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*Freud's Vienna  
and Other Essays*



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## *Freud's Vienna*

It is not by chance that psychoanalysis was born in Vienna and came of age there. In Freud's time, the cultural atmosphere in Vienna encouraged a fascination with both mental illness and sexual problems in a way unique in the Western world—a fascination that extended throughout society, even into the imperial court which dominated Viennese social life. The origins of this unique cultural preoccupation can be traced to the history of the city itself, but most especially to the concerns and attitudes foremost in the minds of Vienna's cultural elites just before and during the period in which Freud formed his revolutionary theories about our emotional life.

Freud was by no means the only innovator in Vienna who brought a change in our view of sexuality in general and sexual perversions in particular, and of the treatment of insanity. For instance, Baron Richard von Krafft-Ebing, a professor of psychiatry at the University of Vienna, first gave a name to paranoia and brought it into common discourse. His clinical accounts of sexual pathology showed in a lively way the many forms the sexual drive may take, years before Freud undertook his stud-

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ies of sex. Krafft-Ebing's most important work, *Psychopathia Sexualis*, published in 1886, revolutionized the world's ideas about sexual perversions, a subject completely ignored by scientists up to that moment. This book led to the decriminalization of sexual perversions in Austria, long before such a sensible view spread to other countries. Krafft-Ebing led the way to an era of changed attitudes toward sexuality in Vienna and Austria, and in a sense he prepared the environment that made Freud's work possible.

In addition to psychoanalysis, other modern methods of treating mental disturbances were created and developed by doctors in Vienna. Wagner von Jauregg, who followed Krafft-Ebing as head of psychiatry at the University of Vienna, and who as such was Freud's chief while he taught there, discovered the malaria treatment of general paresis and the fever treatment of the same disease; for this he won in 1927 the first Nobel Prize in medicine that was awarded for a psychiatric discovery. His work can justly be seen as the beginning of chemical treatment for mental illnesses. In the same direction, Manfred Sakel, another Viennese physician, discovered in 1933 the insulin-shock treatment for schizophrenia. It is almost astonishing to note that *all* modern methods of treatment for mental disturbances—psychoanalysis, chemical treatment, and shock treatment—were brought into the world within a few decades in one and the same city.

To understand the unique form that Vienna's culture attained during the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, one must recognize that Vienna had been, as it was called with some affection, *die alte Kaiserstadt*—the old Imperial City. The Hapsburg name does not now carry the aura and glamour it once did, but for many centuries the vast Hapsburg Empire, of which Vienna was the capital, was the greatest the world had ever known, surpassing in extent the ancient Roman Empire, of which it saw itself the rightful heir: the Hapsburgs were rulers of the "Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation."

In the sixteenth century a Hapsburg emperor, Charles V (also Charles I, as King of Spain), could make the claim (later borrowed by the British) that since his empire circled the globe, the sun never set upon it. After Charles V, a gradual but steady decline of the Hapsburgs and their power set in. The empire almost perished during the Napoleonic Wars. But at the end of this episode, Vienna hosted the Congress of Vienna in 1814–15, which determined the geography and future of

Europe. After this, the Viennese could look upon theirs as the preeminent city of Europe, for the Hapsburg emperor and his realm once again dominated the continent, this owing to the skill of Austria's chancellor, Prince Metternich.

However, this changed once and for all with the revolutions of 1848, when the aged Metternich was forced to resign and Franz Joseph began his long reign (1848–1916). Even in its reduced form after the Napoleonic Wars, and in the absence of the title "Holy Roman Empire," the Hapsburg realm remained Europe's foremost imperial presence, dominating an assortment of German principalities before modern Germany was formed; and it held sway in all of Central Europe and much of Italy and Eastern Europe as well. The Hapsburg state was thus a multinational one, inhabited by many different language groups, of which the most important were the Germans, Italians, Poles, Czechs, Hungarians, Slovaks, Croatians, Slovenes, and Ruthenians. In 1848 and afterward, with the tide of nationalism rising, these various peoples forming the empire began to demand self-determination and soon absolute independence, threatening the empire with what seemed like chaos. These powerful forces in the minds of ordinary people were counterbalanced and kept in check by the presence of the emperor's army, which was made up of all nationalities, and by the reverence accorded the emperor himself, which he worked constantly to maintain.

In addition, the capital city of Vienna continued to grow in cultural influence over the intelligentsia of the entire empire, as well as much of the rest of Europe, such as the German states and the Balkans. It might be said that in Central and Eastern Europe, all roads led to Vienna; not only was it the seat of empire and of the most important cultural institutions within its sphere of influence, but it was by far the largest city in this vast geographical area. In fact, it was the second-largest city on the continent of Europe (after Paris), and so it naturally attracted those who wished to leave the provinces in favor of life at the center of things. Throughout the nineteenth century, Vienna continued to grow in size, in cultural opportunities, in scientific renown, and in economic importance. And all this time the emperor held his place, growing more revered as he grew older.

Most of those who contributed to Vienna's cultural greatness in these years were not born there, but came from the empire's near or distant provinces. They were drawn to Vienna either as immigrants to the cul-

tural center, or because they had already been educated there. Many were brought to Vienna in childhood by their parents, who wanted their children to have the best. Sigmund Freud was one of these, as was Theodor Herzl, the founder of Zionism. Others came to Vienna as adults, such as the musicians Gustav Mahler and Johannes Brahms, the painter Oskar Kokoschka, the early modern architect Josef Hoffmann, and the educator Franz Cizek, who was the first to discover and nurture the art of children.

A culture has power to draw talented people to its center, and one example of Vienna's attraction in our own century is that of the Nobel Prize winner for literature Elias Canetti. In one volume of his autobiography, entitled *Die Fackel im Ohr* (*The Torch in My Ear*), he tells how he came to Vienna from the Balkans and was influenced by the cultural climate he found there. He pays particular note to the critic and political writer Karl Kraus, whose ideas, as expressed in his magazine, *Die Fackel* ("The Torch"), were crucial to Canetti's own development.

But what gave this Viennese culture its true uniqueness was the luck of history, by which the culture's greatest flowering came about simultaneously with the disintegration of the empire which had made Vienna important in the first place, and of which it was still the capital, the seat of government—and, most important of all, its emperor's residence. Franz Joseph, as emperor, was not only the ultimate symbol of the empire, but also the person who actually held it all together. Things had never been better, but at the same time they had never been worse: this strange simultaneity, in my opinion, explains why psychoanalysis, based on the understanding of ambivalence, hysteria, and neurosis, originated in Vienna and probably could have originated nowhere else. And psychoanalysis was but one of the major intellectual developments of a time when a pervasive awareness of political decline led Vienna's cultural elites to abandon politics as a subject to take seriously, to withdraw their attention from the wider world and turn inward instead.

The decline was noticeable to all concerned after the events of 1859 (only three years after Freud's birth), when the empire suffered the first of a series of blows to its eminence (and image) as a world power. In that year, it lost its most prosperous and advanced provinces: most of northern Italy, including Lombardy and the all-important Milan, Tuscany with Florence, Parma, Modena. Only Venice and the Veneto still re-

mained Austrian, and this only for a few more years. Seven years later, in 1866, as a result of war with the upstart Prussia, there was a devastating defeat in the battle of Königgrätz; the last Italian territories were lost, and Prussia became the dominant power over the other German states. This deprived Austria of the hegemony it had held over Germany for some six hundred years. Four years later, when Prussia defeated France in 1870, Germany became united under the leadership of Prussia. With this, Berlin began to replace Vienna as the center of the German-speaking world, and it could boast a young emperor more impressive and dynamic than the fading Franz Joseph.

One way to cope with these losses which presaged the doom of the empire was to use denial as a kind of defense. Thus the Viennese intelligentsia might say, "While the situation is desperate, it is not serious." In this mind-set, which was very common for many years in Vienna, external reality is discounted and all mental energy is turned inward: only the inner life of the individual is allowed to matter. At the same time when the new, unified Germany (with its capital, Berlin) was turning its enormous energies toward empire-building, Vienna's cultural elites became centered upon discovering and conquering the inner world of man. This withdrawal was made easier and more certain by new disappointments which rose up on the heels of the old.

There were official efforts to counteract this feeling of decline, but nothing worked quite the way it was expected to. For instance, to counteract the military defeat of 1866, the government went to great lengths to reassert Vienna's cultural and economic importance. A world's fair was planned for 1873, with the aim of bringing Vienna once more to the admiring attention of the world. The expectations of prosperity that the fair would bring to Vienna led to a building boom; and many grandiose structures, both public and private, rose up on both sides of the newly created Ringstrasse. This avenue circled the inner city and was intended to outshine the world-famous Haussmann boulevards of Paris, because the buildings on the Ringstrasse would be even more splendid than those gracing the Paris avenues.

Historically, Vienna had been a city of the baroque; it was the grand baroque churches and palaces that had given the city its character. Now the modern buildings of the Ringstrasse gave Vienna a double and somewhat contradictory character: that of both an old imperial capital

and a center of modern culture. It was as if the city could not decide which way to turn: toward the glorious (though receding) past, or toward a new and modern future.

Great expectations for the World's Fair also led to wild speculation on the stock market. Nine days after the fair opened, the stock market crashed. On Vienna's "black Friday," 125 banks went bankrupt, and many other enterprises failed, in a widening shock that brought about a deep depression. The financial crisis in Vienna spread all over Europe and even affected the United States.

As mentioned, Vienna's cultural elites rejected the importance of the events occurring around them and turned their attention inward, to the previously hidden and unrecognized aspects of man. However, this was a solution to the haunting contradictions of Viennese life for only a few. The vast majority of Vienna's population had to find another way to escape the unease they felt in a time when the secure, traditional world they and their ancestors had known was falling apart. The answer was lighthearted entertainment. True, the World's Fair of 1873 had failed, but with the premiere of *Die Fledermaus* in 1874, Vienna began once more to rule the world—the world of the operetta. Once the center of the old high culture—grand opera and serious theater, the greatest in the German language—Vienna now rose to preeminence in light opera and most of all in dance music. The Viennese waltz in a few short years had conquered the globe; besides the waltzes, there were the many operettas of Strauss, Lehár, Suppé, and others. As we look back, it seems as if the Viennese of that time never stopped dancing: masked balls, the antics of the carnival (the *Fasching*, in which nearly all of Vienna participated), and splendid dancing halls in all parts of the city. Some of these occasions, such as the great balls at court, were only for the upper classes; but many more were for the lower classes, as well as many in which the classes mixed freely. In addition, Vienna was a great city for pageants, with many floats for everybody to admire when celebrating court events, royal marriages, or anniversaries of the emperor. These were occasions upon which artists could display their talent and imagination as they entertained the populace. Through these continual celebrations, the decline of the empire was denied any seriousness.

In the realm of politics and world events, catastrophes periodically shook the empire to its roots and hastened its disintegration. But this was not all: equally disastrous were the catastrophes which took place

in the heart of the city's personal world—within the imperial family at the court which was the city's true center, its *raison d'être*.

Emperor Franz Joseph's marriage to Elizabeth, a very young and very beautiful Bavarian princess, was one of great love and devotion on his part, and this love continued all through his life. However, despite the emperor's efforts to please Elizabeth and make her happy, she soon distanced herself from him and from the court, a process which became ever more extreme until she spent hardly any time with him, or in Vienna.

We can now see Elizabeth as hysterical, narcissistic, and anorexic. At the time, however, she was acclaimed, with much justification, as the most beautiful woman in Europe. To retain her distinctive beauty, the attribute responsible for her rise to empress, she starved herself on various extreme diets, such as having nothing except six glasses of milk in a day, for days on end. On frequent walking tours, she marched at such a brisk pace that her companions fell behind her in exhaustion, as she continued on for seven, eight, even ten hours.

Like some hysterics, such as the one Schnitzler later described in his novel *Miss Else*, the empress—who always traveled with enough trunks to fill many railway cars, so that she had always at her disposal a vast array of the costliest and most beautiful clothes—at last took to going out for her walks wearing only a dress, a single garment to cover her naked body. She wore no underclothes and, to the horror of her companions, no stockings. Nevertheless, she often wore as many as three pairs of gloves to protect her beautiful hands.

Possibly one of the clearest symptoms of her neurosis was her endless and aimless traveling all over Europe. In the words of the French writer Maurice Barrès: "Her voyages did not resemble the peaceful and deliberate regularity of migrating birds; they were rather the planless darting to and fro of an unanchored spirit which beats its wings, allowing itself neither rest nor design."

In 1871, when the emperor wrote to Elizabeth, who, as nearly always, was not in Vienna, asking what gift she would like best to receive on her name day, she wrote back, probably in a spirit of self-mockery, "What I would really like best would be a completely equipped insane asylum."

Madness held a particular fascination for Elizabeth, possibly because it was not uncommon in her family, the Wittelsbach rulers of Ba-

varia. She frequently visited institutions for the insane, for example in Vienna, Munich, and London. She extolled both death and madness in remarks such as "The idea of death purifies" and "Madness is truer than life"—evidence of her profoundly melancholic disposition long before the terrible events of Mayerling, after which it became even more intense. At last, in 1898, on one of her trips to Geneva, she was assassinated by an anarchist. Her murder made as little sense as had her life before it.

Thus, an interest in insanity and examples of the devastating impact of neurosis and the destructive results of hysteria could be found at the imperial court which dominated all that went on in Vienna, long before Freud decided to devote his life to a deeper understanding of the inner and so far unknown forces in man which cause these disturbances.

In 1889, Franz Joseph had been emperor for over forty years; the continuation of the empire depended upon Rudolf, his heir and only son. Rudolf led a lonely existence; his mother, Elizabeth, was distant and mostly unavailable to him. He and his father had little mutual sympathy, and no love existed between him and his wife, a Belgian princess. By the age of thirty, he had had many affairs, which were meaningless to him. Depressed and lonely, feeling totally useless at this young age, Rudolf formed and carried out a suicide pact with one of his lovers, a Baroness Vetsera: he killed her and then committed suicide at his hunting lodge at Mayerling, in the heart of the Vienna Woods, fifteen miles from the city itself.

Oedipal conflicts between rulers and their sons were nothing new in history—or in the house of Hapsburg. The conflict between Philip and Don Carlos not only made history but became the subject of one of the world's greatest dramas and then a great opera. But Rudolf's act seems unique: the heir of a great empire committing homicide and suicide, immediately after having sex with a woman of his choice, who also had clearly chosen both sex and death. The psychological climate of Vienna during the empire's decline and the morbid feelings which pervaded the city as a consequence in this period are the fitting and even necessary background for such an extreme example of a severe oedipal conflict with a father—neurosis, sex, murder, and suicide. It was a shockingly vivid demonstration of the destructive tendencies inherent in man which Freud would investigate and describe later. It also reflected the intimate relationship between the sex drive and the death drive—a con-

nection Freud sought to clarify in his explorations of the darkest aspects of man's psyche.

The emperor himself sought to cope with these personal and familial tragedies through an aggravation of his work neurosis; he immersed himself in his paperwork tirelessly for some sixteen hours a day, as if he were some mere subaltern of the empire rather than its supreme ruler. Compulsively, he insisted on court etiquette and had adopted the famous (or in truth infamous—because it denied any place to human emotions or spontaneity in human relations) Spanish Court Ceremony, which did not permit personal contact of any nature. Interestingly, however, after Elizabeth's estrangement became permanent, and even more after her death, he sought solace in the company of a young and beautiful actress who had been her reader. Because of Rudolf's suicide, the Archduke Francis Ferdinand—a man with whom the Emperor was in deep conflict—became heir to the throne. It is reported that when Ferdinand was assassinated in 1914—the event which led to the First World War—Franz Joseph remarked that he was relieved, because this murder had rectified a situation which was much in need of it.

Sex and destruction shared a strange coexistence in much of Vienna's culture during this period of the slow demise of the empire. Even leading politicians were preoccupied with ideas of death, as suggested by the remark "We have to kill ourselves before the others do it," made by the Hungarian foreign minister around 1912. This interconnection between sex and death formed a main underlying topic of Viennese art, literature, and psychoanalysis. It permeated the work of many, such as the young and brilliant philosopher Otto Weininger, who in 1903, at the age of twenty-three, committed suicide at the place where Beethoven had died. His *Sex and Character*, with its deeply pessimistic view of sex, had tremendous influence on the intelligentsia of Vienna.

Early in his own life, Sigmund Freud made a choice that seemed to presage his later recognition of the importance of the death drive in his mature system. In December of 1881, Vienna's Ring Theater had burned down with a great loss of life, another tragic catastrophe which shook the city. The emperor, always putting the best face on disaster, decreed that on the site of the destroyed theater there should rise a new residential and commercial building to be called the Sühnhaus ("House of Atonement"). The architect would be the man then deemed Vienna's greatest, F. V. Schmidt, and because of the excellent location on the

Ringstrasse, the new building would be able to charge high rents; a part of the income thus derived would go to support the children who had been orphaned by the fire.

At first, it was difficult to find tenants for the Sühnhaus's splendid apartments: people were reluctant to move to a place where so many others had lost their lives. But it was in this "House of Atonement" that Freud—although the rent was far beyond his means—took an apartment when he married, and there he conducted his practice. More significantly, he did not consider that his patients, suffering from debilitating nervous disorders, might be hesitant to go for treatment into a building with morbid associations. For reasons we do not know, Freud not only did not mind these associations, but obviously cherished them. Perhaps even at that time ideas about the morbidity of neuroses were in his unconscious, bringing him to choose this ominous building as the place for his life and work. The Freuds were such early tenants in the Sühnhaus that their first child was also the first baby to be born there. On this occasion, Freud received a letter from the emperor, congratulating him as father of the first child born in the building, bringing life into the world at a place where so many lives had been lost.

This letter is the only direct connection between the emperor and Freud of which we know. But the emperor, and what he stood for, was never far from Freud's awareness. He said many times that an emperor was a symbol for the father and the superego, and that therefore the figure of the emperor played an important role in the conscious and unconscious of everyone.

Events, however, had made clear that even Vienna's emperor was not master in his own house; and this fact may have inspired Freud to develop the idea that the ego was not master in *its* own house—a realization Freud calls a severe blow to our narcissism (as it must have been destructive to the emperor's narcissism that he was rejected by son and wife). Work neurosis as the emperor's defense against the many blows to his self-esteem probably was not lost on Freud as he studied the neuroses and discovered that they were defenses against sexual fears and against attacks on one's self-love.

In this unique Viennese culture, the strongest inner powers were thanatos and eros, death and sex. The formulation looks simple, but the interplay of these powers is anything but simple; on the contrary, it is most complex, creating far-ranging and intricate psychological prob-

lems. Viennese culture liked to explore these psychological complexities and embodied them in its creations. To tease out the meaning of these hitherto unknown, dark and hidden, most complex psychological phenomena so that one might be able to understand and perhaps even master them was the central problem of Viennese culture. Freud was not alone in devoting his life to the struggle with these taxing problems. The Viennese Arthur Schnitzler, whom Freud called his alter ego, had been, like Freud, trained as a physician; and also like Freud, Schnitzler exercised this craft for a relatively short time. Then he too turned to the study of man's psyche, not as a psychiatrist, but as a writer.

Schnitzler was far and away the leading literary figure of Vienna in his time, and was recognized as such; his novels were widely read and admired, and his plays were those most frequently performed on the German stage, particularly in Vienna, a city where the theater had always been held in esteem. This is not the place to analyze Schnitzler's work in any detail, but at least two of his most important plays should be mentioned to make the point that in his mind too, sex and death were inextricably interwoven. The title of one of these plays may be freely translated as "A Little Love Affair" (*Liebelei*). A young man of the upper class has an affair with a lower-class girl who loves him deeply. But their relation is of little importance to him, compared with his interest in seducing the wife of a prominent citizen. He is not truly in love with her, either, but the challenge of seducing her appeals to his vanity. The lady's husband feels obliged to challenge him to a duel, in the course of which he kills the young man. The girl who has loved him so much is not even permitted to attend the funeral, and this fact impresses her with how little she had meant to him; in desperation, she commits suicide.

The other play is *Das Weite Land*, "The Enormous Country." This enormous and unknown country is, of course, man's psyche. In this play a married upper-class lady has an affair—we must assume for the first time in her life—with a young naval officer on leave. Her husband has had many affairs himself, none of which have meant much to him, but nevertheless takes offense at his wife's affair because it hurts his pride. He challenges the naval officer to a duel and kills him. In consequence, not only is this life destroyed but also those of both the husband and the wife, since their lives have now lost all meaning. Thus in both plays, as in many of Schnitzler's other writings, sexual involvement leads to destruction. This is also the theme of one of his best-known novels, *Frau-*

*lein Else* ("Miss Else"), in which a clearly neurotic and probably hysteric young girl, to save her father from being disgraced, accedes to the desire of an older man that she come to him naked, only to kill herself as she does so.

In a conversation with Martin Buber—another extraordinary man whose personality was formed during those years in Vienna, where he was born and where, through his association with Herzl, he decided to devote his life to the study of Hasidism—Schnitzler said about the figures he had created, who were so typical of Vienna at this time, that a sense of the end of their world envelops them, and that the end of their world is near; as indeed it was.

Rilke, in his *Tale of Love and Death of Cornet Christoph Rilke*, projects into Austria's past the idea that death immediately follows sexual experience, but the theme was clearly a contemporary one, as the tragedy of the Austrian crown prince so clearly showed.

That eros and thanatos are the deepest and strongest drives in man was an insight achieved by others besides Freud and Schnitzler. One of Brahms's greatest works, his *German Requiem*, has a central theme that "in the middle of life we are surrounded by death." Mahler wrote songs on a child's death, a resurrection symphony, and, as his crowning achievement, the Eighth Symphony, in which he combines a medieval mass with the last part of Faust—his apotheosis, where in death he is saved by the love of woman, suggesting that only in death is true fulfillment possible.

Freud began his investigation of the hidden forces which underlie man's actions with his study of hysteria, which he was still working on when the Mayerling tragedy occurred. Through his study he discovered how powerful and all-encompassing a force the sexual drive is, and what strange forms of behavior it could produce when inhibited and/or repressed. His (and Breuer's) *Studies on Hysteria* appeared in 1895, to be followed the next year by Freud's paper on the etiology of hysteria and by that on sexuality in the etiology of neuroses. How deep an impression these studies made on Vienna's literary world may be illustrated by Hugo von Hoffmannsthal's remark that while he was writing the libretto for Richard Strauss's opera *Electra*, he consulted them again and again. *Electra* is indeed portrayed as a hysterical woman.

With the appearance of *The Interpretation of Dreams* in 1900, psychoanalysis became established. This greatest of Freud's works is one of

introspection; in it all interest is devoted to the innermost self of man, to the neglect of the external world, which pales in comparison to the fascination of this inner world. That this turn-of-the-century Viennese *chef d'oeuvre* was indeed the result of desperation at being unable to change the course of the external world, and represented an effort to make up this deficiency by a single-minded interest in the dark underworld, is attested to by the motto which Freud put at its beginning: Virgil's line *Flectere si nequeo superos, Acheronta movebo* ("If I cannot move heaven, I will stir up the underworld"). This motto was a most succinct suggestion that turning inward toward the hidden aspects of the self was due to a despair that it was no longer within one's ability to alter the external world or stop its dissolution; that therefore the best one could do was to deny importance to the world at large by concentrating all interest on the dark aspects of the psyche.

These preoccupations with sex and death are found to a very marked degree in the work of Vienna's greatest artists of the period, most notably Gustav Klimt and Egon Schiele. Klimt's early work had been quite conventional, but upon reaching maturity around the turn of the century he began to paint and draw hysteric nude women. For example, some of his studies for his large paintings which were to decorate the University of Vienna showed nude women in the typical hysterical *arc de cercle* posture, a motif he repeated many times. In fact, as early as 1902 an inimical critic referred to Klimt, not without reason, as "the painter of the unconscious." The role of eros in Klimt's painting can hardly be disregarded, so dominant are erotic themes in most of his paintings, with the exception of the landscapes. Klimt's paintings *Danaë*, *Water Serpents*, *Fulfillment*, and various parts of the Beethoven Frieze, such as *Hostile Powers*, should be mentioned here, as well as his *Leda* and *The Kiss*.

Klimt's most gifted student, Egon Schiele, carried this development much further. As soon as he reached artistic maturity he painted and drew mainly the inner world of man, especially man's neurotic aspects. One important precept of Freud's that seems to have influenced Schiele is that self-analysis must precede the analysis of others; in order to understand the unconscious fully, one must study one's own unconscious first. In his self-portraits Schiele analyzed his own personality as penetratingly and as mercilessly as Freud had analyzed himself. The two paintings he did in 1910 and 1911 entitled *The Self Seers* are typical



of Schiele's ability to give us visions of a person's unconscious life. In the double portrait *Inspector Benesch and His Son*, he painted not only the hidden aspects of the psyches of these two people but their oedipal conflict. Here a picture does indeed convey the essence of an oedipal conflict as eloquently as Freud's own writings.

What has been said above concerning the portraits and self-portraits by Schiele can be said with equal justification about those by Oskar Koschka. And Arnold Schönberg, who created in Vienna the foundations of modern music, also painted; his *The Red Stare* and *The Vision* let us see the inner life of the person represented more clearly than the external appearance. But ultimately, pictures speak directly to us, and the messages these paintings convey about man's innermost secrets should be found in them—in our own responses to them—and not in what may be said or written about them.

There is an eloquent footnote to the story of Empress Elizabeth and her desire for a "completely equipped insane asylum." In the decade after her death, an institution was built to house the insane of Vienna. The greatest artistic talents available were called upon to create the most modern and most beautiful building for the sole use of mental patients. One of Vienna's most distinguished architects, Otto Wagner, was commissioned to design this structure, the Church of St. Leopold on the Steinhof, a place devoted to serving the spiritual needs of patients who suffered the most severe inner disturbances. Wagner conceived of this church as a total work of art, a *Gesamtkunstwerk*, and he invited many of the best young artists of Vienna—Kolo Moser, Richard Luksch, Othmar Schimkovitz, and others—to participate in decorating it. One of the most splendid features of the church, begun in 1905 and completed in 1907, is its golden cupola, a cupola covered with gilded bronze, which glows beautifully when the rays of the sun are reflected by it. This church dominates not only the entire institution but the surrounding districts; it has become one of the great landmarks of the city.

Thus during the last years of the disintegration of the great Hapsburg Empire, its capital paid tribute to the importance of madness with a beautiful and impressive monument. Its greatest writers and painters, too, explored the nature of madness in their work, and its best scholarly minds devoted their energies to discovering and understanding the deeply hidden, innermost mind of man, that "enormous country" of

Schnitzler's play, and to deciphering the sources of hysteric and neurotic behavior.

Because of what took place in Vienna at that extraordinary time, we now have the means of mastering—or at least understanding—some of the darkest forces of our minds, and so finding it possible—even when surrounded by disintegration—to extract meaning from life and, as Freud taught, to be master in our own house.