so to speak, of the plot; and then I would finish

with some concluding statements. In fact this is exactly the manner in which my investigation has been organized, though I have made some changes in the naming of the sections to make them more relevant to what was actually taking place.

I chose the format of a play because, in many respects, that is exactly what was going on in Vienna at the time. One had a large number of self-proclaimed protagonists acting out roles in a tragicomedy which had as its setting the virtually unreal (or perhaps surreal) location of late, imperial Vienna in the final decades of the Habsburg Monarchy. Perhaps this sounds a little far-fetched, but then much about Vienna and its intellectuals seems at first glance far-fetched. More to the point, in the descriptions I have read of each of these individuals one point is almost invariably emphasized--the fact that they almost always viewed themselves as playing some great, dramatic role in the course of their life.¹ While much of this theatricalization of one's personal view of one's own life probably originated as a result of the heavy emphasis placed upon the theater within Vienna, it does not change the fact that people viewed their lives thusly. As a result, I feel that it is warranted to treat the Viennese milieu as a play on an enormous scale. Besides, is that not exactly what Karl Kraus himself did when he chose Vienna and its inhabitants as the setting and

the characters of his own great satirical tragicomedy, Die letzten Tagen der Menschheit? If Karl Kraus took such a view of Vienna, how could I do otherwise?

Having mentioned the basic ideas behind my choice of organization for this study, it is perhaps helpful to describe the basic content of each section. "The Setting" presents the reader with some of my ideas on the essential background information necessary in order to understand what was going on at that time. I split this section into three sub-sections which explore respectively the nineteenth century, the Habsburg Monarchy, and the city of Vienna. While these examinations are by no means comprehensive in scope, they provide the uninitiated reader with some very basic information on what had taken place in the decades preceding the end of the century. They are also filled with some of my own interpretations of what was of importance in the events which took place.

The next section, "The Creators of Culture", provides the reader with brief, biographical information on the principal players examined in this study. I must point out that the biographies are not intended to be complete summaries of the lives and accomplishments of those examined, but rather are intended to serve as points of reference as to the backgrounds of these individuals as well as providing a brief account of what they are noted for having accomplished. Upon reading these brief biographies

one will realize that all do not continue up to the person's death. In fact, most conclude with either the death of the individual or 1918, whichever happened to occur first.

There are several exceptions, most notably that of Robert Musil, whose chief work, though it dealt with life in Vienna prior to World War I, was written following the war. For the most part I have tried to follow a pattern of providing the reader with an understanding of those examined, their works, and their interrelationships with one another within the context of Vienna up through 1918.

The final of the three main textual sections is entitled "Themes in Creativity". In this section I endeavor to provide the reader with a number of the main themes that I was able to discern which ran through the works of these diverse individuals. In so doing it is my hope to illumine some of the specific motivational influences which inspired artists and intellectuals at the turn of the century, specifically in Vienna.

Having said all this, I turn in the final section "Conclusions" to both a summary of what I discovered as well as its relevance to the broader picture I am trying to help illumine. Schorske set out in his work to examine the origins of the breakdown in the interrelationships between intellectual disciplines during the twentieth century as well as the a-historical nature of much of what they produced. In a similar vein, I am trying to discover what

it was that motivated the individuals whose work Schorske viewed as being part of the trend which created our present cultural predicament. While my efforts might ultimately accomplish nothing, I can only try.

NOTES

¹For an example of that theatrical tendency in at least one individual see: Carl E. Schorske, Fin-De-Siecle Vienna: Politics and Culture (New York: Random House, 1981), pp. 181-83. In this section he provides a brief statement written by Freud in which Freud, somewhat jokingly, sees himself and his psychoanalysis as being widely acclaimed by all the powers that be within Austria-Hungary. While highly ludicrous, it is also very theatrical.

THE SETTING

In making an examination of a group of individuals who lived in a particular place during a particular time period, it is of the utmost importance to have at least a basic understanding of what conditions were like in that specific time and place. The importance of such an understanding is easily illustrated. If one examines the writings of individuals such as Dickens, Tolstoy, and Twain, it becomes readily apparent that when and where they lived shaped the nature of their writings. The same of course holds true for the innovative minds of turn of the century Vienna. Each individual was a product of the latter half of the nineteenth century. Each was not only shaped by the individual events of their personal lives, but they were also molded by the very nature of the Habsburg Monarchy in which they lived. While similar in many respects to their contemporaries elsewhere in the Western World, the creative minds of the Habsburg Monarchy were also quite different from their counterparts in say England or France. Moreover, Vienna itself; like Paris, London, New York, or Berlin; subtly, yet profoundly, altered those who lived within them. Language differences aside, one could fairly easily differentiate between the individuals who resided in any one of these cities as opposed to any of the others. It is so that one might keep

in mind a few of the characteristics of the time and place in which the individuals examined in this study lived and thus have a better understanding of what they were trying to accomplish that I present the following brief examination of the nineteenth century, the Habsburg Monarchy, and the city of Vienna.

The Age

The nineteenth century as a whole was a century of great and fundamental changes in the nature of human society. In areas ranging from governmental structure to transportation, changes took place in the course of the century which left each of these areas irrevocably altered. The effect all these changes had on the individuals who experienced them firsthand must have been tremendous. It is difficult, if not impossible, for those of us who did not live through these changes to fully appreciate what they meant to those who lived through them. Here in the United States we recognize that enormous changes have occurred since the last century, and yet somehow most people do not seem to realize how significant they were. Many view the changes as perfectly natural, especially since the United States was exploring and developing frontier regions--if there was one thing people could expect it was change. In Europe, however, where certain aspects of life had not changed significantly for centuries, these changes seemed

anything but natural.

For Europe, the advent of the industrial age meant not only the creation of new and better means of production, it also meant the alteration and even destruction of existing social and political structures. Whereas in previous centuries multi-national states had been fairly widely accepted, if not always appreciated, by the middle of the nineteenth century the cry for nation states had emerged. While this development in itself is a very complex one, it is safe to say that it was the spread of education and the example of successful national movements elsewhere which perhaps more than anything accentuated national differences within Europe. To uneducated peasant families there was little recognition of what was meant by a national identity, but once presented with an education and an awareness of nationalism elsewhere, national differences became all too apparent.

Education was being spread for a number of reasons at this particular time period, though the primary reasons had to do with the need for educated individuals for the well-oiled functioning of the increasingly complex social and economic structure of the European states. This meant not only educating workers so that they were able to handle more complex tasks and equipment, but also educating bureaucrats so that the government would be able to exercise more effective control over its state. While these

developments had their antecedents in the Protestant push for education so that everyone could read the Bible and in the move towards more centralized governments in order to better compete in the increasingly vigorous European power-politics, the whole process was given an enormous boost by the move towards industrialization.

As far as nationalism was concerned, the event which triggered practically all of the nationalist movements in Europe was the French Revolution. In many respects the Revolution and the ensuing Napoleonic Wars served as a catalyst for individuals in other countries by providing them with the example of a new a vital political entity which literally swept away many of the old political structures of Europe by the means of its military prowess, and by making them the victims of French chauvinism. With the ideas of the French Revolution and the successes of French nationalism being spread across Europe by the victorious armies of Napoleon, as well as in reaction to Napoleonic domination, people throughout Europe were inspired to mimic the French ideas which had led to such successes.

The spread of nationalism was by no means the only change which took place in Europe during the nineteenth century. There were many other changes which were at least equally as significant taking place in Europe at that time. One of these was the change from a rural, agricultural

society to an urban, industrial society. This change was, of course, brought about by the opportunity for increased prosperity in the urban setting and by the improvements in the methods of cultivation which decreased the need for human labor in the fields. What this succeeded in doing was destabilizing what had once been a very stable social organization. As a result the nineteenth century was a massive migration of individuals to the cities of their own countries and abroad to regions as far away as North and South America.

Another aspect of the changes which had taken place as a by-product of industrialization was the development of advanced systems of transportation and communication. Whereas in the past it might have taken months to travel from one location to another and just as long to communicate across such distances, by the latter part of the nineteenth century news could be transmitted nearly instantaneously through the advent of telegraph (at least between places linked by telegraph cables) and people could travel fairly rapidly to most destinations on the globe by either steamship or railroad. Once again these elements, born of the machine age, combined to destabilize the existing societal structure. Where in the past months or even years might pass before the provocation by one power might cause another power to retaliate, it was now possible to respond almost instantaneously and to actually go to war within a

few weeks. Moreover, wars gained an increasing potential in both scale and destructiveness as technology altered the methods and means of warfare. Destruction which had taken years to accomplish in the past could now be completed in a very short period of time, if one were inclined to destroy things. While the wars of the last half of the nineteenth century showed a tendency towards brevity (the American Civil War was by far the longest, yet lasted only four years), they also demonstrated the nature of all-out warfare, even if only for brief periods of time.

In the cities, where people increasingly congregated, the situation was often bleak. What had once been small towns bloomed into huge cities during the course of the century. These cities were dirty, overcrowded, and almost always deficient in the areas of water supply and sewerage. Dozens of families would be jammed together in a single building which, as likely as not, would not be furnished with plumbing. Such was the nature of cities, if one was poor, throughout most of the century.

City life brought another issue to the forefront as people from rural backgrounds streamed into the cities. That issue was sexuality. In village communities premarital sexual intercourse was a rather widely practiced and accepted reality, accepted in large part no doubt because within the context of the village community it almost always led to marriage. When people from such a background entered

the setting of the big city things changed. While premarital sex was still widely practiced among these members of the working class, the stability and control of the village setting was gone. Economic uncertainties frequently made marriage difficult, if not impossible, for those who were of the working class. These same uncertainties frequently drove young women from the countryside into prostitution as a means of surviving.¹ While prostitution itself was by no means new within the context of European cities, what emerged was a situation where middle-class men sought out "sweet girls" fresh from the countryside in order to fulfill their sexual needs both prior to marriage and afterwards. In some areas, like Vienna, this situation reached extreme proportions and had the dual effect of creating widespread illegitimacy and spreading venereal diseases among the populace at large. Moreover, it tended to break down the sexual mores of society as a whole by the end of the century.

While so far it might appear that all the changes were merely social and technological, such was not the case. In fact, there were vast changes in the intellectual structure of European thought as well. The nineteenth century saw the widespread emergence of ideologies such as positivism which rejected the older methods of understanding the world, such as religion and metaphysics, and believed instead that science alone could provide positive knowledge of the

world. While in many respects this hearkened back to the rationalism of the eighteenth century, the sheer number of people who held such belief sets the situation of the late nineteenth century apart from anything which had preceded it. It was in 1859 that Darwin published his Origin of Species and thus set off a furor over the origin of man. In many ways those who were educated were rejecting the traditional views of the world and trying to formulate new answers, answers which all too often were somewhat less satisfying or reassuring in regards to the nature of humanity itself than had been the older answers. For a large number of the intellectual elite, traditional understandings of God and Nature were entirely discredited; they sought instead new solutions relevant to the "modern" conception of the world.

This was also a century of exploration into the basic nature of humanity and into the functioning of human society. People examined humanity as never before through the study of history, language, and culture. By the end of the century nearly every aspect of human existence had been brought under careful scrutiny, including the mind itself. About seemingly everything people asked the questions--what do we know? how do we know? what is knowable?--and with each of these questions new criteria were formed in every field of knowledge, criteria which specified what was, and what was not, acceptable in order to verify and legitimize the

truth of something. As a result one sees the formulation of such now well-known constructs as the scientific method of controlled and verifiable experimentation and the Rankean tenets for historical research based on careful examination of written documents in order to present history "as it actually happened". By the end of the century the foremost of thinkers were no longer seeking "The Truth", instead they sought only minor, limited truths, having come to the conclusion that "The Truth" was just another myth out of the human past which showed a lack of understanding about the limits of the knowable.²

In this uncertainty about what was knowable one can see one of the great ironies of the nineteenth century. In many respects it was a century in which people were self-assured in their causes. Whether one was fighting for nationalism, or liberalism, or socialism; whether one was helping out one's "little brown brothers" or selling them out; whether one was making discoveries which would make the world a better place, or making one which would make it a worse place; whether one was proclaiming that God is dead or that science was the answer to all the world's problems--everyone appeared, on the surface, entirely sure of the rightness of what he or she was doing. There was a confidence in the demeanor of both individuals and nations which seems very odd considering that it was a time when virtually everything was brought into question. Assured of

their rightness, their appeared to be no doubts. Therein lies the paradox of the nineteenth century and the first part of the twentieth: seemingly everything was brought into question, yet everyone appeared sure in their knowledge of what was right and what ought to be done. It would seem that somewhere between the braggadocio of individuals such as William II and Rudyard Kipling and the skepticism of the likes of Ernst Mach and Friedrich Nietzsche lay the true, somewhat schizophrenic, nature of late nineteenth and early twentieth century Europeans.³

Overall, one can see that the nineteenth century was an extremely unstable time period in regard to all the great changes which were taking place (one might think that in comparison to the instability of the twentieth century that the nineteenth century was a rock of consistency, but that would be ignoring the fact that our own century's instability is merely the shockwaves created by the last century's changes). This instability was reflected in the political events of Europe during that century. It is not surprising that the nineteenth century saw the first popular uprisings in history which almost instantaneously spread across an entire continent in the Revolutions of 1830 and 1848. It should also come as no surprise, considering the fundamental changes which were taking place, that the nineteenth century saw the breakdown of the old power structure throughout not only Europe, but the entire world.

That century saw the emergence of such powers as Germany and the United States, as well as the almost total eclipse of such traditional powers as China, the Ottoman Empire, and the Habsburg Monarchy. Change and instability offered opportunities. Those who could take advantage of them prospered, those who could not suffered-- whether applied to great states or single individuals this simple truism was the reality of late nineteenth century existence.

The Realm

The Habsburg Monarchy was one of those states which ultimately did not prosper from the changes which were taking place in the world. This by no means implies that certain advances in technology were not enjoyed by the residents of that realm or that the functioning of the state itself was not in certain aspects more easily facilitated due to the changes which had occurred. What it means most simply is that the Habsburg Monarchy was one of the casualties in the attempts to restructure the world; it ultimately ceased to exist. Whereas other states such as China and Russia were eventually reconstituted under different forms of government as a result of the changes which occurred, the lands which once constituted the realms of the Habsburgs have split asunder to the point where it is difficult to imagine that they ever constituted a single entity, one which many probably felt would last virtually

forever.⁴ This is not to say that it was inconceivable that the Monarchy, left to its own devices, could have survived into the twentieth century and beyond; what it simply means is that the Habsburg Monarchy was unable to survive a losing effort in the First World War. Even if the majority of its populace had wanted a continuation of its existence, some of its opponents in the war did not.

This is, however, getting ahead of the situation as it existed in the period from 1890 to 1918. During those turn of the century years (at least up to 1918) the Habsburg Monarchy was definitely still alive, even if it was not entirely well, but then it was not really any worse off than it had been at numerous other occasions during the dynasty's six hundred year tenure in Central Europe. In fact, in many respects it was in a much better situation than it had been in for most of the preceding 150 years. In the words of that oft repeated phrase, "the situation was critical, but not serious."⁵ In spite of glib remarks such as this, the truth was that the Habsburgs suffered a number of setbacks during the course of the nineteenth century which had combined to limit the power of the dynasty in terms of its political and territorial scope. What one found when examining the Habsburg Monarchy was a political tradition which was finding itself hard-pressed to cope with the rapid flow of events.

The Habsburgs came out of the Napoleonic period at the

beginning of the nineteenth century in what appeared to be fairly good shape. It seemed that the Habsburgs were once again a leading player in continental events. This very period in European history is almost invariably associated with the name of the Habsburg prime minister, Prince Klemens Lothar von Metternich. The family once again ruled over Northern Italy and was once again the dominant power in German affairs, although the Habsburg rulers had given up the title of Holy Roman Emperor and had reconciled themselves to the fact that the Holy Roman Empire had ceased to exist. Overall it still seemed that the Habsburgs were a major power, yet appearances can be deceiving. In truth the Habsburgs had been unable to deal with Napoleon militarily and had regained title to most of their former holdings, not through their own efforts so much as by the efforts of others. Moreover, the Habsburgs adopted a policy of trying to ignore the fact that anything fundamental had changed in the world just at a time when changes were really starting to move. While in actuality they recognized the fact that much had changed since the French Revolution, publicly they tried to eliminate everything which allowed people to remember that fact in, what would seem to have been, a vain hope that somehow everyone would eventually forget that the French Revolution had ever happened. It seems that that, more than anything else, was the motive force behind such actions as the Karlsbad Decrees: the Habsburgs wanted to

pretend publicly that nothing essential had changed in the world and thus sought to squelch all activities which tended to show that the world actually had changed fundamentally.⁶

The Habsburg attempts at creating collective amnesia were finally brought to an end by the Revolution of 1848. Still, the Habsburgs emerged from the turmoil of the revolutionary years of 1848-49 seemingly unscathed and once more in control of the situation within their own lands. Actually, they had only regained control of Hungary through the military aid of Imperial Russia and consequently it was difficult for anyone to claim that the restoration of absolutist rule was a convincing display of the strength of Habsburg absolutism or of the weakness of those groups which had initiated and supported the revolution--the liberals and the nationalists. All the same, the dynasty was still in power.

The consequences of the events of 1848-49 cast a long shadow over the future politics of the Habsburg Monarchy. Neither the liberals nor the nationalists had been able to replace the absolutism of the Habsburg dynasty when given the chance. This inspired the belief among future generations that the failure of these groups had somehow been caused by a lack of conviction in their efforts. At the same time, the Habsburgs themselves were unable to claim a resounding victory for their absolutist rule since they had been hard-pressed to regain control of the situation and

had ultimately done so only through the skillful use of national antagonisms among their subject peoples and through the timely intervention in Hungary of the Russian army. The significance of all this was that, when the struggles had all ended, neither those who had fought for change nor those who had supported the status quo were resoundingly victorious. Thus each group was somewhat discredited by the events of 1848-49. From then onwards supporters of either group would be faced with the ultimate realization that, when put to the test, they had been unequal to the task put before them. Although absolutism seemed to have won out for the moment, no one would go so far to say that any of the contending forces, those of absolutism included, had shown themselves strong enough to persevere.⁷

Between 1850 and 1867 a rapid erosion of the international position of the Habsburgs occurred. Following a policy of indecisive vacillation during the Crimean War, the Monarchy found itself in a position where it was isolated diplomatically, a very dangerous position in a time in which the forces of change were running rampant. When most people today think of the Habsburg Monarchy, they think of the monarchy as it existed after 1867, the Dual-Monarchy of Austria-Hungary. They think of its boundaries as being those of post-1867, even when thinking of the Monarchy during an earlier age when its boundaries were quite different. While it is important to remember the

Dual-Monarchy as such, one must first realize what the Monarchy was as late as the 1850's as well as what changed in the years up to 1867. One way to get a grasp of what the Habsburg Monarchy once was is to take a look at the lengthy title given to Franz Joseph upon his coronation:

Franz Joseph I von Gottes Gnaden Kaiser von Oesterreich; Koenig von Ungarn und Boehmen, von Dalmatien, Kroatien, Slavonian, Galizien, Lodomerien und Illyrien; Koenig von Jerusalem etc.; Erzherzog von Oesterreich; Grossherzog von Toscana und Krakau; Herzog von Lothringen, von Salzburg, Steyer, Kaernten, Krain und der Bukowina; Grossfuerst von Siebenbuergen, Markgraf von Maehren; Herzog von Ober- und Nieder-Schlesien, von Modena, Parma, Piacenza und Guastalla, von Auschwitz und Zator, von Teschen, Friaul, Ragusa und Zara; gefuerster Graf von Habsburg und Tirol, von Kyburg; Goertz und Gradisca; Fuerst von Trient und Brixen; Markgraf von Ober- und Nieder-Lausitz und in Istrien; Graf von Hohenembs, Feldkirch, Bregenz, Sonnenberg etc.; Herr von Triest, von Cattaro und auf der windischen Mark; Grosswojwod der Wojwodschaft Serbien etc. etc.⁸

From such a title one can readily see that the Habsburg state was an agglomeration of a myriad of smaller political entities picked up by the family over the centuries. This is true even though a number of the titles had long been meaningless and several more were shortly to become so. Still, the Habsburg Monarchy had a history of Central European dominance which was impressive.

In the course of a few years, however, the Habsburg Monarchy was to lose a number of territories. In 1859, by losing to the combined forces of Sardinia and France, the Habsburgs were forced to cede their holdings in Lombardy, Parma, Modena, and Tuscany to Sardinia (France got to take

Savoy from Sardinia as payment for their aid), thereby creating the basis for a unified Italy. In 1866 the Habsburgs found themselves fighting the forces of Prussia and Italy. Defeat at the hands of the Prussian army forced the Habsburgs out of the German Confederation while they had to cede Venetia to Italy. Thus, in a brief span of time, the Habsburgs lost their position of prominence in both Italian and German affairs. In 1867 Franz Joseph was forced to conclude the *Ausgleich* with Hungary which essentially split the Habsburgs' remaining territories into two separate parts: one governed from Budapest and the other from Vienna.

Internally what resulted from these defeats was the victory of those forces which had been defeated in 1848-49. Following the defeat of 1859 the liberals were allowed to have a hand in governing the Monarchy. Following the defeat of 1866 the nationalists in Hungary were allowed to exercise power over their half of the Monarchy. In other words, some of those groups which had been unable to place themselves in positions of power through revolution found themselves elevated to these positions by imperial fiat in the wake of disastrous military defeats. What this meant was that, in the eyes of the populace at large, these new governments were perceived as being merely one more set of officials appointed to govern by the crown, which in essence was exactly what they were. As a result of this and other factors, one saw the emergence of anti-liberal, mass parties

during the final decades of the century. Liberals and the older nationalist parties were generally perceived to be lackeys of the crown, motivated by their own narrow interests. As a result they did not have a wide base of popular support.

Although politically this period had been disastrous, the years following 1867 saw an enormous surge in the growth of industrialization in the Habsburg realm. This period became known as the *Gruenderzeit* because so many industrial and business undertakings were begun during this period. The extent of this development can be seen in the following passage:

In 1830 there were 9 joint-stock companies in Austria, twenty years later there were 35, by 1867 they numbered 154. However, in 1869 alone 141 joint-stock companies were founded with a face value of 517 million Gulden, in 1872 newly formed companies numbered 376 with nearly two billion Gulden in capital, and in the first four months of 1873 154 concessions with a billion Gulden in capital were granted. Consequently, in six years 1005 undertakings were originated of which only 682 actually came to life. From 919 to 1882, of the actual foundations which were established, 157 came from the time before 1867, 671 during the period from 1868 to May of 1873, and only 91 during the final ten years.⁹

From this passage one can see, not only the great burst of economic activity known as the *Gruenderzeit*, but also the falloff which occurred following the economic crash of 1873.

This economic crash had the effect of stirring things up within the Habsburg Monarchy. Those individuals who had invested their savings in companies following 1867 generally

saw their investments wiped out. These were individuals unused to the finer points of modern capitalism who viewed the loss of their monies as nothing short of criminal. In the aftermath of the crash people sought out scapegoats to blame for their misfortune and eventually settled upon big-business, liberals, and Jews--three groups of individuals popularly viewed as being one and the same. It was largely in response to this perception that anti-liberal, mass parties emerged over the next two decades. It was felt that, not only had the liberals been placed in power by imperial fiat, now they were destroying the economic well-being of the Monarchy as well. Such was the growingly widespread conviction.¹⁰

Other than economic change, perhaps the most significant of the developments which took place within the Habsburg Monarchy was the emergence of strong nationalistic forces. While nationalism had been growing throughout the century within the boundaries of the Habsburg Monarchy, the creation of an Italian state in 1861 and a German state in 1871 combined to bring the issue of nationalism to a near boiling point, where it would remain for the next forty years. Although most states today would view nationalism as something at least positive if not desirable, that is only because we now live in an age dominated by nation-states. As far as the Habsburg Monarchy was concerned, nationalism was a force which had the potential to rip the state asunder

as a dozen or so national groups each clamored for rights and privileges. In reality, for most of the time the situation was not too bad for there were only two major groups which actively sought to actually leave the Monarchy: the Germans and the Italians. This is not to say that all Austro-Germans or Austro-Italians wanted to leave the Monarchy, in fact only a handful were willing to push that far. Still, they were a vocal minority and their actions only heightened national tensions.

One way to get a feeling for what the Habsburg Monarchy was like around the turn of the century is to turn, as so many others have turned, to the words of Robert Musil in his book The Man Without Qualities.¹¹ In the following passage (provided in its entirety in the Appendix), Musil describes Austria-Hungary in this manner:

There, in Kakanian, that misunderstood State that has since vanished, which was in so many things a model, though all unacknowledged, there was speed too, of course; but not too much speed. Whenever one thought of that country from some place abroad, the memory that hovered before the eyes was of wide, prosperous roads dating from the age of foottravellers and mail-coaches, roads leading in all directions like rivers of established order, streaking the countryside like ribbons of bright military twill, the paper-white arm of the government holding the provinces in firm embrace. And what provinces! There were glaciers and the sea, the Carso and the cornfields of Bohemia, nights by the Adriatic restless with the chirping of cicadas, and Slovakian villages where the smoke rose from the chimneys as from upturned nostrils, the village curled up between two little hills as though the earth had parted its lips to warm its child between them. Of course cars also drove along those roads--but not too many cars! The conquest of the air had begun here too; but not too intensely. Now

and then a ship was sent off to South America or to the Far East; but not too often. There was no ambition to have world markets and world power. Here one was in the centre of Europe, at the focal point of the world's old axes; the words 'colony' and 'overseas' had the ring of something as yet utterly untried and remote. There was some display of luxury; but it was not, of course, as over-sophisticated as that of the French. One went in for sport; but not in madly Anglo-Saxon fashion. One spent tremendous sums on the army; but only just enough to assure one of remaining the second weakest of the great powers. The capital, too, was somewhat smaller than the rest of the world's largest cities, but nevertheless quite considerably larger than a mere ordinary large city. And the administration of this country was carried out in an enlightened, hardly perceptible manner, with a cautious clipping of all sharp points, by the best bureaucracy in Europe, which could be accused of only one defect: it could not help regarding genius and enterprise of genius in private persons, unless privileged by high birth or State appointment, as ostentation, indeed presumption. But who would want unqualified persons putting their oar in anyway? And besides, in Kakanian it was only that a genius was always regarded as a lout, but never, as sometimes happens elsewhere, that a mere lout was regarded as a genius.

All in all, how many remarkable things might be said about that vanished Kakanian! For instance, it was *kaiserlich-koeniglich* (Imperial-Royal) and it was *kaiserlich und koeniglich* (Imperial and Royal); one of the two abbreviations, *k.k.* or *k. & k.*, applied to every thing and person, but esoteric lore was nevertheless required in order to be sure of distinguishing which institutions and persons were to be referred to as *k.k.* and which as *k. & k.* On paper it called itself the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy; in speaking, however, one referred to it as Austria, that is to say, it was known by a name that it had, as a State, solemnly renounced by oath, while preserving it in all matters of sentiment, as a sign that feelings are just as important as constitutional law and that regulations are not the really serious thing in life. By its constitution it was liberal, but its system of government was clerical. The system of government was clerical, but the general attitude to life was liberal. Before the law all citizens were equal, but then not everyone, of course, was a citizen. There was a parliament, which made such vigorous use of its

liberty that it was usually kept shut; but there was also an emergency powers act by means of which it was possible to manage without Parliament, and every time when everyone was just beginning to rejoice in absolutism, the Crown declared that there must now again be a return to parliamentary government. Many such things happened in this State, and among them were those national struggles that justifiably aroused Europe's curiosity and are today completely misrepresented. They were so violent that they several times a year caused the machinery of State to jam and come to a dead stop. But between whiles, in the breathing-spaces between government and government, everyone got on excellently with everyone else and behaved as though nothing had ever been the matter. It was nothing more than the fact that every human being's dislike of every other human being's attempts to get on--a dislike in which today we are all agreed--in that country crystallized earlier, assuming the form of a sublimated ceremonial that might have become of great importance if its evolution had not been prematurely cut short by a catastrophe.¹²

Although this is a very long passage, it not only presents the reader with a feeling for what "Kakania" was like, it also shows what one of its highly educated residents thought of it.

There is one last element which must be examined when considering the Habsburg Monarchy at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth--that element is anti-Semitism. As a result of the events of this century, especially the Holocaust, it has become a necessity to explore the origins of modern anti-Semitism. Since Adolf Hitler was a native of the Habsburg Monarchy there has been an especial emphasis placed upon the origins and nature of anti-Semitism within its Austro-Hungarian context. The point must be made, to those who do not already know, that

anti-Semitism was an ugly reality of almost all of the Western World at the end of the nineteenth century and the Habsburg Monarchy was no exception.

Within the Habsburg territories there were essentially three distinct forms of anti-Semitism: cultural, economic, and racial. The first of these was a by-product of the intense nationalism of the nineteenth century which was only heightened by the disparaging way in which Western Civilization viewed the other cultures of the world at that time. This form of anti-Semitism was widely practiced by the intellectual elite, German and Jew alike, and was primarily targeted against the culture of Eastern European Jews. The economic form of anti-Semitism had to do with the fact that it appeared to the artisans and the small shop owners that their livelihood was being destroyed by what they saw as Jewish big business and by the influx of Eastern European Jews into the cities. The final form of anti-Semitism within the Austrian context was racial. While essentially held by a very small minority, this belief was loosely based on the ideas of genetics and Darwinism and perceived any interrelationship between races as detrimental in nature. It was this belief, more than perhaps anything else which inspired Hitler.

While one could continue indefinitely exploring the Habsburg Monarchy in greater depth, one must at some point call a halt. From what we have already seen one can tell

that the Habsburg Monarchy was an ancient political entity which was seeking to maintain itself in a rapidly changing world. It was beset by problems internally and lacked any strong political leadership which could shape the course of its actions. Nearly every development in the world around it seemed to make its continued existence just that much more difficult. Its own built-in contradictions, along with its historical situation, had made it an easy victim of its nationalistic neighbors. If one were to name one single element which more than anything else brought about its demise, one would have to say that it was nationalism. Not the nationalism of its residents so much as the continued, aggressive nationalism of its neighbors in Europe. Their vigorous idolization of nationalism made the existence of a polyglot in their midst a situation which many seemed to feel had to be rectified. It seems it finally was. The First World War, sparked in large part by the extreme nationalism of the time, ultimately brought about the end of the Habsburg Monarchy.

The City

Vienna--the name itself conjures up images in one's mind. Even those who have never been to Vienna imagine scenes of sumptuous ballrooms filled with waltzing, swirling dancers, the air itself saturated with the sound of violins playing Strauss waltzes. Or perhaps one has images of

concerthalls filled with the music of Beethoven and Mozart, periwigs abounding. Then again there are those who envision coffeehouses filled with intellectuals: students, artists, and revolutionaries, discussing ideas over coffee and pastries. Whatever the image, Vienna, like Paris, Istanbul, Venice, and Rome, is a city whose very name is enshrouded in the popular mind with a number of preconceptions which are often difficult to separate from reality. It is not without reason that Vienna, especially Vienna in the final decades of Habsburg rule, has been described as a fairy-tale city--the popular images of it are more that of a children's story than of a real city.¹³

The city of Vienna entered the final years of the nineteenth century and the early years of the twentieth as a city, like the world around it, in the midst of vast changes. This city, whose heart dates from Roman times, had during the latter half of the nineteenth century undergone enormous structural changes which essentially created the city as it exists today. Whereas in the preceding centuries since the Babenberg archdukes made it their capital during the twelfth century, the city had changed very slowly; the changes of the late nineteenth century, like those following the Second Turkish Siege of Vienna, redefined it. With the removal of the walls around the city and the building of the Ringstrasse, Vienna was melded with its suburbs and changed from a medieval city into a modern metropolis.

At the mid-point of the nineteenth century Vienna was one of the leading cities of Europe, on a relative par in terms of importance with London, Paris, and St. Petersburg. At that time the city was the primary political center of both Italian and German affairs. By 1867 that was all over. Vienna was no longer even sole mistress of the Habsburg realms and had been left with virtually no influence over either German or Italian affairs. It is somewhat ironic that the city came to the full glory of its splendor at the same time that it began its plunge from political importance. It has often been noted that the monumental building of the Ringstrasse coincided almost exactly with the demise of Vienna's importance as a world capital and many have intimated that the former was undertaken in order to distract its citizens from the latter.¹⁴

In 1848 the inner city of Vienna, which was all that constituted Vienna proper, had a population of around 60,000. It was surrounded by suburbs, soon to be incorporated into the city, which had a combined population of nearly 300,000.¹⁵ The entire region was divided into three separate parts. The first was the inner city which was surrounded by ancient brick ramparts that rose to a height of more than fifty feet. Since Napoleon had shown the wall to be useless in the face of modern military technology, on top of the bastions ran a promenade which

extended more than three miles and was covered with trees, benches, and coffeehouses in place of cannon.¹⁶ There were eight gates penetrating the wall which gave access to the inner city through tunnel-like passages and which were closed promptly at ten every evening. Bridges in front of the gates crossed a tree-lined moat and led out onto the glacis surrounding the wall and varying in width from fifty-five to a little more than one hundred yards, the area filled with paths, gardens, and a military parade ground.¹⁷

Between the glacis and the second girdle of ramparts lay the first section of suburbs. The wall surrounding these suburbs was some twelve feet in height and had eleven gates through it at which tolls were collected on all items entering Vienna.¹⁸ Beyond this was lay the small rural villages, vineyards, the Vienna Woods, and mountain spurs such as the Kahlenberg. Here, too, lay the summer palaces of the nobility such as Schoenbrunn, the summer residence of the Habsburgs.

One could continue to examine Vienna, especially the inner city and the suburban palaces, in greater detail. At that time it had the flavor of its past centuries far more than does the present city. Vienna was, and to a certain extent still is, a city of apartment dwellers with buildings ranging upwards towards eight stories in height. With a highly urbanized setting, it was drastically in need of both sewers and a more stable water supply by the middle of the

century. Late into the century these problems would continue to plague Vienna.

In 1857, as a kind of Christmas present to the city, the Emperor announced plans to tear down the walls, thus merging the inner city with its suburbs. The major feature of the planned reconstruction was the Ringstrasse, a wide boulevard which would virtually encircle the inner city. The official opening of the street took place in 1865. Almost three-fifths of the land opened up by the demolition of the walls and the opening up of the glacis was allocated to streets, parks, and gardens. The remainder was divided about equally between public buildings and parcels which could be sold to private interests. All told, more than two hundred acres were sold to private interests, and the money thus earned was used to help pay for the cost of reconstruction, laying out of streets and parks, and erecting public buildings.¹⁹ Among the public buildings constructed along the Ringstrasse over the next thirty years was an opera house, a stock exchange, the *Votivkirche*, the Palace of Justice, City Hall, *Burgtheater*, Parliament, museums of fine arts and natural history, and a new home for the University of Vienna.

All the new building created something of a renaissance in Vienna. Interest in art and architecture flourished as people discussed which styles were appropriate for which buildings. Where previously the Viennese had been

basically content with their music and theater, now they became vitally interested in all things artistic.²⁰ This interest was perhaps most clearly shown by the widespread popularity of Hans Makart and his colossal, lavishly colored paintings. Proclaimed another Titian or Reubens by an adoring public, he turned the city into an enormous historical pageant for the celebration of the twenty-fifth wedding anniversary of the Emperor in 1879. His paintings, however, like his fame, soon faded after his death.

The city of Vienna was, in many respects, what it has often been claimed to be--a dazzling spectacle of sensations which overwhelmed the visitor. Adolf Hitler was not the only visitor to the city who was overpowered by its magic. When thinking of Vienna at this time one must always keep in mind its multi-national character:

Vienna was not merely a national but an imperial capital, and not merely a capital, but the soul of the Habsburg Empire. It reflected and controlled, as best it could, a supranational alignment of feudal and clericalist forces, stretching across half of Europe, that had survived from the Middle Ages into the nineteenth century. There were more Czechs in Vienna than in Prague, more Croats than in Zagreb, and five times as many Jews as in Jerusalem. Vienna's cultural atmosphere was more cosmopolitan than that of any other European city since the fall of Rome.²¹

It was a city in which it was possible to find a newspaper in practically any language one could choose and supporting, in spite of official censorship, practically every political and cultural position imaginable--a stunning achievement considering the existence of popular newspapers was a

relatively new development born of larger cities and increased literacy.²²

In contrast to all this apparent diversity there also existed an attitude which was referred to as typically Viennese. This was the belief that nearly everything which existed fifty or a hundred years previously was far and away superior to anything the present could hope to produce (this tendency still exists among Viennese today, yet perhaps they are now more justified in their belief, at least as far as Vienna is concerned). What this meant was that the Viennese loved Mozart and Beethoven (though their ancestors had not done so while they were still living) and despised anything which smacked of the present. They built their homes in Baroque style and convinced themselves that Josef II was by far superior to any ruler the world produced in their own time. Seemingly out of habit the typical Viennese criticized everything new and adored that which was old. It is interesting to note that, early on, the biggest criticism leveled against the building of the Ringstrasse was not, as it later was, that the buildings were built along historical models, but rather that the street itself was distasteful because it was not narrow and winding and thus difficult to travel like the older streets of the city were. It was felt that by having a broad, easily travelled thoroughfare one detracted from the beauty of the buildings because one could hurry by too quickly and not pay close enough attention to

them.²³ From such attitudes one can get a feel for what is meant by being called "typically Viennese".

Vienna was also a city which revelled in culture. In Vienna actors were more prominent than politicians and discussions of an artistic nature predominated over such mundane things as world affairs. Living in such an environment it is not surprising that the Viennese intellectuals put such a high value on artistic endeavors--to them these were of vital concern to the well-being of humanity. This is a point to remember when one looks at the works of Viennese intellectuals. Whenever one examines such works, one almost invariably finds a certain emphasis placed on things of an artistic nature--they are seen as being of vital importance to fields in which most of the Western World would view them as being, quite frequently, entirely irrelevant.

As a city, Vienna was under enormous physical pressures during the final decades of the Habsburg Monarchy. From a population of 705,000 in 1880, Vienna had ballooned to more than 2,000,000 inhabitants by 1910.²⁴ With this increase in population went increasingly crowded housing conditions, especially among the working-class residents. The situation was so bad that Adolf Loos, upon his return from the United States, praised how wonderful housing conditions were in New York City.²⁵ Considering the situation in New York at the end of the nineteenth century,

that says a lot about the Viennese housing conditions for the lower classes.

Housing of course was not the only problem. One also saw the emergence of anti-liberal, mass parties which took to the streets in increasingly larger demonstrations. Some, like the annual May Day parade of the Social Democrats, were relatively peaceful. Others, from time to time, got rather ugly. Christian Socials protested against big businesses and department stores which were rapidly driving the small, independent producers and shop owners out of business. Social Democrats protested for shorter working hours, better pay, safer factories, more holidays, and the right to vote. Together they made the Viennese streets an often volatile setting. Anti-Semitic nationalists were known to attack members of the "Jewish Press" if they felt provoked.²⁶ Controversial art exhibits or musical compositions were known to stir near-riots.²⁷ If parliament was in session, one could nearly always find what amounted to a near-brawl within its chambers.²⁸ Vienna seemed a place of often violent emotions which could spring up virtually out of thin air.

For all this turmoil, Vienna was generally rather placid. For every day in which there was conflict in the streets, there were many more in which nothing disturbed its busy bustle. While heated emotions seemed capable of springing up at a moment's notice, they had a tendency to

dissipate just as rapidly. For every demonstration, there were many placid strolls through the streets and parks of the city. The violence of emotions which was sometimes possible, was more the exception than the rule. Most of the time life went on at a regular pace and temperament.

Such was the nature of the Vienna in which figures like Klimt and Mahler lived. One day they could receive the city's highest praises, the next they could be brutally criticized. It was an environment in which all things cultural were under the closest of scrutiny, not as a result of government censorship as is sometimes the case in our own time, but rather because they lived in a city whose citizens took culture seriously. When political importance waned for Vienna and the Habsburg Monarchy, there was always culture to fall back on.

NOTES

¹I found this particular discussion in Edward McNall Burns, Robert E. Lerner and Standish Meacham's, Western Civilizations: Their History and Their Culture, 10th ed. (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1984), p. 753. From their list of selected readings for the section in which I found this study, it appears most likely that it originated in Louise Tilly and Joan W. Scott's, Women, Work and Family (New York, 1978). I have not as yet been able to find a copy of this work.

²One can cite a number of intellectual positions in the context of Vienna at the turn of the century which illustrate this point. One such belief was Mach's dictum that all human truth is ultimately subjective since our entire apprehension of the world is based upon our senses. With this basis he showed that all truths, even scientific ones, were relativistic. Another such example can be found in the belief of Ludwig Wittgenstein that through the media

of language it is impossible to have a complete correlation between what was originally thought and what was conveyed to another through the use of language.

³When one examines the assuredness with which the late nineteenth century Western World viewed virtually every aspect of human existence, one can but ponder the nature of their confidence. These individuals undertook projects like the building of the Suez and Panama canals with an alacrity which had little to do with what we now perceive as reality. When one considers the way in which Westerners viewed those whom they considered non-Western, one is amazed by not only their incredible belief in their own superiority, but also their complete lack of understanding of their own limitations. This all seems even more incredible when one considers the fact that at this very time the West's foremost thinkers were bringing into question nearly everything which was once held to be true. They were questioning the validity of everything from Newtonian physics and Euclidian geometry to the origins of man and the powers of human perception and reason. For these reasons it seems imperative that further investigation be made into this time period in order to better understand the world of today.

⁴Allan Janik and Stephen Toulmin, Wittgenstein's Vienna (New York: Simon Schuster, 1973), p. 17.

⁵This phrase is widely used in many works without citation. A few work imply that it might have originated with Karl Kraus, however, I have as yet found no proof of that fact.

⁶There are numerous works which deal with the era following the Napoleonic Wars and quite a large number on Metternich and his policies. For the specific material mentioned see: Hugo Hantsch, Die Geschichte Oesterreichs, 1648-1918, vol. 2 (Graz: Verlag Styria, 1968), pp. 282-85.

⁷There has been a great deal written on the Revolution of 1848 and the aftermath of its failure. The crux of my position is that, if the revolution would have succeeded, both liberals and the older nationalists would have gained a much wider base of support by having placed themselves into power than they did as a result of being place into positions of power by imperial fiat. I also believe that the monarchy itself would have enjoyed more support if it had been able to set its own house in order by the strength of its own forces rather than relying on the antagonisms among its national groups and the support of the Imperial Russian army to once again gain control of the situation within its lands.

⁸Richard Rickett, A Brief Survey of Austrian History (Vienna: Georg Prachner Verlag, 1966), p. 92.

⁹Hantsch, p. 380. My translation.

¹⁰Ibid., pp. 407-12.

¹¹I chose at this juncture and also later in this examination to include lengthy passages by Robert Musil. I did so because fully two-thirds of the works I examined dealing with Vienna and its culture chose to use excerpts from these passages, often in somewhat wanton fashion. I believe that in order to fully understand what Musil was saying in these passages, one must read them in their entirety. Concerning the importance of examining Musil's writing in order to better understand the condition of the Habsburg Monarchy in its final years I quote Janik and Toulmin, p. 36. "Robert Musil-- . . . (in) The Man Without Qualities, has captured the atmosphere of fin-de-siecle Vienna better than any historical or literary work-- . . ." With such an endorsement and my own belief in the value of his observations, I felt that his passages, when used, should not be butchered.

¹²Robert Musil, The Man Without Qualities, vol. 1, trans. Eithne Wilkins and Ernst Kaiser (London: Secker and Warburg, 1953; reprint ed., 1979), pp. 31-34.

¹³Among those who viewed Vienna as something of a fairy tale was Adolf Hitler as cited by Carl Schorske in his Fin-De-Siecle Vienna: Politics and Culture (New York: Random House, 1980), p. 46, from Hitler's Mein Kampf.

¹⁴While discussions of this issue have been bandied about for years, it seems most likely that the Ringstrasse was built in order to assert the ideals of the liberals who had just gained power in Austria. For a discussion of this see: Schorske, pp. 24-46.

¹⁵Arthur J. May, Vienna in the Age of Franz Josef (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1966), p. 6.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 5.

¹⁷Ibid.

¹⁸Ibid.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 33.

²⁰Ibid., Chapter 4, "A Flowering of Culture".

²¹Amos Elon, Herzl (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1975), p. 35.

²²Erich Zoellner, Geschichte Oesterreichs: Von den Anfaengen bis zur Gegenwart, 3rd ed. (Munich: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 1966), pp. 470-71.

²³Schorske, pp. 62-72. These views were primarily espoused by Camillo Sitte in numerous articles following the construction of the Ringstrasse.

²⁴Edward Timms, Karl Kraus, Apocalyptic Satirist: Culture and catastrophe in Habsburg Vienna (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986), p. 15.

²⁵Ludwig Muenz and Gustav Kuenstler, Adolf Loos: Pioneer of Modern Architecture, with an Introduction by Nikolaus Pevsner and an Appreciation by Oskar Kokoschka, trans. Harold Meek (London: Thames and Hudson, 1966), p. 18.

²⁶F. L. Carsten, Fascist Movements in Austria: From Schoenerer to Hitler (London: SAGE Publications, 1977), p. 19.

²⁷Examples of this can be found in the public reactions to Kokoschka's production, "Murderer, Hope of Women", and to presentations of the compositions of Schoenberg. For reference to the first see: Schorske, p. 338. For information on the second I rely on the anecdote related to me by an Austrian Culture professor while I was in Vienna, Frau Doctor Lehne, in which she said that at a public performance of a Schoenberg composition Gustav Mahler berated the crowd for the loud noises they were making during the performance; a member of the audience shouted back that it was alright because they always treated Mahler's compositions in the same fashion.

²⁸Carsten, p. 22.

THE CREATORS OF CULTURE

The individuals who played a major role in the creative innovation in Vienna around the turn of the century are not a uniformly well-known group. While the names of some, like Sigmund Freud, might be familiar to a fairly large number of people, others, such as Egon Schiele, are relatively unknown. As a consequence, it is helpful and informative to take a look at just who these individuals were and what they are noted for having accomplished. By making such an examination one can become relatively familiar with all of those who will be dealt with in this study and thus be able to better understand what was going on in Vienna at the turn of the century. In the interest of trying to view those who were instrumental in Viennese innovation holistically, the brief biographical material on each of them is presented in chronological order by date of birth rather than categorically by field of expertise. Perhaps in this fashion one can better view some of the common traits and interests among these individuals.

Otto Wagner (1841-1918)

Otto Wagner was born in the Viennese suburb of Penzing which was at that time still a country village. The son of a notary who died while Otto was still a boy, Wagner developed an early interest in architecture and went on to

study his craft under the tutelage of August Siccard von Siccardsburg and Eduard van der Nuell, the designers of the Opera House on the Ringstrasse.¹ After their untimely deaths (which were brought about in large by the controversy over the Opera House)² and the completion of his studies, Wagner went to work for a time with Ludwig von Foerster, another of the famous Ringstrasse architects.³ Wagner spent the next thirty years making a name for himself as an architect on the new buildings being erect on and around the Ringstrasse. While he was not responsible for designing any of the major public buildings along the street, he worked with virtually every major architect of the Ringstrasse Period. This is an important aspect of Wagner's career to remember, especially in light of the position he was to take during the 1890's. The work done on the Ringstrasse implemented historical styles in the designing of buildings rather than entirely original designs; in this way, Wagner, like the rest of the architects of the Ringstrasse, used the practice of historicism in his designs, the very practice which he was later to vehemently criticize.

Following the death of Karl von Hasenauer, another of the famous Ringstrasse architects, in 1894, Wagner was appointed to take his place as head of the Academy of Fine Arts. It was during his inaugural address upon assuming his new position that Wagner first presented his new views on the proper nature of architecture. He stated that, "all

modern forms must correspond to new materials and the new requirements of our time, if they are to fit modern mankind," and that, "it may be regarded as proved that art and artists always represent their own epoch."⁴ He went on to say that "what is unpractical can never be beautiful."⁵ While these remarks may not seem overly stunning in our own age, to the Viennese, who were used to expropriating historical forms for the designs of their structures and adorning their buildings with heavily decorated facades, these words were revolutionary.

In the years following his appointment to head the Academy, Wagner's architectural style went through a somewhat gradual, though ultimately dramatic, series of changes. Initially the changes were fairly minimal as most of his efforts during the 1890's were concentrated on the building of the city railway system for Vienna and the regulation of the Danube--projects which added greatly to his renown, but did not readily lend themselves to extensive stylistic experimentation. Prosaic as these projects may sound, they have made the architectural ideology of Otto Wagner an integral part of Vienna's structure, an architectural *leitmotiv* that permeates the entire city. According to Frank Borsi in his book on Viennese architecture at the turn of the century:

What counted was that, when he designed the Danube Canal and the city railway system, Wagner became a

miracle-worker of a modern Vienna, a Vienna that was not just composed of Baroque palaces and "suburban cemeteries." This Vienna was built up according to a mythical idea of modernity, and Wagner himself defined it as "the most modern of the modern."⁶

In 1899 Wagner joined the Secession movement which had been founded by Gustav Klimt and was dedicated to breaking away from historicism. It was following this event that Wagner's style really began to change. At first he was heavily influenced by his former students, Josef Maria Olbrich and Josef Hoffmann, and used *Jugendstil* motifs similar to their own; however, after a few years his work was once again distinctly his own as is evidenced by his Church on Steinhof and his Postal Savings Bank designs. In the construction of these structures Wagner employed new techniques in construction and designed them in a fashion which made those techniques both obvious and aesthetically pleasing.⁷

Wagner's final years were somewhat unhappy ones. His beloved student Josef Maria Olbrich had died in 1908 and Wagner's wife in 1915. Throughout these later years he was also plagued by an inability to win approval for the construction of any of his designs for monumental structures or for the furthering of his plan for the development of Vienna as a growing city. Finally, on February 6, 1918 he was forced to make a second entry in his diary which he addressed to his deceased wife. He wrote, "I have to write you again. Something terrible has happened. Klimt is

dead. If this stupid world only knew what it has lost today!"⁸ At about the same time Koloman Moser fell ill (he died on October 11, 1918). Those two, Klimt and Moser, had been Wagner's closest friends. Perhaps fortunately, Wagner was not around to hear of Moser's death, for he himself died on April 11, 1918, thus ending his long career as Vienna's premier architect.

Georg von Schoenerer (1842-1921)

Georg von Schoenerer was born in Lower Austria, the son of a wealthy Austrian railway builder who had been ennobled for his services to the Monarchy. Schoenerer spent seven years from the age of 14 to the age of 21 in Saxony and Wuerttemberg and there gained German nationalist leanings. He was very impressed with German efficiency, especially when compared to Austrian *Schlamperei*.¹⁰ Following the unification of Germany in 1871, Schoenerer was elected to the Austrian Parliament and almost immediately became associated with the German Progressive Club which was opposed to the *Ausgleich* with Hungary of 1867 and instead preferred a loose, purely dynastic union with Hungary.¹¹ The Club also promoted the separation of Galicia and Dalmatia from the Austrian half of the Monarchy in order to assure a German majority over the remaining portion.¹² This association illustrates Schoenerer's early nationalist sympathies.

Schoenerer's entire career was spent espousing increasingly radical programs in an attempt to secure a reunification of the German provinces of the Habsburg Monarchy with the rest of Germany. In 1878, after calling for such a reunification in Parliament, Schoenerer became the hero of the German nationalist students and began a fairly close relationship with them, an association which is seen by some as the origin of Schoenerer's anti-Semitic ideology.¹³ He did not immediately start emphasizing this issue; instead, he maintained his position in the radical wing of the Liberal Party. In 1882 Schoenerer took part in the drafting of the historic *Linz Programme* of the German Liberals along with the future leading socialists, Viktor Adler and Engelbert Pernerstorfer, the future Christian Social leader Robert Pattai, and the historian Heinrich Friedjung.¹⁴ While this program was wildly nationalistic and sought major structural changes in the Habsburg Monarchy, it was not racially anti-Semitic, a fact evidenced by the presence of Adler and Friedjung among its authors, both of whom were of Jewish origins. By 1887 that had changed, at least as far as Schoenerer was concerned. Heavily influenced by the nationalist student organizations, he moved beyond anti-Semitism for economic and social reasons and promoted racial anti-Semitism, thus setting himself apart from the main stream of Austrian anti-Semitism.¹⁵

Gradually Schoenerer destroyed his own base of support, which had been among the rural peasantry of Lower Austria, by becoming increasingly hostile towards those things which he saw as hindering unification with Germany. While support for such a union was fairly wide-spread in the German populated provinces of Austria, by attacking all other races, the Catholic Church, and even the Habsburgs as elements which were hindering such an eventuality, Schoenerer succeeded in leaving himself with virtually no popular support among his own constituency. He sealed his public fate when he and his supporters took it upon themselves to physically chastise members of the press for their disrespect towards Germany, thus getting himself removed from public life for a number of years as well as costing him his patent of nobility.¹⁶ While his Pan-Germanic Party enjoyed its greatest electoral success in the elections of 1901¹⁷, its support was mainly limited to the German portions of Bohemia and Moravia which were at that point involved in an increasingly open conflict with Czech nationalists. After the franchise was extended, even that support disappeared so that finally Schoenerer himself was willing to admit that his struggle had been in vain. Little did he realize that the goal he had sought to achieve would be accomplished some seventeen years after his death by a man who was inspired by Schoenerer's efforts and exhortations. One has to wonder what Georg von Schoenerer

would have thought of Adolf Hitler.

Karl Lueger (1844-1910)

Lueger was born in 1844 in Vienna, the son of a former soldier who worked as a low level civil servant at the Polytechnical Institute. Although his family was lower middle class, Lueger was able to attend the *Theresianum*, gymnasia of the nobility and service elite, and graduated from there with high honors.¹⁸ He went on to study law at the University of Vienna where, in his final oral examination, he defended the ideas of universal suffrage and social reform, as well as the thesis that, "the nationality idea is destructive and obstacle to the progress of mankind."¹⁹ In view of the prevailing nationalist sentiment of the time, especially among the university students of Vienna, his position was anything but popular. In fact, when he returned to the university later that year, 1870, to combat Prussophil nationalism following the outbreak of the Franco-Prussian War, he nearly caused a riot by proclaiming that the North German colors were "the product of despotic arbitrariness."²⁰

In 1872 Lueger joined the German Democratic Club and began his career in Viennese politics.²¹ Lueger immediately demonstrated the tendency which he would maintain throughout his career by switching allegiance and joining the liberal *Buergerklub* because he felt too restricted under the tyranny

of his former club's leader. For a time Lueger was content to contain his activities to the politics of his own district, but before long he showed an interest in making a name for himself throughout the city. In order to gain a place for himself on the city council, Lueger ostensibly joined the *Mittelpartei*, but in reality became associated with the Democratic Club.²² Throughout all these changes in affiliation Lueger became fairly closely associated with the Jewish Democrat, Ignaz Mandl. Together they opposed governmental corruption, iron-fisted party leadership, and the dominant position of big business in the city as opposed to the small shop owners and producers. Such were the recurring themes in Lueger's political convictions throughout a myriad of party affiliations.

What ultimately emerged was that Lueger, playing to the sympathies of his petit bourgeois and artisan supporters, developed a series of political convictions which he proceeded to espouse in speeches which, through skillful use of the local dialect, played on the sympathies of his Viennese audience. Since his supporters were opposed to big business, he was opposed to big business; since they were anti-Semitic, he was anti-Semitic; since they were supporters of Catholicism, he was a supporter of Catholicism. Although not the creator of Christian Socialism as an idea, Lueger brought life to its program in a way which individuals such as Karl von Vogelsang²³ never

could have accomplished. Lueger had an understanding of his constituency which allowed him to seem like he was both leading them and following them at the same time. His use of anti-Semitism as a political issue is widely known, however Lueger, unlike Schoenerer, was able to control it and use it for his own ends rather than allowing anti-Semitism to control him. As a result of all of this one would say that Lueger was a consummate politician who gained firm control over the Viennese electorate through his skillful playing to their sympathies. Although the emperor Franz Josef tried to prevent Lueger from coming to power by refusing to approve his election as mayor of Vienna the first three times he was elected, Lueger was finally confirmed as mayor in 1897 and held that position until his death in 1910. For some fifteen years, Vienna belonged to Lueger.

What Lueger had achieved was significant. He had defeated the forces of Liberalism and thrown them from their one-time stronghold of Vienna. By the skillful use of demagoguery he was able to construct a coalition of interests in support of himself and was able to use that coalition to implement his own plans for Vienna²⁴, without actually carrying out any of the objectives which he had proclaimed so loudly in his speeches and which had allowed him to form his coalition. Lueger was able to weld together the support of those elements of society which were unable

to cope with the changes taking place in the modern world, yet did so without ever having to resort to ludicrous schemes aimed at recreating the world as it once was--the general wish of his constituency. He gained their support by saying what they wanted to hear, yet kept them happy without ever doing what they said they wanted done.

Viktor Adler (1852-1918)

Viktor Adler was born in Prague, the son of a wealthy businessman of Jewish descent. His father moved his family to Vienna while Viktor was still young. In Vienna Adler attended the *Schottengymnasium* and there acquired a close group of friends with whom he would maintain contact throughout the rest of his life. While young, Adler and his circle of friends were deeply involved in the German Nationalist movement and Adler especially submerged himself in its Wagnerian ideology.²⁵ While at the University of Vienna he was involved in the German Reading Club, a highly nationalistic organization, and served as one of its prominent leaders.²⁶ Adler studied medicine while at the university and soon became a physician. As such he worked for a number of years at the Meynert Clinic and while there came to oppose the therapeutic nihilism of Viennese medicine which, though it was world-renowned for its excellence, preferred postmortems to prescriptions.²⁷ It seems that Adler cared too much for his patients, who were generally

from the working class, to just sit by and watch them die.

While technically considered a Jew, Adler was baptized a Christian in 1878 and throughout his life held the majority of Jews in contempt.²⁸ This was, however, not at all unusual; most of the highly educated Jews in the Habsburg Monarchy were to some extent anti-Semitic. They revelled in German culture and were only too willing to denigrate the culture of Eastern European Jews. Adler's own willingness to help compose the *Linz Programme*, which was highly nationalistic and tacitly anti-Semitic, shows the nature of his own sympathies.

Adler, like Schoenerer and Lueger, started out as a member of the Liberal Party, albeit its most radical wing. He, like the other two, soon found that his association with that group was less than satisfying. In 1885 Adler joined the Socialist Party and by 1888 was able to unify its various factions at the party congress of Hainfeld into the Social Democratic Workers' Party.²⁹ According to a fellow socialist leader, Karl Kautsky, "With Adler's entry into their ranks, the dominance of political naivete came to an end."³⁰

Adler sought to educate the workers and thus to create for them a cultural position which would ready them for taking over and running the country when the time eventually came for them to do so. Moreover, Adler believed that such a goal could be achieved without having to resort to

violence, a belief which set himself and Austro-Marxism apart from more revolutionary forms of socialism. Adler went so far in his belief of evolutionary change that he was actually willing to support the continuation of the Habsburg Monarchy as the only possible solution for the meantime of the nationalities problem in Central Europe, even though such a belief directly countered his own nationalistic feelings. This is not to say, however, that he abandoned the ideals of his youth. McGrath writes that,

. . . viewing Adler's later career in the light of his Wagnerian background reveals that even within the context of socialist, working-class politics, Adler's attitudes and actions continued to be influenced by his youthful enthusiasm for the cultural theories of Wagner and Nietzsche.³¹

In the end Adler succeeded in creating one of the most highly unified Marxist parties in Europe as well as one of the most intellectual.³² It is interesting to note that, were it not for the personal intervention of Viktor Adler, Trotsky and Lenin would most probably have spent the duration of the First World War in Austrian detention.³³ In that act alone he helped to shape history.

Sigmund Freud (1856-1939)

Sigmund Freud is perhaps one of the best known of Viennese, especially in the English speaking world, and one of the most extensively analyzed individuals in history. As a consequence, the comments on his life will be brief. He was born in Freiberg in Moravia, the son of a Jewish merchant. His family moved to Vienna in 1860 and Freud resided there for most of his life. Freud was an exceptionally bright student and entered the *Sperlgymnasium* a year earlier than is usual and graduated first in his class at the age of seventeen.³⁴ By then, he was already familiar with Nietzsche's writings and wrote of them that they were "where I hope to find the words for much that is mute within me."³⁵

In 1873 Freud entered the University of Vienna and in 1881 he obtained his medical certification. While there he had joined a German nationalist group and had been influenced in his thinking by Franz Brentano, Ernst Bruecke and Theodor Meynert as instructors and by the writings of Goethe, Carlyle, Darwin, J.S. Mill, Fechner and Hemholz.³⁶ Freud, like Adler and Schnitzler, worked for a time following the completion of his studies in the Meynert Clinic which provided him with a broad view of human suffering. In 1885 Freud received an award to study in Paris with Jean-Martin Charcot. It was while there that

Freud became intrigued with the treatment of neuroses, rather than just the examination of them.³⁷ By 1886 he had moved into the field of psychopathology, a move which eventually led him into psychoanalysis through his association with Joseph Breuer.³⁸ As a result of his studies and his publication of works such as The Interpretation of Dreams (1902), Freud became one of the twentieth century's most well-known proponents of the examination of the human subconscious.

Theodor Herzl (1860-1904)

Theodor Herzl was born in Budapest and lived there until the age of eighteen. His father was a Jewish entrepreneur and the Herzl family was German in both language and culture.³⁹ Although he did not come to Vienna until he had grown up, Herzl was entirely Viennese (one author comments that Herzl was "more Viennese than the Danube,"⁴⁰ an interesting statement considering that the Danube is a much more central feature of Budapest than it is of Vienna). Once in Vienna Herzl enrolled in the university as a law student; however, his pursuit of his studies was extremely casual as he was more interested in playing the role of one of the Viennese literati than in studying law.⁴¹ Herzl was obsessed with the theater and with Wagnerian music and spent much of his time in the Viennese cafes discussing such things. Herzl, like many other Jewish

intellectuals, was a German nationalist in the cultural sense and felt that the Jews of Eastern Europe were beneath contempt.⁴²

Herzl's lifelong desire was to become a playwright, but his early attempts met with failure. Finally he turned to the writing of feuilletons and, as a result of his proficiency, became the Paris correspondent for the *Neue Freie Presse*. While in Paris, Herzl saw first hand the Dreyfus Affair which convinced him to give up his assimilationist views and to become a Zionist.⁴³ The fact that such an anti-Semitic uproar could occur in civilized France convinced Herzl that assimilation was a false dream and that the Jew had no place in Europe.⁴⁴ It was not long afterward that he published his book, The Jewish State (1896), and organized the Zionist movement, both aimed at finding a place in the world for the Jewish people. His movement finally succeeded nearly forty-five years after his death with the creation of the state of Israel.

Gustav Mahler (1860-1911)

Gustav Mahler was born in the Bohemian town of Kaliste and spent his early years in the town of Iglau. His father was a local coachman who had acquired a small liquor store and thus became a businessman.⁴⁵ At an early age Mahler showed a talent for music and was encouraged by his parents in his musical studies. In 1870, in order to further his

musical education, Mahler was sent to Prague to study piano and to attend the gymnasium there.⁴⁶ His stay in Prague was not a pleasant one and he soon returned home. That is not to say that his musical talent was inadequate, quite the contrary; by 1875 Mahler was enrolled in the Vienna Conservatory where he distinguished himself as a talented music student. While there, he won two first prizes for his performance on the piano and two for his composition.⁴⁷ Financially these years were not easy for Mahler and he subsisted on what he could earn by giving music lessons. While studying in Vienna, however, he became acquainted with Viktor Adler and his circle of friends. Adler was so impressed with Mahler that he purchased for him the most expensive piano he could find and spent a considerable amount of time seeking out students for Mahler to teach.⁴⁸

Upon his graduation from the Conservatory Mahler decided to become a conductor. While his previous interest had always focused on becoming a pianist and a composer, Mahler convinced himself that his work was not good enough after hearing performances by Liszt and Rubenstein and after having one of his compositions rejected in a competition.⁴⁹ As a result, he took a position as the conductor of a small regional opera in Laibach. From there onwards Mahler's career went through a rapid series of advances as he moved upwards to increasingly prestigious conducting positions. Finally, in 1897, he was made conductor and director of the

Imperial Opera in Vienna. At that time the Viennese Philharmonic was the most prestigious orchestra in the world. While the members of the Philharmonic served under Mahler at the Opera during his ten year tenure, they also elected him for a time to serve as their conductor within their own music hall. It is said that the Viennese Opera reached its highest heights under the directorship of Gustav Mahler.⁵⁰

While his conducting made him famous, during his lifetime Mahler's compositions were generally ridiculed or ignored. Perhaps the problem with his music was that it was too philosophical for his audience. It has been said about Mahler that, "metaphysical thoughts, searching for God, fear of Eternity, the Glory of Heaven all calmed and entranced him."⁵¹ If this is so, it is made overwhelmingly apparent in his music. Mahler actually used one of Nietzsche's poems in his Third Symphony thus emphasizing his music's close ties to philosophy.⁵²

Throughout his entire life Mahler felt somewhat alienated. It was an alienation that went beyond the simple fact that his music was not widely accepted. He summed up some of what he felt when he stated that he was thrice isolated--"as a Bohemian among Austrians, as an Austrian among Germans, as a Jew throughout the world."⁵³ In 1907 Mahler gave up his position in Vienna and went to the United States to head up the opera in New York. His stay there did

not last long, for by 1911 he was dead. It is perhaps ironic that his music, like so many others, has only come to be appreciated after his death.

Arthur Schnitzler (1862-1931)

Arthur Schnitzler was born in Vienna, the son of a Jewish doctor. His father had originally come from Hungary and had moved to Vienna to practice medicine. It is interesting to note (in light of Schnitzler's own career) that as a student Schnitzler's father was thought to have great talent as a playwright.⁵⁴ From an early age Schnitzler had an interest in the theater, an interest which was no doubt partially fostered by the fact that his father was a specialist in laryngology and many of his patients were actors and actresses. Whatever the case, Schnitzler found the world of the theater fascinating.

In his youth Schnitzler made his way around Vienna, especially some of its seamier districts, and thus acquired quite a familiarity with his future play topics. His autobiography, which covers his early years in Vienna, paints a frank portrait of a sexually liberated individual who was more than willing to break a few moral codes. He points out in his autobiography as well as in his plays that virtually every one was breaking them, although some were less than honest in admitting the fact.⁵⁵

Schnitzler went on to study medicine at the university

and became a doctor. Like Freud and Adler, he studied under Meynert and showed a primary interest in psychiatry. As a doctor he had numerous occasions to witness death, which, along with sexuality, was carefully dissected as a major theme in his plays.⁵⁶

It is interesting to note just how much of the material for his plays was garnered from his Viennese surroundings.⁵⁷ Schnitzler's plays focused on sexuality, morality, and death and did so through deeply psychological portraits of the characters involved. Considering how much his plays dealt with the subconscious, it is not surprising that Freud viewed Schnitzler as his double.⁵⁸ Overall Schnitzler's work has been viewed alternately as the clearest picture of Austrian society at the turn of the century and as the perfect example of the decadence of that society.⁵⁹

Gustav Klimt (1862-1918)

Klimt was born in the Viennese suburb of Baumgarten which at the time of his birth was still a country village. His father was a goldsmith and an engraver who had come to the Viennese area from Bohemia.⁶⁰ Klimt's father must have instilled in his sons an interest in creating things because two of the three became painters and the other a goldsmith like his father. Gustav and his brother Ernst both studied painting at the newly founded School of Arts

and Crafts.⁶¹ At this school they gained both the technical skills in their chosen discipline as well as an extensive education on the history of art and design. Klimt became an architectural decorator upon leaving the school and soon had an opportunity to make a name for himself by working on the last two monumental buildings on the Ringstrasse: the *Burgtheater* and the Museum of Art History.⁶²

As a result of the success of his work on these buildings, Klimt was soon widely acclaimed as an artist. His brother's death, while personally upsetting to Klimt, could only have helped to make him individually more prominent in the public eye since they had previously collaborated on their works. At this time Klimt's paintings were essentially historical in nature and virtually photographic in style. Already he had "developed a marauding eye for handsome motifs"⁶³ with which to adorn his paintings. He employed them in his historical paintings as devices on background items within the paintings. In 1884, the Ministry of Culture and Education commissioned Klimt to design three ceiling paintings for the ceremonial hall of the university.⁶⁴ At this point in his career Klimt was at the top of the Viennese art world.

Before he actually got around to carrying out the university paintings, Klimt went through a number of stylistic changes. Inspired by artists in France and elsewhere, in 1897 Klimt led a group of artists out of the

established artists' association and founded the Viennese Secession. The group took as its purpose the regeneration of art and chose as its motto "*Der Zeit Ihre Kunst, Der Kunst Ihre Freiheit*" (The Age its Art, the Art its Freedom).⁶⁵ Needless to say, the work which Klimt finally presented to the university was not exactly what the faculty of the university had expected to receive. More bluntly put, "by pressing a private iconography upon the general public Klimt lost, in the opening year of the twentieth century, the universal acclaim which had previously pronounced him the greatest living Austrian painter."⁶⁶ Things were not entirely bad, however; Klimt was soon supporting himself by means of privately commissioned portraits, something of a lucrative business in Vienna at the time.

One might think that an individual would lose a certain degree of his artistic creativity if he was forced to rely primarily upon commissioned portraits for his livelihood. With Klimt such was not the case. Many of his most famous and innovative works are portraits which gained their fame as a result of the creativity he put into them as well as their beautiful use of color. In undertaking to create a modern art Klimt did not eschew his usage of decorative motifs, quite conversely he expanded his use of such items. His portraits are made up almost entirely of a mosaic of colorful designs picked up from dozens of

different cultures and time periods. Often only the hands and the face remain in his stylized world as points of reference to that which exists outside the painting. His skillful use of color and decoration created for Klimt a prominent position in the world of painting.

Josef Hoffmann (1870-1956)

Josef Hoffmann was born in the Moravian town of Pirnitz, where his father was mayor, a major land and property owner, and part owner of a cotton manufacturing plant.⁶⁷ When he became old enough, Hoffmann was sent away to Iglau to attend the gymnasium; there Adolf Loos was also a student.⁶⁸ In 1887 Hoffmann left Iglau and went to Bruenn to study architecture at the State Technical School. Perhaps rather surprisingly since they were both to become famous Viennese architects, Adolf Loos was also a student at the State Technical School in Bruenn in 1888-1889.⁶⁹ Hoffmann arrived in Vienna in 1892 and enrolled in the Academy of Fine Arts with his mind set on a career as an architect. When he first arrived Hasenauer⁷⁰ was the head of the Academy, but shortly thereafter Otto Wagner took over as its director. Hoffmann was a brilliant student and was soon one of Wagner's favorites, as was Josef Maria Olbrich who had just graduated from the academy prior to Hoffmann's arrival. Hoffmann's stay at the Academy was very successful for, while there, he won every prize that the Academy

awarded.⁷¹

Hoffmann began his professional career in the shadow of Olbrich. Olbrich himself was a brilliant architect and his ideas on building were attractive, not only to Hoffmann, but even to the mentor of both Hoffmann and Olbrich--Otto Wagner. It is not surprising then that many of Hoffmann's earliest works closely followed the *art nouveau* style of Olbrich. It was on account of this style that Loos chose to attack the work of both Hoffmann and Olbrich.⁷² It was not long before Hoffmann and Olbrich were working in close association with the members of the Secession in the effort to create a style of art for the modern world; soon both joined the Secession.

Upon joining the Secession Hoffmann initiated a continuing collaboration with two of its leading figures: Gustav Klimt and Koloman Moser. Working closely with Klimt, Hoffmann supervised and designed the layout for the exhibition honoring Max Klinger's polychrome statue of Beethoven and Beethoven himself. Hoffmann also worked with Klimt in incorporating some of Klimt's works into his architectural designs. It was, however, with Moser that his closest collaboration would take place. Together they founded the *Wiener Werkstaette* which sought to create modern designs for all items of personal human use. Their crowning achievement was the Palais Stoclet in which the house and everything in it was specifically designed and constructed

to create a unified work of art. It is somewhat ironic that this preeminent creation of the Viennese Workshops is found in Brussels rather than in Vienna. Overall Hoffmann played a major role in the artistic events during the first decade of the twentieth century.

Adolf Loos (1870-1933)

Adolf Loos was born in the Moravian city of Bruenn, the son of a stonemason who died while Loos was just a boy.⁷³ Like Hoffmann, he studied in both Iglau and Bruenn and concentrated on studying architecture. In 1893 Loos travelled to the United States and spent the next three years living there. It was during this period that he developed his deep respect for things American and English. When he returned to Vienna, Loos was initially interested in the ideas of the Secession, but soon came to detest them. As far as the architectural situation in Vienna was concerned, the following sums up his feelings:

In the context of Vienna at the turn of the century, Loos felt respect for Wagner ("I capitulate to Otto Wagner's genius") but an open aversion for his school and its attractive graphism ("The best draftsman can be a bad architect and the best architect can be a bad draftsman").⁷⁴

As far as Hoffmann and Olbrich were concerned, Loos had a certain degree of understanding for the former, but a total aversion for the latter.⁷⁵

Loos felt that the problem with *art nouveau* was that it, like the historicism it sought to eliminate, stifled

creativity and sacrificed function in the interest of form. In 1908 he published his view in an essay entitled "Ornament and Crime." At about that same time he embroiled himself in a controversy over his design for the House on Michaelerplatz or the so-called "House without Eyebrows." Its stark, undecorated facade caused something of a stir, especially due to the fact that it was located directly across the street from one of the ornate, baroque gates into the *Hofburg* and inspired the aging Franz Josef to proclaim that he would never use that gate again so that he would not have to gaze upon that eyesore across the way. Loos was backed in his cultural battle over the building not only by his close friends such as Kraus, Altenberg, and Trakl, but also by Otto Wagner.⁷⁶ It was the sad plight of his career that Loos was seldom given the opportunity to display his architectural ideas in any important structures. Almost the entire scope of his building was limited to a handful of private residences.

Karl Kraus (1874-1936)

Karl Kraus was born in northern Bohemia, the son of a Jewish paper manufacturer who moved his family to Vienna when Kraus was three.⁷⁷ In Vienna Kraus grew up with a love of the theater. He began his studies at the University of Vienna in the field of law, but soon switched to literature where he could better focus on his beloved drama.⁷⁸

Although he always wanted to become an actor, his terrible performance in his first public appearance convinced him to give up acting as a career. While in his early twenties Kraus became involved in writing and produced a number of essays of literary and theatrical criticism. Soon thereafter he was offered a job with the newspaper *Die Neue Freie Presse*. Kraus, however, decided that it was better to be against the newspapers than with them, so he turned down the offer and set out to publish his own works.

Kraus' first independent publications were satirical pamphlets which began appearing in 1897. By 1899 he had decided to found his own magazine and thus was born *Die Fackel*. This small, red magazine was to be published at intermittent intervals throughout the rest of his life. Kraus presented all kinds of criticism and satire within his magazine and it was soon the rage throughout Vienna. In its pages Kraus waged his struggle for the proper use of language, an issue which he saw as fundamental to the well-being of human society. Kraus is also well-known for his other writings, especially ones such as his book-length play, *Die letzten Tagen der Menschheit*, which was an attack on the First World War written during the war and comprised of what essentially amounted to verbatim presentations of the stupidities uttered by his fellow countrymen.

Kraus, like many of his contemporaries, was culturally anti-Semitic.⁷⁹ He spent much of his energies attacking the

Jewish Press and unceasingly pointing out its blunders and its stupidity. Although it often seemed that he opposed everything and everyone, Kraus in fact had a tight group of close, like-minded friends. It is not surprising that other iconoclastic individuals such as Loos, Schoenberg, and Kokoschka became the friends of Karl Kraus--they were in many respects waging the same battle and thus were natural allies.

Arnold Schoenberg (1874-1951)

Arnold Schoenberg was a native of Vienna. His father was born in Szecseny and had come to Vienna as a teenager to make his fortune. Schoenberg's mother came originally from Prague. Both parents were from Jewish families and once married they lived in the Second District where they ran a small shoeshop.⁸⁰ Schoenberg, like Schnitzler and Kraus, grew up in Vienna and took an active part in its abundant cultural opportunities. Although he was not an outstanding student, he showed an early interest in music, an interest which eventually led him and some of his friends to put together a small musical ensemble. His father's untimely death at the end of 1890 left the family in difficult circumstances so that Schoenberg had to leave *Realschule* and find a job. His mother acquired for him a position as an apprentice in a bank, however, Schoenberg did not last there very long.⁸¹ Instead he declared that he was going to make

his living as a musician, a task which was, considering the abundance of musicians in Vienna at the time, virtually impossible. For the next several years Schoenberg eked out a living by playing when he could and by directing workers' choruses.

Throughout years of living a virtually day to day existence, Schoenberg spent whatever free time he had working on compositions. That could not have been a great deal of time for it is known that even as late as 1911 his financial status was so bad that Gustav Mahler was afraid that his own death would leave Schoenberg without any support.⁸² His compositions were, from the very start, very unusual, long before the formulation of his famed twelve-tone system of composition. Mahler, though he often supported the younger man's work, proclaimed that he himself was unable to understand Schoenberg's music.⁸³

Schoenberg himself virtually worshiped Mahler. He considered Mahler a genius even if no one else recognized that fact. Nor was this devotion given solely to Mahler, throughout his entire life he practiced a kind of hero worship which also had others such as Richard Strauss as its object.

In his innermost being Schoenberg was a religious man. Belief in genius could not be separated from his view of art. He wanted to admire and honor, and did this with unbounded devotion, if he recognized greatness in other people.⁸⁴

This was the Schoenberg of Late Imperial Vienna.

Schoenberg was an individual who sought to redefine the rules of tonality. Whereas in the past there had always been a fixed key which served as the center of the tonal structure, Schoenberg wished to break away from the necessity of setting a tonal center, especially since the importance of the tonal center had eroded throughout the course of the nineteenth century as a heightened emphasis on dissonance entered musical compositions.⁸⁵ Eventually Schoenberg developed the twelve-tone system, which he had perfected by 1920, which allowed a structuring of music without the preconceived tonality of the old system of musical composition.⁸⁶ Schoenberg was a multi-faceted individual and showed accomplishment not only in composition, but also in painting, writing, and teaching.

Robert Musil (1880-1942)

Robert Musil was born in 1880 in the city of Klagenfurt. His father was an engineer who soon moved the family to Bruenn where he became professor of machine construction at the Technological University. Musil's maternal grandfather had been one of the builders of the first European railway which ran between Linz and Budweis.⁸⁷ With such a background it was not too surprising that Musil himself studied to be an engineer and actually gained his degree in 1901. After spending a year of compulsory service in the military, Musil took the position

of an assistant professor of engineering at the Technological University of Stuttgart. However, he was not satisfied, and soon moved to Berlin to study philosophy, mathematics, physics, and experimental psychology at the University of Berlin.⁸⁸ While there, he published his first novel, Young Toerless, which described the experiences of a young boy in an Austrian school. In 1908 Musil received his Doctor of Philosophy degree with his thesis entitled: A Contribution to the Assessment of Mach's Theories.⁸⁹ Following this he was offered a position at the University of Graz which he declined.

By present day standards, Musil was a strange mixture of intellectual interests. One writer described him as follows:

Combine the attitudes towards man of Swift, Freud, Nietzsche, Valery, Shaw and Bertrand Russell, and the result will roughly delineate the mind of Robert Musil, who was at various times a soldier, an engineer, a philosopher, and experimental psychologist, a librarian, an editor, a dramatic critic, a consultant on military education, and finally, "nothing but a writer."⁹⁰

Musil attempted throughout his life to explain the crisis of the modern world and to help end that crisis through his writings.

Like Nietzsche, he believed that culture had lost its unity. It is indeed significant that he accepted Nietzsche's dictum that cultural decadence prevailed if culture was no longer pervaded by a sense of wholeness, which was manifested in all its aspects. Like Nietzsche, he felt that it was the artist's task to restore that unity, but unlike Nietzsche he did not judge modern culture by reference to criteria supplied by Ancient Greece.⁹¹

With this in mind Musil set for himself the task of achieving a synthesis between art and science.⁹²

Although his greatest work, The Man Without Qualities, was both unfinished and written after the end of the Habsburg Monarchy, it has been viewed by many as the most accurate portrayal of the last years of "Kakania". As a book it explores the situation in the final years of the Habsburg Monarchy by carefully examining various individuals and showing what it was that motivated them in their actions. It also seeks through Ulrich, the title character, to give an example of what modern man ought to be. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, it gives insights into just what the Habsburg Monarchy was during its final years, allowing readers to assess just what the world has lost through its passing. Musil never finished the work and ended up dying in Swiss exile in 1942, an escapee of the Nazi regime.

Oskar Kokoschka (1886-1980)

Oskar Kokoschka was born in the town of Poechlarn, a small town on the Danube, due west of Vienna. Kokoschka came from a family which was quite poor. His father had grown up in Prague and had been trained as a goldsmith in the family business. Due to industrialization, however, goldsmithery had become unprofitable and even a move to Vienna was not enough to reverse his flagging fortune. As a

result Kokoschka's father took up repairing watches and worked as an agent for a relative who sold jewelry.⁹³ All in all, Kokoschka spent much of his youth moving around with his family while his father sought work.

In 1904 Kokoschka began studying at the Arts and Crafts School in Vienna. He hoped to become an art teacher through the training that he received at that school. This changed in 1908 when his teacher urged that some of his works be included in the *Kunstschau* which was emphasizing that particular year "The Art of the Child".⁹⁴ It was as a result of this art show that Kokoschka began to focus on living the life of a painter rather than that of an art teacher. Although his works were not exactly what was expected, they all sold. However, at the following year's show Kokoschka sought to examine eros as pure aggression in a short play entitled Murderer, Hope of Women.⁹⁵ The subsequent furor cost Kokoschka his financial support at the Arts and Crafts School, but also brought him to the attention of Adolf Loos.⁹⁶ Over the next several years Loos provided Kokoschka not only with financial support, but also with patrons who wished to have him paint their portraits.⁹⁷

With his introduction into the world of the Viennese iconoclasts, Kokoschka was soon able to pursue his career without being concerned about finding patrons. Over the next several years he began to paint works which have been described as being similar to the plays of Schnitzler due to

the surgical fashion in which they both laid bare the human psyche.⁹⁸ As far as his reputation as an artist was concerned, Kokoschka was one of the very few of the Viennese innovators who lived long enough to see their works widely praised. That is, it seems, one of the benefits of living a long life.

Egon Schiele (1890-1918)

Egon Schiele was born in the town of Tulln on the Austrian Danube. His father was a railway stationmaster and thus Schiele "grew up in the typical middle-class environment of a civil servant."⁹⁹ Schiele's father died in 1905 and the following year Schiele enrolled in the Academy of the Visual Arts in Vienna.¹⁰⁰ In 1907 he first met Gustav Klimt and a friendship was formed which would last until Klimt's death. It has been said that "the seventeen year-old Schiele worshipped the forty-five year-old Klimt, who somehow fulfilled the role of a spiritual father."¹⁰¹ In spite of this relationship, Schiele was never Klimt's student, but then neither was anyone else.¹⁰² Klimt did, however, provide him with a certain degree of guidance and introduced him to Wagner and Hoffmann in 1910.

In 1908 Schiele had his first public showing in Klosterneuburg. By the following year he was ready to show in Vienna proper. Schiele's work, in spite of his friendship with Klimt, did not resemble the work of the

older artist in the least. Schiele's works examined two themes, death and sexuality, and did so in a fashion that seldom elicited feelings of contentment in viewers. His figures were starkly portrayed, frequently in strangely contorted positions, and "Schiele painted his cityscapes and landscapes as nakedly as he treated the human form, unabashedly recording sensuality as he perceived it."¹⁰³

It is safe to say that Schiele's work was not always appreciated by his contemporaries. He was once arrested on charges of sexually abusing minors through his painting, a charge which, although proved to be false, still caused him to endure the humiliation of imprisonment and of having to watch a judge burn one of his paintings in front of him.¹⁰⁴ All the same, it is felt that Schiele would have become one of the major painters of the twentieth century, and a feeling is all it must remain, for Schiele died at the age of twenty-eight, a victim along with his wife of the influenza epidemic which swept Europe at the end of the First World War. Along with Klimt, Wagner, Adler, and Moser, Schiele died with the empire of which he had been a part.

NOTES

¹Heinz Geretsegger and Max Peintner, Otto Wagner 1841-1918: The Expanding City, The Beginning of Modern Architecture, with an Introduction by Richard Neustra, trans. Gerald Onn (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1964), p. 9.

²Eduard van der Nuell committed suicide because of the criticism leveled against the Opera House and Siccardsburg destroyed his health to such an extent that he died within a year of the completion of the Opera House.

³Geretsegger and Peintner, p. 9.

⁴Ludwig Muenz and Gustav Kuenstler, Adolf Loos: Pioneer of Modern Architecture, with an Introduction by Nikolaus Pevsner and an Appreciation by Oskar Kokoschka, trans. Harold Meek (London: Thames and Hudson, 1966), p. 14.

⁵Ibid.

⁶Franco Borsi and Ezio Godoli, Vienna 1900: Architecture and Design (New York: Rizzoli International, 1986), p. 31.

⁷Arthur J. May, Vienna in the Age of Franz Josef (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1966), pp. 110-111.

⁸Geretsegger and Peintner, p. 18.

⁹Koloman Moser was one of the original founders of the Viennese Secession and along with Josef Hoffmann founded the *Wiener Werkstaette*. He was initially a painter but eventually dabbled in many artistic endeavors.

¹⁰F. L. Carsten, Fascist Movements in Austria: From Schoenerer to Hitler (London: SAGE Publications, 1977), p. 12.

¹¹Ibid.

¹²Ibid.

¹³Ibid.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 13.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 14.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 19.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 24. In 1901 Schoenerer's Pan-Germanic Party won 21 seats in the *Reichsrat*.

¹⁸John W. Boyer, Political Radicalism in Late Imperial Vienna: Origins of the Christian Social Movement (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), p. 185.

¹⁹Carl E. Schorske, Fin-De-Siecle Vienna: Politics and

Culture (New York: Random House, 1981), p. 136.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Boyer, p. 191.

²² Ibid.

²³ Vogelsang originated many of the ideas of Christian Socialism during the latter part of the nineteenth century and has been credited as having been the ideological founder of the movement.

²⁴ May, pp. 95-97. The municipal program of Karl Lueger included the building of a municipally owned gasworks, a municipally owned electrical works, and electrified street railways. These undertakings all included the buying out of all other competition as well. Lueger's administration solved the city's long-time water problem by building a 113 mile long aqueduct from the Styrian Alps to the city. Sewers were constructed for the city, roads were paved, and streets were widened to facilitate modern traffic. The Danube was further regulated and another bridge was built across the river. His administration also constructed a children's hospital, orphanages, the *Am Steinhof* asylum for the mentally ill (it was essentially a city in miniature), a home for the aged, hostels and soup kitchens for the indigent, day-care centers for the children of working mothers, and nearly one hundred new schools with light and airy classrooms. Under Lueger's leadership the city expanded public baths as well as swimming and boating facilities. It also established an employment bureau, established an insurance company, and instituted an inexpensive burial service. The Central Cemetery was beautified, parks and woodlands were expanded, and outdoor beauties were better preserved. Lueger's administration bought a brewery for the city and turned the basement of city hall into a vast place for citizens of the city to wine and dine. They also set up adult education programs throughout the city.

²⁵ William J. McGrath, Dionysian Art and Populist Politics in Austria (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974), p. 208.

²⁶ William M. Johnston, The Austrian Mind: An Intellectual and Social History, 1848-1938 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972), p. 99.

²⁷ Ibid., pp. 71, 99, 223-229. Therapeutic nihilism in Austrian medicine refers to the practice of offering no attempted cures which were felt might disrupt a patient's

symptoms. Doctors instead preferred to examine the patients carefully after they had died in order to diagnose their illness.

²⁸The anti-Semitism of Viktor Adler was, like that of many other educated Jews, a cultural anti-Semitism which denigrated the culture of Eastern European Jews and extolled the virtues of German Culture.

²⁹Johnston, p. 100.

³⁰McGrath, p. 209.

³¹Ibid. p. 210.

³²Johnston, pp. 97-102.

³³May, p. 100.

³⁴Mark Francis, ed., The Viennese Enlightenment (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1985), p. 91.

³⁵John E. Gedo and George H. Pollock, eds., Freud: The Fusion of Science and Humanism: The Intellectual History of Psychoanalysis (New York: International University Press, 1976), p. 13.

³⁶Francis, ed., p. 92.

³⁷Ibid., p. 94.

³⁸Ibid.

³⁹Schorske, p. 147.

⁴⁰Allan Janik and Stephen Toulmin, Wittgenstein's Vienna (New York: Simon Schuster, 1973), p. 59.

⁴¹Amos Elon, Herzl (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1975), pp. 44-5.

⁴²Schorske, p. 151.

⁴³Janik and Toulmin, p. 60.

⁴⁴Schorske, p. 162.

⁴⁵Burnett James, The Music of Gustav Mahler (Rutherford: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1985), p. 19.

⁴⁶Ibid., p. 22.

⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 25.

⁴⁸ McGrath, p. 89.

⁴⁹ Edward Seckerson, Mahler: His Life and Times (New York: Hippocrene Books, 1982), pp. 21-2.

⁵⁰ May, pp. 102-3.

⁵¹ H. H. Stuckenschmidt, Schoenberg: His Life, World and Work, trans. Humphrey Searle (New York: Schirmer Books, 1977), p. 111.

⁵² McGrath, p. 121.

⁵³ Janik and Toulmin, p. 199.

⁵⁴ Arthur Schnitzler, My Youth in Vienna, with a Forward by Frederic Morton, trans. Catherine Hutter (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1970), p. 22.

⁵⁵ Ibid., entire work.

⁵⁶ Johnston, p. 171.

⁵⁷ May, pp. 113-14.

⁵⁸ Johnston, p. 241.

⁵⁹ May, p. 113.

⁶⁰ Werner Hofmann, Gustav Klimt und die Wiener Jahrhundertwende (Salzburg: Verlag Galerie Welz, 1970), p. 9.

⁶¹ Alessandra Comini, Gustav Klimt (New York: George Braziller, 1975), p. 10

⁶² Schorske, p. 209.

⁶³ Frank Whitford, Oskar Kokoschka: A Life (New York: Atheneum, 1986), p. 10.

⁶⁴ Schorske, p. 227.

⁶⁵ The motto of the Secession can be found on the Secession building designed by Josef Maria Olbrich.

⁶⁶ Comini, p. 9.

⁶⁷ Eduard F. Sekler, Josef Hoffmann: The Architectural Work (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), p. 10.

⁶⁸ Ibid., p. 11.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Carl Hasenauer was one of the Ringstrasse architects who either designed or helped design the twin museums, the *Burgtheater*, and the new wing of the *Hofburg*.

⁷¹ Sekler, p. 12.

⁷² Benedetto Gravagnuolo, Adolf Loos: Theory and Works, with a Preface by Aldo Rossi (New York: Rizzoli International Publications, 1982), p. 29.

⁷³ Borsi and Godoli, p. 144.

⁷⁴ Ibid., p. 148.

⁷⁵ Gravagnuolo, p. 29.

⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 30.

⁷⁷ Edward Timms, Karl Kraus, Apocalyptic Satirist: Culture and Catastrophe in Habsburg Vienna (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986), p. 1.

⁷⁸ Ibid., p. 3.

⁷⁹ Karl Kraus' anti-Semitism was cultural. He also detested Jewish misuse of the German language.

⁸⁰ Stuckenschmidt, p. 23.

⁸¹ Ibid., p. 25.

⁸² Ibid., p. 108.

⁸³ Ibid., p. 105.

⁸⁴ Ibid., p. 110.

⁸⁵ Schorske, p. 347.

⁸⁶ Johnston, p. 139.

⁸⁷ Hannah Hickman, Robert Musil & the Culture of Vienna (LaSalle, Illinois: Open Court Publishing Company, 1984), p. 3.

⁸⁸ Ibid., p. 190.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰Burton Pike, Robert Musil: An Introduction to His Work (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1961; reprint ed., Port Washington, New York: Kennikat Press, 1972), p. 1.

⁹¹Lothar Huber and John J. White, Musil in Focus: Papers from a Centenary Symposium (London: University of London Press, 1982), p. 41.

⁹²Ibid., p. 43.

⁹³Whitford, p. 3.

⁹⁴Schorske, p. 327.

⁹⁵Ibid., p. 335.

⁹⁶Ibid., p. 338.

⁹⁷Muenz and Kuenstler, p. 11.

⁹⁸Erwin Mitsch, The Art of Egon Schiele, trans. W. Keith Haughan (London: Phaidon Press, 1975), p. 16.

⁹⁹Serge Sabarsky, Egon Schiele, with contributions by Robert Waissenberger, Achille Bonito Oliva, and Rudolph Leopold, trans. Jon Van de Grift (New York: Rizzoli International Publications, 1985), p. 9.

¹⁰⁰Ibid.

¹⁰¹Ibid., p. 10.

¹⁰²Ibid.

¹⁰³Ibid., pp. 12-13.

¹⁰⁴For further information see Alessandra Comini, Schiele in Prison (Greenwich: New York Graphic Society, 1973).

THEMES IN CREATIVITY

When one takes a careful look at the works of these individuals who helped to create the Viennese culture of the final decades of the Habsburg Monarchy, one finds within their creations recurrent themes and ideas. It is interesting to note just what these various thematic similarities are, especially since they cut across the boundaries of intellectual disciplines which in our own time have become quite frequently widely separated. By examining their works with the intent of finding common motivational factors, one is then better able to understand what it was that they sought to create through their individual efforts and explorations.

One of the most obvious themes which emerges from an examination of the works of these individuals is the theme of innovation. This is not overly surprising since it was a common theme of the nineteenth century. Perhaps the only aspects of this innovation which are startling are the fact that it followed so closely on the heels of rampant historicism, often with both practices being encompassed in the careers of single individuals, and that it was so pervasive throughout all areas of intellectual and creative activity. Every person that I examined, whether a politician, a scientist, a philosopher, or an artist, actively sought new ways in which to practice their chosen

professions. While it could be claimed that only those who did something worthy of note, like coming up with a new idea on how something should be done, are made the object of historical examinations and thus all those who merely continued to act as in the past are ignored; such a position neglects the fact that these individuals were among the most prominent in their respective fields of endeavor during their own lifetimes. Though their works were not always appreciated, they were recognized as skillful practitioners of their art, especially those who began their careers following traditional patterns of expression. What is of importance is that they sought to stretch the boundaries of their chosen discipline, even when such an action was not readily accepted by the general public. Perhaps of even more importance is the fact that this trend towards innovation was not merely limited to those individuals or areas of endeavor examined in this study, it was the general rule of virtually all areas of Viennese intellectual activity at this particular time. They were rejecting the answers of earlier generations as being no longer relevant to the reality of the modern world.

Now what exactly was meant by innovation in this Viennese context? It is true that among the residents of Vienna innovation was by no means a uniform occurrence. In the artistic fields alone, there were at least two major trends. The first was an attempt to create a style for the

present which was new, yet still followed traditional ideas of aesthetics. The second was an iconoclastic movement which sought to overthrow the dominance of traditional ideas by redefining the entire aesthetics of their respective crafts. Together they made Vienna an exciting center of artistic innovation.

The first group can be closely associated with that movement which called itself the Secession. While there are certain individuals such as Gustav Mahler whom I will place in this group even though they were not official members of the Secession, their general principles seem to be basically the same. What each sought to change was the heavy, if not total, reliance on the use of historical models in the arts, the practice of historicism which had taken over in Vienna during the period of the building of the Ringstrasse. During that era the new buildings along the Ringstrasse were designed following historical models which were generally enlarged to fit present needs. For instance, the university was built in the style of the Italian Renaissance, the city hall in the Gothic style of the Belgian cities, the Parliament building along Classical Greek lines, and the *Burgtheater* in the style of the Baroque. Furthermore, these four buildings themselves form the boundaries of a single square, thus presenting a strange mixture of styles which a number of people found distasteful. Yet it was not merely in architecture that historicism held sway, the same was

true in other fields, especially those of the visual arts where individuals such as Makart produced an effusion of historically oriented paintings.

It was against all of this that the artists of the Secession rebelled. They rejected the use of historicism and sought to show modern man his true face. It was not by chance that they chose *Ver Sacrum*, meaning "sacred spring", as the title for their magazine. The name referred to a Roman ritual of consecration of youth in times of national disaster in which they pledged their children to a divine mission to save society.¹ In his work, Fin-De-Siecle Vienna: Politics and Culture, Schorske goes on to claim that, as far as Vienna was concerned, it was the youth who "pledged to save culture from their elders".²

In many respects one can view Gustav Klimt and Otto Wagner as the driving forces behind this effort. While, of course, others were involved, these two represented to society as a whole the purpose behind the Secession. Both Klimt and Wagner had made names for themselves as artists within the context of the tradition of historicism before turning away from its precepts. In fact, at the time of the founding of the Secession, they were the leading practitioners of historicism within Vienna. By turning their backs on the style which made them famous, they were able to show society as a whole, especially the young potential artists, that historicism was an aberration which

destroyed the true creativity and relevance of art. Whether or not historicism was fundamentally wrong, through their efforts they convinced others to seek the proper role of art in society. While neither Klimt nor Wagner actually originated the ideas which they carried out, by vociferously promoting those ideas in Vienna, they won for themselves a place in the popular conception as heroes fighting against oppression, a fact which is amply illustrated by the idolization of both men by later iconoclasts who, though they rejected the styles of both Klimt and Wagner, held them in high esteem for the struggle they had fought in order to provide art its freedom.

As far as the iconoclasts themselves were concerned, the struggle for freedom in artistic expression did not end with the Secession and its related movements in literature and music. They felt that the early reformers had thrown off the shackles of historicism only to bind themselves up once more with such decorative styles as *art nouveau*.³ These later individuals, such as Loos, Kokoschka, Schoenberg, and Kraus, felt that one had to do more than merely alter the surface appearance of one's medium in order to deal with what was wrong with culture and its relationship to the world. Such alterations, no matter how beautiful, were merely superficial and thus could not hope to deal with the essence of what needed to be changed. A brief examination of the works of any of these individuals

shows that such was the case. To Loos ornament was a crime, to Kraus language was a misused and abused medium of communication, to Schoenberg emphasis on a tonal center was unnecessarily stifling music's expressiveness, to Kokoschka art as mere decoration was an aberration: all sought to combat the problems which they perceived as facing human expression in the arts.

Innovation was also prevalent in political thought and practice during the latter years of the nineteenth century. One need only look at the four major political groupings which emerged within a decade of one another, in and around Vienna, to see that this was true. Vienna saw in the years between 1888 and 1898 the abandonment of the traditional liberal party and the emergence of anti-liberal parties with mass followings whose principal leaders had all once been affiliated with liberalism. The weakness of the liberal ideological position was readily apparent in the fact that its own, most-promising future leaders not only abandoned the party, but went on to become its primary opponents. This switching of allegiance was not just the result of some smart political maneuvering, it was an all-out rejection of everything which the liberal party stood for and represented within the Austrian half of the Habsburg Monarchy.⁴ These individuals believed that the old ideas of liberalism were no longer relevant to the situation of the modern world. One would find it extremely difficult to reconcile the

ideologies of Christian Socialism, Austro-Marxism, Zionism, and Proto-Fascism with the beliefs of traditional Austrian Liberalism--the overlapping of ideas is just too limited.

In politics innovation became the accepted norm at the end of the nineteenth century, not only in the Habsburg Monarchy but virtually everywhere in the world. It is out of the political ideas and beginnings of this period that I daresay all of the political changes seen in the twentieth century originated. Within the Austrian setting, the four groups originated essentially by Schoenerer, Adler, Lueger, and Herzl each represented new trends in political thinking and organization that had not existed under liberalism and which would dominate political thinking in the twentieth century. Both Schoenerer's and Herzl's groups, the Pan-Germans and the Zionists respectively, found their ideological basis in the idea that the nation-state was the ideal form for a social and political entity, and that it would prove to be something of a panacea for all the problems facing modern man.⁵ Their beliefs stemmed from a rejection of multi-national states which they each felt, in certain respects, undermined the creative potential of individual national groups. They also believed that the existence of multi-national entities accentuated strife between individuals and thus viewed nation states as the means to eliminate the nascent strife which seemed ready to fill the world at the end of the nineteenth century. While

it is difficult to believe that anyone could be so naive as to believe in the existence of panacean remedies, much less such simplistic one, one finds such a belief to be a prevalent one during this time period throughout much of the Western World and especially within the confines of the Habsburg Monarchy.⁶ Nor is such naivete confined to the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, one still finds throughout the world an incredible belief in the wonders which can be achieved by the nation-state.

The political ideas of Adler and Lueger, while in many respects far more pragmatic than those of either Schoenerer or Herzl, also had some interesting idiosyncrasies within them. Both men were essentially committed to the incremental improvement of the human condition (not at all unlike American Progressivism) through progressive use of legislation and the careful cultivation of the populace of the country. Both, however, used extremely strong rhetoric in their political statements in order to gain the mass support which they believed was necessary in order to carry out their plans. Thus, though both were actually committed to the maintenance of the orderly functioning and progressive alteration of the state, they introduced into the body politic the use of inflammatory jargon which intimated drastic actions which far exceeded their own intent. While by doing so they effectively undermined any large amount of support for more radical political

ideologies, they also blurred the public conception of what was and what was not acceptable political practice. Although this did not cause too much trouble while the two men were alive, it prepared the basis for a future generation which would not know, or perhaps even care, when one's convictions ended and one's rhetoric began. One need only look at the pathetic situation in Austria during the First Republic⁷ to see that the parties founded by Adler and Lueger, the Social Democrats and the Christian Socials, had forgotten that their rhetoric was just that, and instead began to take it seriously.

While these innovations in political activity now sound very familiar, such was not the case at the end of the nineteenth century. One must remember that, especially where the Habsburg Monarchy was concerned, elections of any kind were a relatively new experience and mass political parties were entirely unheard of in the Austrian half prior to 1888.⁸ In the first decade or so that elections were held, nobody went so far as to campaign for votes.⁹ There was no need to do so, especially considering the restrictive nature of the franchise. One must remember too, that within the Austrian half of the Monarchy, universal manhood suffrage was introduced only during the first decade of the twentieth century. When the first elections were held back at the end of the 1850's only the very wealthy were permitted to cast a vote and not everyone who had the right

to vote did so. Mass parties, such as we are familiar with in this century, could only gain meaningfulness through the extension of the voting franchise. While some parties were thus formed to take advantage of the latest franchise extension, others, such as the Social Democrats, were formed and then actually pushed until their membership was given the right to vote.

The idea of revolting against the "old" ideas and styles was quite widespread at the end of the nineteenth century and at the beginning of the twentieth. Practically everywhere one looked one could find someone seeking to change something. In his book, The Man Without Qualities, Robert Musil commented on what had gone on during that time period. He wrote:

The century that had then just gone to its grave had not exactly distinguished itself in its second half. It had been clever in technical and commercial matters and in research, but outside these focal points of energy it had been quiet and treacherous as a swamp. It had painted like the Old Masters, written like Goethe and Schiller, and built houses in the Gothic or Renaissance style. Insistence on the Ideal dominated all manifestations of life, like the headquarters of a police-force. But by virtue of that secret law that will not permit man any kind of imitation without his getting an exaggeration along with it, everything was at that time done with a correctness of craftsmanship such as the admired prototypes could never have achieved and the traces of which can still be seen in the streets and museums even today. And--it may or may not be relevant--the women of that time, who were as chaste as they were shy, had to wear clothes covering from their ears down to the ground, but at the same time had to display a swelling bosom and a voluptuous posterior. For the rest, there are all sorts of reasons why there is no past era one know so little about as the three to five decades that

lie between one's own twentieth year and one's father's twentieth year. It may therefore be useful to be reminded that in bad epochs the most frightening buildings and poems are made according to principles exactly as beautiful as in the best epochs; that all people who take part in destroying the achievements of a previous good period do so with the feeling that they are improving on them; and that the bloodless young people of such a time think exactly as much of their blood as the new people of all other times do.

And each time it is like a miracle when, after such an epoch of shallow sloping plains, suddenly, there comes a slight rise in the spiritual ground, as happened then. Out of the oil-smooth spirit of the last two decades of the nineteenth century, suddenly, throughout Europe, there rose a kindling fever. Nobody knew exactly what was on the way; nobody was able to say whether it was to be a new art, a New Man, a new morality or perhaps a re-shuffling of society. So everyone made of it what he liked. But people were standing up on all sides to fight against the old way of life. Suddenly the right man was on the spot everywhere; and, what is so important, men of practical enterprise joined forces with the men of intellectual enterprise. Talents developed that had previously been choked or had taken no part at all in public life. They were as different from each other as anything well could be, and the contradictions in their aims were unsurpassable. The Superman was adored, and the Subman was adored; health and the sun were worshipped, and the delicacy of consumptive girls was worshipped; people were enthusiastic hero-worshippers and enthusiastic adherents of the social creed of the Man in the street; one had faith and was sceptical, one was naturalistic and precious, robust and morbid; one dreamed of ancient castles and shady avenues, autumnal gardens, glassy ponds, jewels, hashish, disease and demonism, but also of prairies, vast horizons, forges and rolling-mills, naked wrestlers, the uprisings of the slaves of toil, man and woman in the primeval Garden, and the destruction of society. Admittedly these were contradictions and very different battle-cries, but they all breathed the same breath of life. If that epoch had been analyzed, some such nonsense would have come out as a square circle supposed to be made of wooden iron; but in reality all this had blended into shimmering significance. This illusion, which found its embodiment in the magical date of the turn of the

century, was so powerful that it made some hurl themselves enthusiastically upon the new, as yet untrodden century, while others were having a last fling in the old one, as in a house that one is moving out of anyway, without either one or the other party feeling that there was much difference between the two attitudes.

So one need not overrate that past 'activity' if one does not wish. It only went on, in any case, in that thin fluctuating layer of humanity, the intelligentsia, which is unanimously despised these days by the people with the wear-and-tear proof views--who have come to the top again, thank heaven--in spite of all differences among those views. It had no effect on the masses. But all the same, even if it did not become an historical event, in was at least an eventlet.¹⁰

In this way Musil emphasized the nature of the last half of the nineteenth century against which so many creative individuals revolted during the final years of the century. He also pointed out the almost mystical nature of this revolt in which people felt that a new world was about to be created. Although Musil ultimately believed that nothing was really accomplished, one must remember that he is writing from the perspective of having seen his world destroyed during the First World War. Thus, his view of what the people of this time were trying to accomplish was colored by his knowledge of what ultimately occurred. All the same, his ideas are perceptive and thought provoking and give one a feel for the outpouring of new ideas which flourished at the turn of the century, not only in Vienna, but throughout the Western World.

There were of course a number of different, lesser themes, aside from the predominant theme of change and the

rejection of older methods of doing things, which were prevalent in Vienna and, quite frequently, elsewhere. When one looks at some of these subthemes, one is reminded of the fact that Vienna was considered one of the most cosmopolitan of European cities¹¹ and that, consequently, the inhabitants of Vienna were themselves cosmopolitans. As one examines the ideas and creations of the Viennese creators of culture, one can see that they truly were cosmopolitan in outlook, encompassing virtually everything that term implies.¹²

Evidence of the cosmopolitan nature of the Viennese creators of culture can easily be found in the works which they produced. It is ironic that the Viennese have frequently been viewed as somewhat backward and provincial. This belief stems in part from the fact that the Viennese, as a whole, have often had the tendency to look somewhat askance at anything new. When that was combined with the traditional North German stereotype of Southern Germans as being essentially lazy and inefficient Catholic peasants (with the emphasis on Catholic), people have tended to make the assumption that Austrians were entirely provincial in their outlook. While this characterization of Southern Germans has a certain degree of truth within it, as most such characterizations do, it does not necessarily mean that they are somehow less rigorous in their intellect of narrow-minded in their outlook. At least as far as the intellectuals who congregated around Vienna were concerned,

such was definitely not the case. This was in spite of the fact that there were those, such as Adolf Loos, who felt that it was necessary to introduce Western Culture into Austria.¹³ In truth Western Culture was already there, it was merely mixed with so many other cultures that it was ultimately quite different from that which existed in England, the United States, or even the German Empire. This uniqueness was caused by the fact that it was cosmopolitan and contained within itself, not merely Northern or Western European influences, but also Mediterranean, Eastern European, and even Asian influences. In a land with more than a dozen ethnic groups and nearly as many religious traditions, the one thing that would have been really surprising would have been the existence of cultural developments within its center which in no respects reflected its many-faceted ethnic composition.

Having said this, it is interesting to note that one of the major thematic trends in Vienna at the beginning of the twentieth century was the use of oriental motifs acquired from Chinese and Japanese cultures in all sorts of artistic endeavors. While similar trends existed elsewhere in Europe at the time, it is important to note that such a movement also existed in the Habsburg Empire which, unlike France or England, had no colonies in the Far East. In the architectural designs of Josef Hoffmann, as well as in his work at the *Wiener Werkstaette*, he frequently incorporated

Japanese motifs into his creations.¹⁴ Klimt's portraits, after his Golden Period, used Japanese and Chinese figures and designs for their ornamentation. Mahler's composition, The Song of the Earth, was based on an ancient Chinese poem and used a translation of that poem for its lyrics. In spite of the fact that the Habsburg Monarchy had no colonies, its citizens showed an awareness of even the distant realms of the earth.

Perhaps more widespread as a theme in creativity was that of ancient Greek culture. In nearly every area of intellectual endeavor Greek culture was somehow incorporated. Freud used characters from Greek literature and mythology to describe psychological processes; Klimt used Greek gods and goddesses to give added meaning to his philosophical paintings; Mahler used figures from Greek mythology as the inspiration for some of his compositions; Kokoschka considered Loos as the "last of the Greeks, the individualist"¹⁵--wherever one looked one could find Greek allusions, Greek comparisons, or Greek descriptions. One could get the impression that for the Viennese ancient Greece held some special meaning.

Although the use of examples garnered from Greek culture was prevalent throughout Europe in the nineteenth century, the practice seemed especially acute in the German regions of Europe.¹⁶ While from the first stirrings of liberal culture in Europe the Greeks, as the originators of

the ideas of democracy, had been held in high esteem as an example of a lost perfection which one could only hope to achieve again, that particular aspect of Greek culture was not one of the more heavily emphasized ones within the German regions of Europe. Moreover, by the end of the century the more progressive minded individuals showed little interest in Greek democratic forms of government.

There were a number of factors which might have combined to make the examples of ancient Greece seem especially relevant to those within the German cultural world. One of these factors was that ancient Greece originated the philosophical ideas which dominated Western Culture. Philosophy was a field of interest which, from the middle of the eighteenth century onwards, was of major importance to German intellectuals. If one were to list all of the major philosophers since 1750, an inordinately large number of them would be German. To many of these philosophers, Greek society prior to the Macedonian influence was a model worthy of emulation. One can see the continuation of this trend even into the writings of Nietzsche.

Another factor which might have played a role in the German empathy for Greek culture was the fact that it was

pre-Christian and thus not affected, as were later Western Cultures, by the taint of Christianity. While certainly not all German intellectuals were anti-Christian, there was an increasingly dominant trend from the middle of the eighteenth century onwards to discount the importance of religion as an aspect of human life. While there was some effort, especially during the time of Richard Wagner, to examine pre-Christian Germanic culture, most of the examinations of pre-Christian culture focused on Classical Greece and Republican Rome. Of the two, Greece seemed to be the one for which German intellectuals felt a greater affinity, perhaps because the political disunity of the Greek city-states closely resembled the situation within the German areas of Europe, especially prior to 1871. While such a suggestion might sound a bit far-fetched at first, upon further reflection it would seem only natural that a people who were politically disunified, yet trying to assert their own cultural and national strength and identity, would turn to the historical example of a people who did just that for guidance and inspiration. Once such a process was initiated, it would continue out of sheer inertia.

The means by which the Greek influence on German culture was kept alive was the *Gymnasia*. From their creation onward these institutions emphasized the study of philosophy, mathematics, German, and, of course, Greek and Latin. Those who passed through the *Gymnasia*, as had many

of those examined in this study, were of course influenced by the education they received there for the rest of their lives. When examining the culture of the Germanic regions of Europe, especially during the nineteenth century, one must never underestimate the influence of these educational institutions. Formed to fulfill the desires of the late eighteenth century German neo-humanists, the *Gymnasia* steeped students in the ideas of philosophy and in the classics, and became virtually the sole arbiter of entrance into the German universities. With such a prominent role in the development of the intellectual elite, one should not discount its significance in shaping their world outlook.¹⁷ Not only did such schools foster an interest in Classical Greece and its culture among their students, they also promoted, according to their critics, the existence of professional scholars, aloofness from religion, social divisiveness, and lack of nationalistic spirit.¹⁸ Throughout the Habsburg Monarchy, the curricula of the *Gymnasia* represented one of the unifying factors in the intellectual outlook of the Monarchy, though the language it was presented in often was one of the most divisive issues within the multi-national state.

Having mentioned the importance of education in shaping the world view of students, it is important to recall that the interest in historicism during the latter half of the nineteenth century made the methodical study of

past forms of expression an obligatory part of one's educational curriculum, especially in the fields of music, art, and architecture. With such an education familiarity with past cultures would become second-nature as did historical allusions in order to convey a point to one's contemporaries. Educated individuals in practically every profession were known to utilize such allusions in their speech, even in everyday conversations. While such a practice is not entirely unknown in our own time, it is generally restricted to speeches by politicians. In Vienna around the turn of the century, and most likely elsewhere in the Western World, familiarity with past events and cultures was fairly commonplace, it served as a mark of one's education. One need only look to the works of Gustav Klimt to see the way in which historical motifs were woven into the creative works of the period. Even iconoclasts such as Arnold Schoenberg insisted that one had to first understand how the great works of the past were created before one could hope to employ modern forms of expression. It seems that overall the Viennese innovators believed that one had to have a firm basis in traditional forms of expression before one could hope to create new forms. Their belief was in some respects analogous to realizing that one must first understand numbers before one can hope to solve calculus problems. These individuals appreciated the lessons taught by the past.

All of these qualities which have been mentioned thus far illustrate the breadth and somewhat eclectic nature of interests within the Habsburg Monarchy at this time. This is not to say that others elsewhere in the world did not have similar interests, they quite frequently did, it merely demonstrates the broad base of influences which shaped Viennese thought and creativity. One can easily cite many other such examples, ones which combined with those already mentioned helped to create the uniquely Austro-Hungarian outlook and style. The Viennese did not, as has already been mentioned, look far abroad to find their muse. The Alps, villages on the Adriatic, Byzantine remnants, and Ottoman influences all played influential roles in the creations of the Viennese artists. They were willing to let internationalism enter into their creations in an age in which nationalism was becoming increasingly dominant in other countries.

Aside from the use of cultural and historical examples from other places and times, there were many other similarities in the nature of Viennese creativity. Many themes dealt, in one way or another, with the condition of modern man, especially concerning life in an industrial-age city. It is not really surprising that such would be the case throughout the Western World towards the end of the nineteenth century as people saw the world change around them. For those who lived in the Habsburg Monarchy the past

and future were juxtaposed to a degree which few others could match. The Monarchy itself was an entity whose existence dated from medieval times and whose territories were held together almost solely through the acquired rights and privileges of the Habsburg dynasty. In such a setting the industrial revolution was taking place. This was a realm in which, according to Adolf Loos, "there were peasants in the Austrian provinces still living in the twelfth century."¹⁹ It was this juxtaposition of the disappearing past with the emerging future which helped to make the era around the turn of the century one of the most creative and innovative in Western history, and there was hardly a place in which that meeting was more pronounced than in the Habsburg Monarchy.

Of the themes that thus emerged, one of the most pronounced was that of sexuality. As mentioned previously, the nature of city life in an industrializing society helped to shatter the traditional moral structure in regards to sex. Previous periods of licentious behavior had been much more limited in scope. The modern industrial city made such activities omnipresent, yet for a time they went virtually unmentioned as in the case of Vienna. Given the situation, it is not surprising that the outpouring of new ideas at the turn of the century included a new, more open view of human sexuality.²⁰ One need only look at the paintings of Klimt, Kokoschka, or Schiele, or examine the writings of

Schnitzler, Musil, or Freud to see that a new emphasis was being placed on human sexuality, one which was not limited to any particular circle or clique of intellectuals. All realized that human sexuality could no longer be sublimated in the disguises of the past, a masquerade which Freud saw as being the basis for virtually all psychological disorders. It was an issue which all seemed to deem important.

Another theme which was fairly common in the Viennese culture of this period was the theme of death and decay.²¹ While not an uncommon theme in any time or culture, and especially not in the Catholic regions of Europe, it took on what many have considered to be a heightened importance during the years around the turn of the century, especially within the Habsburg Monarchy. There have been many explanations forwarded as to why this would be the case, most of which seem to me rather unsatisfactory. One centers on the fact that Austria-Hungary was in the midst of decay and that thus its inhabitants became preoccupied with that particular theme. While this is possible, it would not explain similar preoccupations elsewhere in the world and it assumes that Austria-Hungary was in the midst of decay, an assertion which in spite of the Monarchy's impending demise through the First World War has not conclusively been proven. Another explanation focuses on the sense of the end of the century, a feeling that one era was ending and

another was beginning. While there was undoubtedly such a feeling present at the end of the nineteenth century, I am not entirely convinced that it was inspired to any large degree by the mere changing of the calendar. There have been many other centuries that have ended without the presence of similar feelings. Yet another explanation has centered on the Catholic beliefs dealing with death as influencing Viennese culture, however, one must wonder why such a belief, though surely influential, would play a primary role influencing a group of people who were, as far as organized religion was concerned, essentially non-religious. Though all of these factors may have played a role in the Viennese interest in death and decay, it would seem that they were not the primary ones.

What probably had a much greater influence in inspiring an interest in death and decay was the belief that they were living at a time which was at the juncture of two epochs--the old world was dying and a new one was being born. Many were influenced in accepting this belief, not only by the changes in the world around them, but also by the writings of Nietzsche who viewed the culture of the late nineteenth century as the decadent creations of a bankrupt and dying age. These views emphasized the cyclical nature of human culture and society in which the vigor and creativity of youth is ultimately followed by decay and finally death, yet out of the ashes of the fallen culture

can spring a new, once more vibrant culture. As a result of this belief, as well as their own explorations into the meaning of life, these Viennese intellectuals took the time to more closely examine the cycle of life and death. One need only view Klimt's paintings "Medicine" and "Death and Life" to see this duality forcefully illustrated. In both paintings one finds an intertwined column of humanity representing life with, in the first, the figure of death in its midst and, in the second, death standing beside it. It is interesting to note that in the first, painted in 1901, death is viewed as an integral part of life; in the second, painted in 1916, death, decorated with crosses, stands menacingly over the oblivious figures representing life. It seems the war and its senseless bloodshed colored Klimt's view of death. Up until the war, however, the Viennese creators of culture appeared to accept death as a natural part of life, they did not rail against it as has sometimes been the case. In fact, there were many young individuals of promise who turned instead to suicide and the solace of death.

The one theme which has been most widely associated with Viennese culture at the turn of the century is the theme of the human subconscious. One finds works by not only Freud, but also by Schnitzler, Musil, Schiele, Kokoschka, and Schoenberg which probe the depths of the human mind and personality.²² While others among those I

examined were equally interested in this particular aspect of humanity, certain media more easily lend themselves to the portrayal of such ideas. The genesis of ideas concerning the human subconscious obviously rests with the realization that rationalism is limited in its scope, as well as the fact that humans do not always act rationally. While these ideas had been around for some time, it took the positivist approach of the late nineteenth century to start dealing with the specific functioning of irrationality. This is somewhat ironic since human irrationality had served for such a long time as the muse of the Romantic movement. However, considering the virtually unprovable nature, according to strict positivist principles, of most of the conjecture as to the functioning of the human subconscious, it is not surprising that Vienna, where science and culture frequently overlapped, would play a major role in the development of such ideas. With the leading medical minds in the world and an educated populace enamored with culture and Wagnerian neo-romanticism, Vienna was the perfect setting for discoveries dealing with human irrationality.

Another theme, which was in many respects fairly closely related to the idea of the human subconscious, was the examination of the limitations of language. While to a certain extent a philosophical issue, it was closely tied, as was the idea of the subconscious, to the issue of the origin of the creative impulse and the inability of language

to fully explain it. As Karl Kraus, that fighter for the proper use of language once wrote: "I master only the language of others. Mine does with me what it will."²⁴ While the most well-known Viennese who dealt with the subject of the limitations of language was Ludwig Wittgenstein²⁵, one can find beliefs similar to his own throughout the Viennese cultural elite prior to his writing of the Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus. One need only consider the case of Gustav Mahler who ultimately gave up the practice of giving titles to his symphonies because the words could not fully express what his symphonies were about to see how deeply the sentiment ran.²⁶ Mahler went so far as to request that the titles which he had given to his earlier symphonies be no longer used, but we, the rest of humanity, being true to our wishes, have kept using them.

It would seem that both these issues, that of the human subconscious and that of the limitations of language, stem from efforts to reconcile the creative impetus with the precepts of science and positivism. What eventually emerged was a rejection of the existence of any positive knowledge which is not influenced by human perception. Out of such beliefs has emerged the relativistic view of the world.

One particular theme in Viennese culture that seemed especially prevalent throughout the period around the turn of the century was that of nature. Schorske makes the theme of the garden one of the main focusing points in his work

Fin-De-Siecle Vienna: Politics and Culture and weaves his narrative dealing with its artists around that theme. Even without Schorske it would be difficult to ignore the overpowering emphasis on nature, gardens, and the countryside in the works of these Viennese creators of culture. It is this emphasis on the natural world, especially as seen in French Impressionism of the period, which has led many to label what was going on at the turn of the century neo-romanticism. Around Vienna the emphasis was everywhere. In the buildings of Wagner, Hoffman, and Olbrich one finds decorative motifs of flowers and vines. In the music of Mahler one finds an almost total preoccupation with the overpowering experience of nature, the only setting in which he was able to compose symphonies. The paintings of Klimt, Kokoschka, and Schiele, inn spite of all their differences, contain a large number of strikingly similar paintings which portray the relaxing, vital beauty of nature. Even the politicians made nature a priority by trying to make sure that the city had enough parks and the the Vienna Woods, which encircled half the city, remained intact.

The origin of this theme is not too difficult to understand. Much of the impetus for their creativity among the Viennese creators of culture came from attempts to deal with modern man and the modern, industrial city. One of the things which the new city life lacked was the intimate

relationship with nature which had in earlier ages marked mankind's existence. What had taken its place was a struggle to control and conquer nature, and thus these individuals sought to once again assert the importance of nature in human life. Human life was not supposed to be merely buildings and machines, it was supposed to be vibrant and alive as was the world at large, or so they seemed to be saying through their works. While the label neo-romanticism in certain respects describes the impetus of their creativity, it is dangerous to apply the term too broadly, they did not seek, as did the romantics of the past, to glorify bygone eras or to rile against the excesses of reason. What they sought was to create a new world which synthesized reason and creativity, science and culture. Their emphasis on nature was not a militant call against science and reason, but rather a gentle reminder of what was of importance to mankind, present and future.

There were, of course, other themes as well, but it is not overly important to mention every one. What one should gain instead is a feeling for what was of importance to these individuals. The fact that so many of these creators of Viennese culture were interested in the same things should not, however, be viewed as entirely coincidental. One must remember that they lived within a city in which all things cultural took on a heightened importance in the eyes of the educated public. Each almost invariably knew what

the others were doing as far as their work was concerned. Furthermore, these Viennese intellectuals were an extremely interrelated group, even more so than was intimated in their short biographies. In his book of Karl Kraus, Edward Timms tries to set up a complex Venn diagram showing the intellectual interrelationships between the major creative forces in Vienna at this time.²⁷ Although he includes many individuals who are not dealt with in this study, he is still unable to chart out entirely the interconnections, for they are far too complex, and he is using a Venn diagram composed of fifteen circles and some fifty-five individuals. The fact was that many of these people were close friends and shared intellectual relationships (such as the one described by McGrath between Viktor Adler and Gustav Mahler) which are virtually impossible to fully explore.

One final theme which has not yet been touched upon directly is that of helping to create a new world. Many of the individuals mentioned, and perhaps all of them, were intimately aware of at least the early writings of Nietzsche. What seems to have been of crucial importance in those writings for the Viennese intellectuals was his emphasis that it must be through art that a new world would be created for modern man. In the Birth of Tragedy he examined ancient Greece and the breakdown of the interrelationship between the Apollonian forces of reason and the Dionysian forces of emotion. This breakdown

Nietzsche viewed as the reason behind the decline of Greek culture and the collapse of Greek civilization. He also pointed out that this issue was of extreme importance to the German world of his own time which he saw as being destroyed by unification under Prussia and by nationalism. One can see through the works of many of these creators of Viennese culture that they took seriously his ideas that through culture the forces of reason and emotion had to once again be brought together in the modern world or there would be drastic consequences.

In McGrath's work, Dionysian Art and Populist Politics in Austria, one of the primary points made was that, throughout their entire careers, not just when they were young, Gustav Mahler and Viktor Adler sought to carry out the task set before them by Nietzsche's early writings. Alessandra Comini pointed out in her work on Klimt that in his paintings, and especially in the ones done for the University, that Klimt was emphasizing Nietzsche's eternal recurrence theme.²⁸ As already mentioned, the ideas of Nietzsche held a certain importance for both Freud and Musil. What one can see through all this is that, either instinctively or intentionally, the creators of Viennese culture sought through their work to create a modern world along ideal lines through the means of their respective disciplines. They were to bridge the chasms which were driving humanity apart through their efforts. Although most

of these individuals rejected the ideas of metaphysics, much of what they sought to accomplish bordered on ideas which were in many respects metaphysical.

Virtually everything these Viennese attempted to do can be viewed from the perspective of trying to create a harmonious balance between reason and emotion for modern man. Whether one was aiming at the proper usage of language, an understanding of its limitations, or an understanding of the human subconscious--all can be viewed as attempts to rectify problems standing in the way of attaining a mutual human understanding. When they sought to give the age its art, it can be viewed as an attempt to establish a cultural basis for a new humanity. When Ernst Mach or Ludwig Wittgenstein stated their ideas on the relative nature of human perception and the limitations of language respectively, they each thought that once and for all they were settling the disturbing philosophical issues which had plagued man in the past.²⁹ When Schoenerer, Herzl, Adler, or perhaps even Lueger established their political principles, they felt they were establishing the basis for a glorious future for humanity, or at least for a section of it. Wherever one looks these men were trying to do things which they felt would make the world a better place. It is ironic in hindsight when one views what became of their ideals in the hands of those who would force on others their ideal vision of the world. Then ideas which

were created to make the world a better place, instead created the bloodshed of Lenin, Mussolini, Stalin, and Hitler.

These, then, are some of the themes which dominated the Viennese cultural setting. One can see in these themes an enhanced awareness of the world around them by the creators of the culture. They were highly aware of the setting in which they lived and tried to understand it as best they could. Whether it was an examination of the human subconscious or the glorification of nature, the works they produced reflected an intense intense examination of the world as it existed in Vienna at the turn of the century.

NOTES

¹ Carl E. Schorske, Fin-De-Siecle Vienna: Politics and Culture (New York: Random House, 1981), p. 215.

² Ibid.

³ Benedetto Gravagnuolo, Adolf Loos: Theory and Works, trans. C. H. Evans (New York: Rizzoli International Publications, 1982), pp. 29-30.

⁴ For a discussion of the ideals and practices of the Austrian liberals see: John W. Boyer, Political Radicalism in Late Imperial Vienna: Origins of the Christian Social Movement 1848-1897 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), chapter 1.

⁵ For examinations of the belief in Nationalism as a cure for the world's ills in the thinking of Schoenerer and Herzl see respectively: Andrew G. Whiteside, The Socialism of Fools: Georg Ritter von Schoenerer and Austrian Pan-Germanism (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975), pp. 6-7. and William M. Johnston, The Austrian Mind: An Intellectual and Social History, 1848-1938 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972), p. 359.

⁶The widespread belief in panacean solutions to the world's problems can be seen in such things as the communist belief that the world would be almost perfect if run by its workers and Houston Stewart Chamberlain's assertions that the problems of the world would be solved if careful racial purity was maintained by essentially separating the races of the world from one another much in the manner with which one maintains purity in the breeding of dogs. For specific examples from the Austro-Hungarian milieu see: Johnston, pp. 319 and 321. There he examines the ideas for world peace of Bertha von Suttner, who believed that it could be achieved by women shifting their approval from soldiers to men of peace, and Richard Coudenhove-Kalergi, who believed that it could be accomplished through the creation of five major constellations of power in the world.

⁷In the First Austrian Republic both the Christian Socials and the Social Democrats, though especially the latter, refused so vehemently to compromise their ideals that in many respects the state never functioned as a unified whole. Instead it functioned as essentially two separate states, each with their own military organizations and each entirely unwilling to compromise in the governing of whatever region they might happen to control. The eventual demise of first the Republic in 1933-34 and then Austria itself in 1938 can be seen as having been brought about in large by the unwillingness of political leaders to engage in the compromise necessary for the smooth functioning of a democratically based state.

⁸For an examination of the reasons why mass political parties were unheard of in the Habsburg Monarchy prior to the late nineteenth century see: Boyer, pp. 25-28.

⁹Ibid. He presents the nature of the political system in the Habsburg Monarchy during the early years of Liberal rule. This included indirect elections and a franchise so restricted that even when it was expanded extensively in 1873, still less than five percent of the Viennese populace had the right to vote.

¹⁰Robert Musil, The Man Without Qualities, vol. 1, trans. Eithne Wilkins and Ernst Kaiser (London: Secker and Warburg, 1953; reprint ed., 1979), pp. 58-60.

¹¹Amos Elon, Herzl (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1975), p. 35.

¹²The term cosmopolitan implies not only diversity in composition, but also having international sophistication and a world-wide scope of interests. In all these meanings, the intellectuals of Vienna were true cosmopolitans.

¹³Willi Reich, Schoenberg: A Critical Biography, trans. Leo Black (London: Longman Group Ltd., 1968), p. 14.

¹⁴Eduard F. Sekler, Josef Hoffmann: The Architectural Work (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), p. 7.

¹⁵Ludwig Muenz and Gustav Kuenstler, Adolf Loos: Pioneer of Modern Architecture, with an Introduction by Nikolaus Pevsner and an Appreciation by Oskar Kokoschka, trans. Harold Meek (London: Thames and Hudson, 1966), p. 12.

¹⁶Johnston, pp. 66-67.

¹⁷Ibid. pp. 66-73 and the section entitled "Schools and Universities: Immersion in Tradition as Training for Genius".

¹⁸Hajo Holborn, A History of Modern Germany 1648-1840 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1964), pp. 475-78.

¹⁹Edward Timms, Karl Kraus, Apocalyptic Satirist: Culture and Catastrophe in Habsburg Vienna (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986), p. 19.

²⁰While the open view of sexuality was only held by a very small number of Viennese at this time, it was a significant group. The paintings of Klimt and Schiele openly portrayed human sexuality as did the writings of Freud and Schnitzler. While most of the views of sexuality held by the intellectual elite set up a dichotomy between the sexuality of men and that of women, few carried to the extreme of Otto Weininger whose book, Sex and Character, went so far as to assert that there were masculine and feminine ideals which encompassed all aspects of human life. For more on Weininger and his ideas see: Allan Janik and Stephen Toulmin, Wittgenstein's Vienna (New York: Simon Schuster, 1973), pp. 71-73.

²¹For further discussion of these issues see: Johnston, Chapter 11: "Fascination with Death".

²²Examples of works by Schnitzler which deal with human personality include: Anatol, which centers on a man whose sole interest in life is attractive women; Professor Bernhardt, which examines medical ethics and religious dogma; and Countess Mizzi, which deals with the high aristocracy and is a satire on ethics and moral behavior. For works by Schiele see: Alessandra Comini, Egon Schiele (New York: George Braziller, 1976). For paintings by Kokoschka and Schoenberg's "The Red Stare" see: Schorske, pp. 322-64.

²³For a discussion of the neurotic nature of Viennese society see: Johnston, pp. 238-39.

²⁴Frederick Unger, ed., No Compromise: Selected Writings of Karl Kraus (New York: Frederick Unger Publishing Co., 1977), p. 228.

²⁵Janik and Toulmin, p. 13.

²⁶Edward Seckerson, Mahler: His Life and Times (New York: Hippocrene Books, 1982), pp. 57-8 and 64.

²⁷Timms, p. 8.

²⁸Alessandra Comini, Gustav Klimt (New York: George Braziller, 1975), p. 13

²⁹Janik and Toulmin, p. 13, and Johnston, pp. 181-86.

CONCLUSIONS

After having examined to a certain extent what was going on in Vienna around the turn of the century, one is now able to draw some conclusions concerning the individuals examined and what they were trying to achieve. While further examination will undoubtedly bring to light new factors, there are already a number of key points which can be garnered from what has so far been examined. Among these are: the basic nature of the individuals who created the Viennese cultural milieu, the ideas which they in general held to be important, and the manner in which they sought to address the problems of the modern world. It is of course instructive to examine each of these points in a certain degree of detail.

As to the nature of the individuals examined in this study, there was a certain degree of similarity in their environmental backgrounds. While it is entirely possible to select a group of individuals for examination who have similar backgrounds, I made no effort to do so in the selection of these individuals. One of the most striking parallelisms that thus arose from my investigation into their backgrounds was that almost every single individual studied was born outside of Vienna. Even those few who were born in Vienna were from families which had only the

generation before migrated to the city. This is, I believe, of significance for two reasons. First of all it indicates that the Viennese cultural developments taking place at the turn of the century were associated fairly strongly with the migrations which resulted from the changes in the economic structure of the Monarchy. Secondly it indicates that those who were instrumental in the Viennese cultural developments of the time were, to varying degrees, tied to regions throughout the Monarchy from which they and their families had migrated. When one examines the backgrounds of these individuals more closely, one also discovers that almost all of those who migrated any distance at all in coming to Vienna were either from Bohemia or Moravia, of Jewish background, or a combination of the two.

What is the significance of the fact that so many of those involved in the creation of the ideas dominating the Viennese setting at the turn of the century came from quite similar backgrounds? It would seem that it is quite important in that they came from backgrounds which emphasized the importance of education and making one's own way in the world. Not a one of those examined came from peasant background nor were any from the ranks of the old nobility (both Schoenerer and Musil had the noble *von* attached to their names as a result of their fathers' contributions to the Monarchy through their railroad building. Schoenerer, as already mentioned, lost his patent

of nobility and Musil was disinclined to use his title). All were instead from those classes which had either gained as a result of the industrial revolution, or, as in the case of at least Kokoschka's family, had slowly seen their old livelihood destroyed. Moreover, nearly all came from families in which their fathers had during their lifetimes greatly improved the family's fortunes (with of course a few exceptions) What this means is that the Viennese culture of the turn of the century was created by the offspring of the newly emergent middle-classes, individuals who shunned the professions of their fathers to pursue instead careers in the arts or in politics. The fact that the very nature of their lives was heavily tied to the changes that had occurred, in that their families' fortunes were generally a direct product of changes which had occurred during the nineteenth century, would seem to have made these individuals more willing to break with tradition in the practicing of their professions, even though their choice of professions closely modeled the traditional manner in which persons of common birth sought to make a name for themselves. Thus, their very lives were closely entangled in the conflict of change and tradition.

Another interesting common aspect in the lives of those I examined is related to the fact that they shunned to one extent or another the professions of their fathers. While many received the education which their families

thought to be important, up to and including post-graduate studies in the cases of Freud, Adler, Schnitzler, and Musil, they did not wholeheartedly follow in their fathers' footsteps. In fact, each ultimately concentrated their energies in areas which generally did not provide them with the financial remuneration which they might otherwise have received. Schoenberg, Loos, Kokoschka, and Schiele all would have fared immeasurably better financially if they had concentrated on merely giving the Viennese public what it wanted. Klimt and Wagner, though they both did fairly well financially, could have done even better if they had kept producing works like those they had done earlier in their careers. Doctors such as Adler, Schnitzler, and Freud and a lawyer such as Lueger could have done better for themselves financially if they had concentrated on practicing the professions for which they had been trained instead of concerning themselves with political, philosophical, artistic, or other such issues. Both Kraus and Herzl would have had successful careers if they had restricted their efforts to simple journalism. One could go on, but the point remains the same--each of these individuals decided to engage in activities which did not enhance their financial situation and quite frequently did not enhance their prestige. From this one can see that their acts had to have been motivated by other factors. It is easy to be an idealist or an iconoclast when such individuals are highly

regarded and rewarded, it is not so easy when they are frequently reviled and despised.

Why is this significant, one always hears stories of starving artists who forsake everything for their art? What seems to be of importance is that these were individuals who had the opportunity to further enrich their families' financial status, yet they chose instead to commit their lives to the pursuit of some ideal. Even following the careers they chose, careers which they perhaps saw as being more worthy of human effort than the simple grubbing for money, it would have been fairly easy, given their talent, for these individuals to gain the adulation of the Viennese populace as had Makart (Lueger actually exceeded all others in being adored by the Viennese, but he is something of a special case). What seems of note is that they preferred to consider themselves as being right in their actions than to have the public at large consider them as being right. I suspect that they would not have upset them greatly if the public had appreciated their creations, yet since it did not they felt that history would vindicate their ideals. The fact that an individual artist might feel this way, ahead of their time, would not be entirely surprising--it happens all the time--, that an entire generation of artists and thinkers would feel thusly is startling. It was not the case as in the 1960's in this country where the youth created a culture counter to that of the adults, it was a

situation where for instance the compositions of Schoenberg were as despised by the youth of Vienna as by the older generations. This was a period, in Vienna and elsewhere, of the avant-garde, a term used all too frequently since then to describe anything which might possibly be considered just a bit ahead of its time.

If these Viennese innovators were so willing to sacrifice in the name of some ideal, what was it that they felt was so important? As I have already mentioned, all seemed concerned with nothing more and nothing less than helping to save modern man from himself. That they sought to do so through culture and politics is significant. In past ages when such efforts had been undertaken, they had generally used religion or philosophy in the effort to achieve their ends. Those of the late nineteenth century sought instead, especially in Vienna, to use culture to achieve mankind's regeneration. That in doing so they consciously tried to meld creativity with the discoveries of science is of the utmost importance. It shows that, unlike those who sought solace in some imaginary past perfection, they sought instead, inspired perhaps by the ancient Greeks, to reconcile what they perceived to be the elements of the modern world with one another. They sought to use the power of modern ideals to motivate the peoples of the world.

While one can applaud the efforts of these individuals in trying to make the world a better place (at least better

as far as their conception of what it should be like), one must question what it was they achieved. While their ideals sound noble, and they most probably were, from the vantage point of the late twentieth century one can see that their programs went awry. The ideas which they helped to foster, nurture, and spread are the same ideas which led to the atrocities of Hitler and Stalin. While I am fairly certain that there was not a one of the individuals I studied who would have approved of what ultimately has taken place in the name of some of the ideals they supported, that does not entirely absolve them of all responsibility. At the turn of the century creative minds felt that they were at the dawning of a new age, and so they were. They sought to give that new age purpose, direction, and a sense of wholeness. In that there was nothing wrong. Where they erred was in their lack of caution in what they said. They sought to make changes happen as quickly as possible, so in their words and works they exhorted mankind to arise from its slumber and rush towards its glorious future. Therein lay the fault in their efforts.

When one examines the events of this century from the perspective of what it was that motivated people to act in the way they did, one finds time and again they did so with the stated goal in mind of making the world a better place. While that sounds good in words or writing, we all know that what it has meant in practical terms is the violent deaths

of more than a hundred million people. Moreover, those same ideas are still present and while we might think them quiescent for now, they might burst forth at any time and have never really died down in many parts of the world. How is it possible that such seemingly noble ideas could inspire such destruction? It has been in search of such an answer that I have made this investigation. There are I believe a number of factors which made it possible.

One such factor is the nature of much of the material which sought to make the world a better place. Frequently it did not distinguish between the whole world and one's local section of it. When such a distinction was made, all too frequently it concentrated on the means of resolving one's localized problems. Though this is not necessarily bad, the solutions thus arrived at often gave little concern for how others outside of one's region might be affected. While many of those who originated these ideas might have ultimately been concerned with that issue, by not emphasizing it future generations inspired by their words and actions were certain to not pay too much attention to that issue. What one sees as a result is the entire world promoting the ideas of nationalism, even those countries which through their communist ideology should be promoting internationalism. This situation has arisen because, in emphasizing nationalism as a solution to the worlds problems, no one really took the time to look to far beyond

the bounds of their own national interests. One need not be reminded as to what has occurred as a result of people thinking that their national interests were they only ones which ultimately mattered. Wherever one looks, the situation is essentially the same, every nation shows the same overblown view of their own importance and the denigration of the importance of the others.

While the fact that they tended to emphasize local concerns more than international ones may have helped to cause the problems of this century, it was by no means the only factor involved. Perhaps even more important was the fact that these individuals around the turn of the century succeeded to well in convincing people that the world could be remade along ideal lines. Humanity has suffered enormously during this century for the simple reason that people believed it was easily possible to perfect the world. As I mentioned before, though individuals like Adler and Lueger might have realized that change must be gradual to be successful in such endeavors, others did not. They became impatient and sought to remake the world overnight. As with anything else attempted in such a limited time frame, the work is shoddy and the mess extensive. The individuals I examined and others elsewhere in the world sought to make the world a better place and were inspired by great ideals. In the hands of common men their ideals turned the world into what probably would have been their

own worst nightmare. Therein lies the danger of attempting to accomplish too much too quickly.

While so much seems clear to me now after studying these individuals, it is quite possible that I might be entirely wrong. The possible example of their own over-exuberance ought to be enough to make anyone cautious in their assertions. It is a noble effort to make the world a better place, but one must proceed with caution lest they make the situation worse. In the course of my study for this work and others, I have found that many of the ideals which have played a dominant role in this century have been to one degree or another fairly closely associated with the Germanic regions of the world. Why this would be the case, I am not entirely certain. Anyway, it seems to me upon completion of this project (which is in itself only a beginning) that a closer examination of the origin of these ideas which have dominated this century is warranted. Since German regions have figured so prominently in these developments, further study by myself and others is warranted of this land of "*Dichter und Denker*" which, in the words of Karl Kraus became the land of "*Richter und Henker*".

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APPENDIX

The following is an excerpt from Robert Musil's The Man Without Qualities in which he describes the nature of the Austro-Hungarian empire and emphasizes what he felt to be its important qualities. Part of this section was included in the text.

There, in Kakania, that misunderstood State that has since vanished, which was in so many things a model, though all unacknowledged, there was speed too, of course; but not too much speed. Whenever one thought of that country from some place abroad, the memory that hovered before the eyes was of wide, prosperous roads dating from the age of foottravellers and mail-coaches, roads leading in all directions like rivers of established order, streaking the countryside like ribbons of bright military twill, the paper-white arm of the government holding the provinces in firm embrace. And what provinces! There were glaciers and the sea, the Carso and the cornfields of Bohemia, nights by the Adriatic restless with the chirping of cicadas, and Slovakian villages where the smoke rose from the chimneys as from upturned nostrils, the village curled up between two little hills as though the earth had parted its lips to warm its child between them. Of course cars also drove along those roads--but not too many cars! The conquest of the air had begun here too; but not too intensely. Now and then a ship was sent off to South America or to the Far East; but not too often. There was no ambition to have world markets and world power. Here one was in the centre of Europe, at the focal point of the world's old axes; the words 'colony' and 'overseas' had the ring of something as yet utterly untried and remote. There was some display of luxury; but it was not, of course, as over-sophisticated as that of the French. One went in for sport; but not in madly Anglo-Saxon fashion. One spent tremendous sums on the army; but only just enough to assure one of remaining the second weakest of the great powers. The capital, too, was somewhat smaller than the rest of the world's largest cities, but nevertheless quite considerably larger than a mere ordinary large city. And the administration of

this country was carried out in an enlightened, hardly perceptible manner, with a cautious clipping of all sharp points, by the best bureaucracy in Europe, which could be accused of only one defect: it could not help regarding genius and enterprise of genius in private persons, unless privileged by high birth or State appointment, as ostentation, indeed presumption. But who would want unqualified persons putting their oar in anyway? And besides, in Kakanian it was only that a genius was always regarded as a lout, but never, as sometimes happens elsewhere, that a mere lout was regarded as a genius.

All in all, how many remarkable things might be said about that vanished Kakanian! For instance, it was *kaiserlich-koeniglich* (Imperial-Royal) and it was *kaiserlich und koeniglich* (Imperial and Royal); one of the two abbreviations, *k.k.* or *k. & k.*, applied to every thing and person, but esoteric lore was nevertheless required in order to be sure of distinguishing which institutions and persons were to be referred to as *k.k.* and which as *k. & k.* On paper it called itself the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy; in speaking, however, one referred to it as Austria, that is to say, it was known by a name that it had, as a State, solemnly renounced by oath, while preserving it in all matters of sentiment, as a sign that feelings are just as important as constitutional law and that regulations are not the really serious thing in life. By its constitution it was liberal, but its system of government was clerical. The system of government was clerical, but the general attitude to life was liberal. Before the law all citizens were equal, but then not everyone, of course, was a citizen. There was a parliament, which made such vigorous use of its liberty that it was usually kept shut; but there was also an emergency powers act by means of which it was possible to manage without Parliament, and every time when everyone was just beginning to rejoice in absolutism, the Crown declared that there must now again be a return to parliamentary government. Many such things happened in this State, and among them were those national struggles that justifiably aroused Europe's curiosity and are today completely misrepresented. They were so violent that they several times a year caused the machinery of State to jam and come to a dead stop. But between whiles, in the breathing-spaces between government and government, everyone got on excellently with everyone else and behaved as though nothing had ever been the matter. It was nothing more than the fact

that every human being's dislike of every other human being's attempts to get on--a dislike in which today we are all agreed--in that country crystallized earlier, assuming the form of a sublimated ceremonial that might have become of great importance if its evolution had not been prematurely cut short by a catastrophe.

For it was not only dislike of one's fellow-citizens that was intensified into a strong sense of community; even mistrust of oneself and of one's own destiny here assumed the character of profound self-certainty. In this country one acted--sometimes indeed to the extreme limits of passion and its consequences--differently from the way one thought, or one thought differently from the way one acted. Uninformed observers have mistaken this for charm, or even for a weakness in what they thought was the Austrian character. But that was wrong. It is always wrong to explain the phenomena of a country simply by the character of its inhabitants. For the inhabitant of a country has at least nine characters: a professional one, a national one, a civic one, a class one, a geographical one, a sex one, a conscious, an unconscious and perhaps even too a private one; he combines them all in himself, but they dissolve him, and he is really nothing but a little channel washed out by all these trickling streams, which flow into it and drain out of it again in order to join other little streams filling another channel. Hence every dweller on earth also has a tenth character, which is nothing more or less than the passive illusion of spaces unfilled; it permits a man everything, with one exception: he may not take seriously what his at least nine other characters do and what happens to them, in other words, the very thing that ought to be the filling of him. This interior space--which is, it must be admitted, difficult to describe--is of a different shade and shape in Italy from what it is in England, because everything that stands out in relief against it is of a different shade and shape; and yet both here and there it is the same, merely and empty, invisible space with reality standing in the middle of it like a little toy brick town, abandoned by the imagination.

In so far as this can at all become apparent to every eye, it has done so in Kakania, and in this Kakania was, without the world's knowing it, the most progressive State of all; it was the State that was by now only just, as it were, acquiescing in its own existence. In it one was negatively free, constantly aware of the inadequate grounds for one's

own existence and lapped by the great fantasy of all that had not happened, or at least not yet irrevocably happened, as by the foam of the oceans from which mankind arose.

Es ist passiert, 'it just sort of happened', people said there when other people in other places thought heaven knows what had occurred. It was a peculiar phrase, not known in this sense to the Germans and with no equivalent in other languages, the very breath of it transforming facts and the bludgeonings of fate into something light as eiderdown, as thought itself. Yes, in spite of much that seems to point the other way, Kakanian was perhaps a home for genius after all; and that, probably, was the ruin of it.¹

NOTES

¹Robert Musil, The Man Without Qualities, vol. 1, trans. Eithne Wilkins and Ernst Kaiser (London: Secker and Warburg, 1953; reprint ed., 1979), pp. 31-35.