

Beller, Vienna

INTRODUCTION



Steven Beller

The Life and Times of Vienna 1900

It is a generally accepted fact that Vienna at the beginning of the twentieth century was the birthplace of a major part of the modern culture and thought which forms the basis of our consciousness to this day. While Vienna's importance is perhaps not seen as being as great as it appeared a decade or so ago, when it could be called "the birthplace of modernity," the Habsburg capital still remains as a central fixture in the conventional picture of the origins of modernism. What is interesting about this is that, for a very large part of this century, this was not so. If one had asked at the turn of the century which city was the most important center of modern culture, the obvious candidate would have been Paris. Between the world wars, Weimar Berlin might have been seen as a greater center of avant-gardism. After the Second World War, New York lorded it over all other centers of modernity, and only really started to falter when "modernism" itself was undermined by the advent of "post-modernism." There was no place in this succession for Vienna. Even thirty years ago, although there had begun a shift in the Habsburg capital's favor, one would have been hard-pressed to make a case for Vienna around 1900 as a true rival in the invention of the modern world for those other cultural capitals. Shortly thereafter, however, things changed.

There had been harbingers of Vienna's significance. One of the very first texts to put Vienna at the, albeit negative, center of the modern world, and one which was seminal for later thinking, was Hermann Broch's *Hofmannsthal and His Times*, written in the late 1940s and

published in 1955.¹ A decade later Ilsa Barea's *Vienna*, Arthur J. May's *Vienna in the Age of Franz Josef* and Frank Field's *The Last Days of Mankind* pioneered many of the themes that would shape later study.² It was, however, with the work of Carl E. Schorske, starting in the early 1960s, that *fin-de-siècle* Vienna—as a subject of academic research and intellectual analysis—was given its shape and its rationale.³ Interest in Vienna as such had survived, naturally enough, in Vienna itself. In 1971 a collection of essays, edited and largely written by Hilde Spiel, *Wien: Spektrum einer Stadt*, was evidence of home-grown interest in the Austrian capital, but this was a different type of Vienna, not the version which would come to have such a powerful hold over the Western imagination.⁴ That was the product of the early 1970s, and was based on the publication of two major books, William M. Johnston's *The Austrian Mind* and Janik and Toulmin's *Wittgenstein's Vienna*, together with Schorske's regularly appearing essays on various aspects of Vienna, which were eventually published in book form as *Fin-de-Siècle Vienna: Politics and Culture*.⁵ These three books have dominated our understanding of Vienna 1900 ever since.

Johnston's major contribution was to provide to the English-speaking public, within a quasi-encyclopedic framework, an overview of the immense contribution made to modern thought and culture by inhabitants of the Habsburg Monarchy in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and to set this in some sort of historical context. Johnston's book provided, and still provides, the ballast for any study or course on Vienna 1900, even if some of his thematic explanations, such as the concept of "therapeutic nihilism," have not had the success of other "paradigms." As one of its authors, Allan Janik, describes in this volume, *Wittgenstein's Vienna* had a double impact on the field. It popularized the Schorskean view of Vienna as a center of aestheticist modernism. Yet, in its more narrow account of the background to Wittgenstein's thought, it also outlined the other major paradigm that would come to rival that of Schorske's, the idea of Vienna as a cradle of what would later be labeled "critical modernism." It was, though, Schorske's work, culminating in his book, *Fin-de-Siècle Vienna*, which became the dominant means by which to understand what was happening in Vienna at the turn of the century.

Schorske's thesis, as it developed through his essays and book, had the great attraction of being elegantly straightforward, yet at the same time tinged with a deep irony and buttressed by an intellectual and aesthetic sophistication, especially in its interplay of external and internal analyses, which was further enhanced by an impressive and readable prose style. In a nutshell, Schorske appeared to explain the origins of the ahistorical

modernist mentality in Vienna as the retreat by the heirs of Austrian liberalism, the children of the bourgeoisie, from the political realm—where various illiberal collectivisms threatened the liberal assumptions of historical, rational progress—and into the cultural temple of the aesthetic and psychological, where the external, historical world held no sway. Having been struck by the connection between political alienation and cultural innovation in American society in the 1950s, the shift from Marx to Freud, social to psychological explanation, and noting the renewed interest, already in the 1960s, in things Viennese, Schorske looked for a similar explanation of ahistorical modernism in turn-of-the-century Vienna, and found it. There as well, it seemed, the defeat of liberalism had led to the intellectuals' retreat from history into a world closed off from the historical, which used as its model *homo psychologicus* rather than *homo oeconomicus*. The ironic equation of political defeat and cultural success, overlaid with the ironic task of historicizing the ahistorical, proved immensely convincing, not only to the academic community, but also to a large section of the reading public. Modernism now appeared as the product not of a self-confident bourgeoisie, but rather as the introspective response of artists and thinkers who, in Schorske's phrase, were not so much alienated *from* their (bourgeois) class as *with* it. This fitted in with the idea, emerging among German historians, of the *Sonderweg* of German—and by implication Central European—history, whereby the failure of the bourgeoisie to assert themselves successfully in the political realm had led to German (Central European) history's leaving the proper path of (liberal) modern history. On the academic level, Schorske thus appeared to have discovered the link by which the internalist and externalist approaches to cultural history could be harmoniously combined. More generally, however, this psychologized reversal of the dominant idea of modernism as the culture of a hegemonic bourgeoisie proved eminently suitable to a society which was less and less confident of what it stood for and where it was going. Vienna 1900 now seemed to be the presager, and hence even the source, of both the malaise of modernity and the cultural forms and insights of modernism.

While part of the success of *Fin-de-Siècle Vienna* might well have been Schorske's good timing in tapping into an interest in Vienna that was already there, as he himself suggests, the Schorskean thesis greatly added to the intellectual excitement in the subject, which now took off. Studies of various aspects and individuals within the universe of *fin-de-siècle* Vienna now appeared. One of the greatest monographic works on the subject, by a student of Schorske, William J. McGrath, had appeared

as early as 1974. McGrath's *Dionysian Art and Populist Politics in Austria*, while not exactly mirroring the Schorskean framework, had nevertheless reflected similar themes of political alienation, the irrationalist challenge to rationalist liberalism and the refuge of the aesthetic world available to the sons of the bourgeoisie. On a quite different level, Frederic Morton's *A Nervous Splendor: Vienna 1888–1889*, from 1979, added to the aura of political decadence and cultural richness. In a different medium, Michael Frayn's *Vienna, the Mask of Gold*, broadcast on the BBC in 1977, introduced the new vision of Vienna 1900 to a still largely unsuspecting television-watching public. Meanwhile the various fields of Viennese cultural achievement were being rediscovered within the new "*fin de siècle*" category, whether it was the music of Mahler, so hauntingly used by Visconti in the film *Death in Venice*, or the art of Klimt, Schiele and others. Pictures such as *The Kiss* now seem an almost clichéd part of modern consciousness, but at the time of the publication of books such as Peter Vergo's *Art in Vienna 1898–1918* (1975), they appeared as fresh, new and little known. When Tom Stoppard's adaptation of an Arthur Schnitzler play, *Undiscovered Country*, was performed in London in 1979, it could be described as "one of the National Theatre's major forays into unknown European drama."⁶

By the early 1980s Vienna 1900 had become distinctly fashionable. Conferences multiplied, pop songs such as Ultravox's smash hit "Oh Vienna" were inspired by it, major feature films such as *Bad Timing* traded in the new decadent chic of Klimtian ornamental sensuality. Moreover, the enthusiasm for Vienna was boosting its status as a cultural capital. Johnston had wanted to stress the significance of Vienna and the Habsburg Monarchy as a major center of modern thought that had previously been overlooked. Janik and Toulmin had wanted to point out the neglected Central European origins of a certain aspect of the thought of one of the seminal thinkers of modern times, Ludwig Wittgenstein. Neither had made any imperial claims for the imperial capital as the birthplace of modernity, although they had at times come close. Schorske had been somewhat more ambivalent about this aspect, at times seeming to see in Vienna just one, albeit powerful, instance of the emergence of the modernist mentality, at others appearing to see Vienna, as Broch had done before, as the birthplace of such a mindset. Yet the subtleties of such considerations were swept aside in the avalanche of interest in Vienna, so that one of the most innovative and stimulating histories of turn-of-the-century Europe to appear in the early 1980s, Norman Stone's *Europe Transformed* (1983), could claim that "it was in Vienna that most of the twentieth-century intellectual world was invented."⁷

It was in the light of this discovery of Vienna as the birthplace of the modern world that the spate of exhibitions of Viennese art occurred. The triumphal march went from the Edinburgh Festival of 1983 to the Biennale in Venice in 1984, back home to Vienna as *Traum und Wirklichkeit* in 1985, and on to what in many ways was its high point, the exhibition at the Beaubourg in Paris, *Vienne 1880–1938: L'apocalypse joyeuse* in 1986, before culminating in New York in the same year with *Vienna 1900: Art, Architecture and Design*.⁸ Meanwhile a couple of other developments had intervened both to complicate and enhance the interest in Vienna 1900, and also to leave their mark on the exhibitions and conferences through which the topic was presented to the academic community and the public at large. The disquiet with the development of modernist thought and culture of the 1970s had coagulated into a diffuse but nevertheless identifiable cultural and intellectual movement, the more enterprising members of which came to articulate their dissatisfaction as "post modernism." What Schorske had identified in *fin-de-siècle* Vienna as the roots of ahistorical modernism now seemed even better suited as a precursor to the similarly cast-adrift mood of post-modernism. As one might expect, and as the catalogue to the Paris exhibition indicates, this identification was strongest in France. Michael Pollak, building on a Schorskean model of liberal failure and artistic alienation, was the first there to emphasize the postmodern theme of fractured identity in turn-of-the-century Viennese culture, in his *Vienne 1900: une identité blessée* (1984).⁹ After Pollak's premature death, the same themes were taken up and elaborated by Jacques Le Rider, whose *Modernité viennoise et crises de l'identité* (1990) took Pollak's ideas on identity crisis and tied them overtly into postmodern discourse.¹⁰

The other, related development which influenced the picture of Vienna 1900 in the 1980s was what turned out to be the ending of the Cold War. At the time it appeared more as the rediscovery of "Central Europe," which was, among other things, a metaphor for intellectuals stuck in the Soviet-dominated Warsaw Bloc of "Eastern Europe" to claim a *Western* European identity for themselves, and hence to persuade their Western counterparts, and sometimes themselves, that they deserved to be seen as separate from the Soviet leviathan, and indeed deserved separation from it.¹¹ In today's perspective this looks more like the onset of the ideological and systemic collapse of the Soviet empire than it does the re-emergence of a geographical entity, but it dovetailed nicely into the fashion for Vienna 1900.

If the Cold War, as Schorske claimed, had in its McCarthyite manifestation been one of the driving forces behind the retreat of intellectuals

in 1950s America from social to psychological and ahistorical modes of thought, and hence an interest in things Viennese, the prominence of Vienna 1900 in Western consciousness could now, in the 1980s, be utilized in strategies to end the same Cold War, or at least extract East Central Europe from it. This was because Vienna 1900 could be latched onto as the spiritual capital and symbol not only of itself but of the whole region of which it had once been cultural—and political—head. It was not long before Kafka's Prague and Budapest 1900 were receiving some of Vienna's reflected glory, and this realization that a large part of the birthplace of modern thought lay behind the Iron Curtain did make the recognition in the West of the legitimacy of Hungarian, Czech and Polish efforts to escape Soviet domination that much easier. Moreover the self-image of Central European dissidents such as György Konrad found reinforcement in the Viennese model of a modernist culture that had succeeded by leaving behind the world of "progress" and "politics." The Schorskean vision of retreat from politics into culture was not all that dissimilar from the concept of an "antipolitics," which sought to escape the ideological politics of *both* East and West.

The one part of this "Habsburgocentric" Central Europe to have remained in the West, Austria, could also, through this connection between Vienna 1900 and the dissidents' "Central Europe" find a way back onto an intellectual and cultural bandwagon, which had started without it, and with which it had been struggling to catch up. Austrian national identity, still a somewhat fragile entity, could also get a boost, and an attractive redefinition, by adopting Vienna 1900 as its own. Interest in the topic thus grew exponentially in Vienna itself.¹² The Schorskean paradigm of Vienna 1900 could both now tie Vienna and Austria more firmly into Western Europe by its emphasis on Vienna as being the origin of so much of Western thought, and at the same time it could soften up the barriers to its Eastern European neighbors by stressing their common, Central European and modernist, heritage.

It did not take long for the postmodern and Central European aspects of Vienna 1900 to merge. In many ways this was, given the heterogeneity of the region, its polyglot nature, and the fact that, one way or the other, most of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries' ideologies of modernity had met their demise here, inevitable. Vienna could now become subsumed in a "Central Europe 1900" which stood for the realization of the shortcomings of an over-confident, Cartesian and progressivist modernity, and hence was not so much the origin of the thought of the twentieth century but rather its victim and its antidote. This view of the region was superbly rendered by Claudio Magris in his

deeply evocative *Danube*, which encapsulates in a travelogue form much of the wisdom which both the Vienna 1900 and the postmodern version of "Central Europe" have to offer.¹³

This postmodern vision of Vienna and Central Europe, which remained an expanded and modified version of the Schorskean interpretation, did not go unchallenged. There were those, such as Peter Gay in his work on Freud, who continued to de-emphasize any special Viennese aspect, stressing instead the larger German cultural field.¹⁴ There were others, who insisted on the more straightforwardly "modern" nature of Vienna's contribution. The collection *The Viennese Enlightenment*, as its title suggests, saw Vienna in a much more progressive light, in the spirit of Karl Popper. Hilde Spiel's *Vienna's Golden Autumn* (London, 1987), despite its title, also stressed the positive contribution to modern thought, playing down the sense of crisis and decadence which provided some of the spice to the dominant, Schorskean, now postmodern model.¹⁵ David Luft had similarly emphasized the empiricist tradition within Austrian thought, in his account of *Robert Musil and the Crisis of European Culture*.¹⁶ Meanwhile Austrian historians tried to bring some sobriety to the subject by pointing out that not all of those in Vienna 1900 had been caught up in the ethereal decadence of the *fin-de-siècle* garden of modernist culture, but rather, as in all European capitals of the time, had lived harsh lives of crushing and benighted poverty.¹⁷ John Boyer was similarly continuing his researches into Viennese local politics, the results of which, as Allan Janik points out in his essay, did not fit at all well with the Schorskean model.¹⁸

There was one aspect of the debate about Vienna 1900 that both appeared to challenge some of the fundamental assumptions of the Schorskean paradigm, and also threatened to take on a life of its own. This was the question of the Jewish contribution to the modern culture which had by now made Vienna 1900 so famous. That Jews and individuals of Jewish descent had played a large role in Viennese modern cultural life was not something that anyone had seriously disputed. What had been at issue was quite how large the role had been, and whether there was anything "Jewish" about it. Johnston's work had emphasized the Jewish aspect, but it had not been integrated into a larger explanation. Janik and Toulmin had acknowledged the Jewish perspective of Wittgenstein's family and the milieu which they had described, but it had not played a central role. Schorske had also acknowledged the Jewish dimension, but had tended to neglect the implications of it for his own approach, claiming that the Jewishness of so many in the Viennese cultural elite was merely incidental to the culture which this elite produced.

This way of dealing with the issue had a venerable tradition, going back as far as many of the Jewish participants in the culture of the turn-of-the-century. Indeed it continues to this day, particularly among disciples, ironically, of many of the Central European émigrés who did so much to shape Anglo-American culture and thought in the second half of this century.¹⁹ Other refugees from Central Europe held, and hold, the opposite view, attributing most if not all of Vienna 1900's cultural significance to the role played by Jews within the city's cultural elite, and indeed making the same argument for the modern culture of Central Europe as a whole. Thus it was that, at the height of Vienna 1900's fame, at the conference in Paris which preceded the exhibition *L'apocalypse joyeuse*, George Steiner could give a talk which, in so many words, claimed all that was important in Central European modern culture, especially the "language turn," as the product of Jewish tradition, experience, and crisis.²⁰

Along with the identification of Vienna 1900 with postmodern themes, and the revival of a Central European identity based on the cultural golden age of the Vienna-Budapest-Prague triangle, this renewed "Jewish Question" about Viennese modernism became a major avenue of research into the topic in the second half of the 1980s. The relevance of such researches, at least for contemporary Austria, was greatly enhanced by the Waldheim Affair of 1986 onward, which opened up many aspects of the Austrian past, and not least the attitude of the Austrian populace to their Jewish "co-citizens." The result of all this was a wave of publications on Viennese Jewry at the end of the decade. There had been Marsha Rozenblit's *The Jews of Vienna* from 1983, which remains a standard work on the social history of Viennese Jewry, but by now the focus was much more on cultural and intellectual history.²¹ Robert Wistrich's magnum opus, *The Jews of Vienna in the Age of Franz Joseph*, offered an account of the development of Vienna's Jewish community and of the ideological ins and outs of Jewish identity within that community, but it devoted a large part of its space to essays on the major cultural figures who had contributed to the culture of Vienna 1900. Indeed it offered itself in its preface as a means to fill in "one of the missing links" to our understanding of *fin-de-siècle* Vienna by describing the Jewish context from which so much of the culture was created.²² What Wistrich's book still did not do, however, was to make clear the extent of Jewish involvement in the Habsburg capital's modern culture and society, and the links between Jewish tradition and the modern culture which had made Vienna 1900 so famous.

That line of enquiry was more evident in Ivar Oxaal's collection, *Jews, Antisemitism and Culture in Vienna*, from 1987, and it was the main

thrust of my own contribution to the subject, *Vienna and the Jews, 1867–1938: A Cultural History* (1989).²³ This purported to show that the contribution of Jews and those of Jewish descent to the modern culture of Vienna 1900 had been so large as to be predominant. Further, the Jewish background of these individuals, whether in the form of secularized religious tradition, the ideology of emancipation, the very forms of assimilation themselves, or the existential problems of living in an anti-semitic environment, had strongly influenced them, and that this had been reflected in their work. Through them, the Jewish background had thus had a large influence on Viennese modern culture generally, which was far more "ethical" and "critical" than the Schorskean paradigm had suggested. Whether or not one agrees with Allan Janik in claiming that this created a new paradigm in the field, the opening up of the Jewish dimension did complicate—and to some extent undermine—the original model of Vienna 1900. Instead of a process which looked as though it had universal application—ahistorical modernism as the product of the cultural elite of an alienated liberal bourgeoisie—Vienna 1900 now appeared as something more particular: the response of the cultural elite of an alienated *Jewish* liberal bourgeoisie. Moreover the extent of the pluralistic, "postmodern" Central Europe, which had been the regional link between the turn of the century and the end of the Cold War, now appeared far narrower, confined to the Jewish bourgeoisies of Vienna, Prague, and Budapest, and some of the smaller commercial and industrial centers, along with a relatively small contingent of non-Jewish ideological and cultural allies. This shift was particularly problematic for many Austrians: having just co-opted Vienna 1900 as part of a modern Austrian identity, they were now faced with the prospect that this culture had been produced by a group within the society which had, to all intents and purposes, been liquidated in 1938. Even outside Austria, though, emphasis on the Jewish aspect threatened to make Vienna 1900 only a special instance of a larger phenomenon: the Jewish contribution to modern culture and thought, and hence to sideline it.

By 1990 the Schorskean model of Vienna 1900 was in trouble. It was still being used as the explanatory base for important studies, Michael Steinberg's *The Meaning of the Salzburg Festival* among them.²⁴ Yet many of its theoretical assumptions were being questioned and found suspect. Comments were being made about the relative paucity of new developments in the field, and the assertion was already being made, by Schorske's supporters, that the Schorskean contribution had been misunderstood and was not responsible for the "aestheticized" image of Vienna 1900.²⁵ Moreover, the whole subject was losing its perceived relevance. While a

veritable culture industry had developed around the idea of Vienna 1900, and many researchers were now delving into the intellectual and cultural world which Schorske had made so enticing, contemporary events conspired to take some of the shine off the subject's relevance. Once the Cold War had actually ended in 1989, and definitively in 1991, the need to lean on a regional "Central Europe" was shaken off remarkably quickly by the former Eastern European countries, whose clear wish was not to be penned into a Central European holding station, but rather to reclaim what they saw as their rightful place as *Western* Europeans, or at least Europeans without the modifier. The aim quickly became not an "antipolitical" resurrection of a sort of revived Habsburg Monarchy but rather membership in the European Union and NATO. Similarly, the gloom among liberal intellectuals in the West began to lift in the 1990s, with the end of the Cold War and the revival of left-of-center political parties. The sense of identification felt with the supposedly alienated cultural elite of Vienna 1900, which had made a great deal of sense in the Thatcher and Reagan years, did not seem as relevant with the success of Bill Clinton and, a few years later, Tony Blair. "Postmodernism" similarly has lost some of its cachet in academic circles. It was always difficult to see quite what was so different about the "postmodern" perspective from various varieties of modernism and modernity, and the mood of ironic pessimism, which encouraged the idea of living in a world without the heroic force of modernity, has begun to pass. Instead, in the new millennium, there is a new-found optimism about, whether due to the miracles of the Internet or simply the good feeling produced by sustained economic growth, so that one can talk of a "neo-modernity" to overcome the postmodern hiccup. Vienna remains a topic of extensive academic research and publication.²⁶ Yet the factors which ratcheted up interest in Vienna 1900 have faded, and it is not without some irony that the historical center which seems to be replacing it in the public eye is the once and future "other" capital of Central Europe, Berlin 1900.

The pendulum having swung one way, it now threatens to swing much too far the other. This volume has as its purpose not only to re-examine the Schorskean model or paradigm, to rethink Vienna 1900 in the light of the latest research, but also to ensure that the remarkable cultural and intellectual achievement of Vienna 1900 is given its due, and is not forgotten in the eddies and maelstroms of cultural and intellectual fashion. The two goals are potentially closely linked, for if it is the Schorskean paradigm which is obstructing our view of the greater significance of Vienna 1900, and hence now acting as a drag on interest in

the subject, then a rethinking of the subject is imperative. Something happened in Vienna around the turn of the century, which has had, in various ways, a profound impact on the history of the last hundred years. Its significance might have been exaggerated at times in the last twenty years, but any city that could produce Freud, Wittgenstein, Mahler, Schoenberg, Herzl, Kelsen, Popper, Hayek, Klimt, Schnitzler, Musil, Loos, Kraus—and Hitler—clearly had something important going on in it. If, in order to find out what was happening in Vienna 1900, one particular explanation, a paradigm, has to be jettisoned, or radically transformed, so be it.

The Schorskean Paradigm and Its Discontents

The essays collected in this volume are the result of a conference which was held at the Center for Austrian Studies at the University of Minnesota in the fall of 1995. As the title of the conference suggests, *Beyond Vienna 1900: Rethinking Culture in Central Europe, 1867–1939*, it was already clear before 1995 that a re-evaluation and reconsideration of the theoretical underpinnings of Vienna 1900 was needed.²⁷ This meant a discussion of Schorske's work and a comparison with other views of the subject, while attempting to place these theoretical and interpretative questions in the context of the most recent results of research. These were the main aims of the conference, which was also intent on placing our knowledge of Vienna 1900 in the larger contexts of Central Europe then and the modern/postmodern world now. What the conference made clear above all was the need to rethink *fin-de-siècle* Vienna, and to try to move beyond the Schorskean model to a new, perhaps less elegant, but more differentiated way of looking at the subject. As the essays in this volume show, the Schorskean paradigm no longer offers a convincing picture of Vienna 1900. The question is, whether there is any alternative which does.

Allan Janik thinks there is such an alternative, and that some such paradigm is necessary to make Vienna 1900 cohere. His magisterial discussion of the various theoretical issues involved in studying the subject starts with the premise that there has been a dominant Schorskean paradigm within the subject, and points out that its central plank, the idea that Viennese modernism was the result of the cultural elite's reaction to the "failure of liberalism," has become ever flimsier the more we know about Viennese and Austrian liberalism. Several of Schorske's supporters have asserted that such criticism is misplaced, inasmuch as Schorske

Chapter 1

VIENNA 1900 REVISITED

Paradigms and Problems



Allan Janik

Forty years ago Robert Kann published his penetrating *Study in Austrian Intellectual History*.¹ This book was a pioneering effort in a field, Austrian cultural history, which has subsequently burgeoned. Kann's legacy has been recognized and honored in many ways, not least being the annual Kann Memorial Lecture, but the full significance of his *Study in Austrian Intellectual History* for our understanding of Austrian cultural history has rarely been realized. It is the neglected contribution which Kann's book made to the discussion of *method* in Austrian cultural studies that interests me here.

My concern is with models of explanation, rather than the strictly empirical side of research—although the two can never be fully separated.² It would, indeed, be scarcely possible to survey the developments in the study of Austrian culture at the level of what I have termed, “monographic” studies of *fin-de-siècle* Vienna.³ By monographic studies I understand what Thomas Kuhn might term “normal” historical research, such as documentation, which is carried on in the context of an established “paradigm,” that is, with established hermeneutic procedures for identifying questions and producing explanations. Here, however, I am concerned with what I have termed “interpretive” history, that sort

of “revolutionary” research that aims at challenging established explanatory models and developing new ones by uniting hitherto disparate levels of discourse—although, unlike Kuhn, I would not make the distinction between the two strictly dichotomous, especially as it applies to historical research.⁴ If, in what follows, it should seem that I neglect my Austrian colleagues in favor of my Anglo-Saxon ones, it is because Austrian work in the field, for all its frequent achievements, has tended to be monographic rather than interpretive, to work within established paradigms rather than developing new hermeneutic strategies.

The questions I want to pose are these: What has happened in the last forty years? Where are we now? And where should we go next?

The first and most obvious point to be made here is that Vienna and Austria have emerged in that period as objects of systematic study in their own right. Since 1960, cities in general have become interesting as fields of historical research. Vienna specifically has tended to exert a fascination upon the intellectual world, which had so long neglected it. At the same time it became increasingly clear that Austrian culture could not simply be treated as a series of footnotes to German history, as it has often tended to be.

Among other significant developments in monographic studies in the last forty years—the sorts of things I shall *not* be talking about in what follows—we must include recognition of the role that feminists, and women generally, played in Viennese life, thanks to the painstaking research of Harriet Anderson, Lisa Fischer, and others. The study of Vienna’s Jews has all but become a discipline in itself since the path-breaking work of Ivar Oxaal, Steven Beller, and Marsha Rozenblit. The last-named has called our attention to the role of the *family* in lending a collective identity to Jewish immigrants to Vienna that was not available to their Christian counterparts, who immigrated to the city as impoverished “singles,” as it were. Monika Glettler has given us a rich picture of Vienna’s Czech minority.⁵ Art historians like Peter Vergo have given us superb accounts of the main developments in painting, while studies of individual figures such as those of Alessandra Comini on Gustav Klimt and Egon Schiele have similarly enriched our knowledge, as have a number of first-class memoirs and biographies, such as George Clare’s *Last Waltz in Vienna* and Henry-Louis De La Grange’s mammoth study of Gustav Mahler, respectively. In general the public imagination has been stimulated by captivating journalistic accounts of remarkable Viennese constellations of figures and events, such as Frederic Morton’s *A Nervous Splendor*.⁶ Finally, the opening of the East since 1989 has stimulated scholars there (with considerable support from Austrian sources) to reexamine their erstwhile ties

to the Habsburg monarchy with the hope of finding an important part of a lost identity.⁷ In short, whereas it was frequently difficult to find material on many of the figures I wanted to write about twenty-five years ago—Klimt and Schiele, as well as Adolf Loos and Robert Musil, come to mind at once—the wealth of material on them today is becoming as much a burden as it is a help to scholarship. This mountain of literature attests to the way that the story of Vienna has expanded in all sorts of directions.

How that story was understood, the “interpretive” side of our Kuhnian model, has also shown many developments over the last forty years. Over a long period the research of individual scholars was loosely guided by theses that were would-be paradigms, such as Hermann Broch’s notion of the Viennese “value vacuum,” William Johnston’s notion of “therapeutic nihilism,” Ilsa Barea’s view emphasizing the consequences of the Counter-Reformation in shaping the Viennese mentality and the city’s image, and last but not least, Robert Kann’s cyclical model (to be discussed later).⁸ Finally, Carl Schorske’s “failure of liberalism” thesis succeeded in providing a pattern around which a research field could crystallize. He established a model that became the basis for the work of other scholars, such as William McGrath and Michael Steinberg, to mention but two of the best-known “Schorskeans.”⁹

However, the publication of John Boyer’s *Political Radicalism in Late Imperial Vienna* in 1981, when Schorske’s book was still hot off the press, provided a covert challenge to the “failure of liberalism” hypothesis by altering our picture of Karl Lueger dramatically, whereas the first *overt* challenge to the adequacy of the “failure of liberalism” paradigm came from Steven Beller in his *Vienna and the Jews* of 1989.¹⁰ Beller argued convincingly that the mainstream of Vienna’s so-called assimilated Jewry (1) was in fact the “soul” of Vienna’s liberal intelligentsia and (2) deserted neither liberalism nor morality, even if it did not attain political power. Alleging that Schorske neglected the enlightened-Jewish character of Viennese culture and the powerful stream of opposition to Viennese aestheticism and “the politics of fantasy” that aestheticism encouraged—that is, what I have called “critical modernism”—Beller claimed to offer a more satisfactory paradigm for grasping the most important achievements of the Viennese *fin de siècle* in terms of precisely that attachment to moral values whose demise Schorske laments. Here we seem to have a clash of paradigms in the classical sense. I believe that much future research on the interpretive level will have to preoccupy itself with the relative merits of these two positions, as well as the question of whether they are reconcilable.

What is it to have a paradigm in the first place? Despite considerable confusion in Kuhn's classical study of the development of scientific ideas, to have a paradigm seems to mean at least three things.¹¹ First, it means that we are in possession of a *hypothesis* that allows—or, better, requires—us to see things together that we previously only could perceive disparately. Second, a paradigm is itself an example to be imitated and further elucidated. Finally, a paradigm incorporates a bold conjecture that *provokes* criticism and thereby creates a common “field” of research by challenging its readers to enter into a systematic discussion. Briefly, our third point refers to nothing more than the fact that research within a paradigm is the activity of a community of scholars rather than isolated individuals. Where there were previously solitary scholars such as, say, Arthur May, who produced a highly informative and frequently insightful overview in *Vienna in the Age of Franz Joseph*,¹² it is with “the failure of liberalism” that we first have a matrix adequate to the interdisciplinary task of systematically identifying problems for research comprehensive enough at once to stimulate further research at the interpretive level and to evoke criticism of the paradigmatic interpretation itself.

As the creator of a new discussion about Vienna 1900 that brilliantly unified turn-of-the-century political and artistic discourse, Schorske is the father of all who work in the field of Viennese cultural studies. His poignant exposition of politics and culture turned Vienna 1900 from a local phenomenon into something crucial for the whole of Western culture, with his twofold allegation that both modern mass politics *and* the rejection of the bond between art and society simultaneously had their origins there. Like Plato, however, who found it necessary “to lay unfilial hands” upon the thesis of “father” Parmenides,¹³ our very commitment to the enterprise that we inherited from Schorske—that of determining the causes and reasons which brought about the extraordinary hothouse of culture that was Vienna at the turn of the century—would seem to impel us to criticize him roundly.

I have until now refrained from mentioning the contribution that Stephen Toulmin and I made to the discussion of Vienna at the turn of the century, because I believe it must be located in the context of the development of such systematic research programs for understanding culture and society in Vienna 1900 as are here under discussion. Briefly, the problem with *Wittgenstein's Vienna* is that it fits into both the “failure of liberalism” and the “critical modernist” paradigms.¹⁴

History often has a way of being stunningly implausible: it is, for example, not always “historical,” if one means by that simple chronological narrative. So “the failure of liberalism” thesis, and the paradigm

that developed around it, was known long before Schorske published his book in 1980, because he had been publishing parts of it as articles as early as 1961. The result was that the broader reading public first encountered the thesis as part of *Wittgenstein's Vienna* in 1973. Thus, Herbert Marcuse greeted Stephen Toulmin shortly after our book was published with the words: “So you have written Schorske's book for him!”¹⁵ In that book, we took what I have subsequently termed the “critical modernism” of Karl Kraus and company to be the reaction of what might be called the second generation of postliberal Viennese intellectuals to the first.¹⁶ As far as Toulmin and I were concerned, Schorske's three essays “Politics and the Psyche,” “Politics in a New Key,” and “The Transformation of the Garden” told the first part of a story whose second part we told.¹⁷ We saw ourselves clearly as working within the “failure of liberalism” paradigm. It is important that despite the title *Wittgenstein's Vienna*, which was a compromise from the start, we did not see our book as being about Vienna except secondarily. In the first instance it was a study of the social and intellectual origins of Wittgenstein's injunction to silence at the end of the *Tractatus*. The point is that Schorske's public had to be different from what he might originally have imagined, because the publication of *Wittgenstein's Vienna*, seven years before his book, had altered the terms of the discussion (at least as concerns the broader public).

All this would merely be an exercise in vanity on my part were it not for the fact that Schorske's work, too, has been subject to considerable misunderstanding, at least from his point of view, inasmuch as it has been read as a definitive, comprehensive study of the relation between politics and culture in Old Vienna as opposed to a case study in the origins of antihistorical thinking, which he claims it is in his preface.¹⁸

The upshot is that neither of the two best-known books about Vienna at the turn of the century claims to be principally a book about Vienna at the turn of the century. One is an account of the background to a very curious philosopher's efforts to “show,” that is, to gesture in words at, something that cannot be said in words, and the other is about the Viennese origins of (1) the twentieth-century retreat from history and (2) the McCarthyite mentality.

Clearly enough each of these first-person views is *absurd*, even if it is true. In the end, the intention implicit in a work itself is more important than the subjective intentions of the author, as has been clearly demonstrated in the case of painters and painting (although these intentions need not be mutually exclusive).¹⁹ Schorske and Toulmin and I have written books about Vienna, whatever we may say.

But the paradoxes do not end there, for *Wittgenstein's Vienna* is an important source of arguments for the “critical modernist”-thesis that came to challenge the “failure of liberalism” paradigm. For this reason I am more than a little interested in the question of whether there is actually a “revolutionary” clash of paradigms here or merely a dramatic instance of “normal” criticism.

While there is certainly no need to belabor the details of the model that is at the heart of the Schorske paradigm here, nevertheless I wish to review its main lines.

The “failure of liberalism” thesis is first and foremost a thesis about the way in which the political frustrations of the Viennese upper middle class turned it from a patient, rational, “scientific-moral” attitude to life and society, embodied in the historicist architecture of the Ringstraße, to a decadent, narcissistic preoccupation with self-fulfillment. It explains, in short, how the pursuit of high culture became a surrogate for political engagement for the second generation of Viennese liberals, as racist demagogues undermined the nascent liberal political order at the same time that Nietzsche’s “Dionysian,” ecstatic ideal of self-fulfillment poisoned the minds of a youth who could no longer see any sense in political engagement—the parallels to Allan Bloom’s subsequent thesis in *The Closing of the American Mind* are striking indeed.²⁰ In aesthetics this transition is marked by the rejection of the aesthetic ideal of naturalism—that is, Emile Zola’s notion of a politically engaged, critical art working toward enlightenment in society—in favor of an impressionist or symbolist fascination with the poetic elucidation of subjective states—that is, what Hermann Bahr called a “Romanticism of nerves.”²¹ In this view, the work of Arthur Schnitzler is the nostalgic embodiment of the abandonment of “moral-scientific” culture for hedonism, whereas that of Hugo von Hofmannsthal epitomizes the growing fixation with the hedonist’s self and comes to incorporate a kind of hedonist’s bad conscience, which posits a surrogate society to give itself the very “social space” from which it has in actuality severed itself. Thus in Schnitzler’s *The Green Cockatoo* a half-aestheticized relation to society expresses itself as self-alienation and a fatalistic defenselessness before the politically inevitable, whereas in Hofmannsthal it becomes the effort to move the populace to fellow feeling by utilizing all of the forceful emotional effects of the Wagnerian *Gesamtkunstwerk*, as Hofmannsthal did in, say, *The Woman without a Shadow* or *The Tower*. Ultimately Austria itself becomes conflated narcissistically with its theatrical self-image as incorporated in the Salzburg Festival.²²

The lower-middle-class version of this “politics of fantasy” is a demagogic exploitation of theatrical gesture for narrow political ends, or better,

making theatrical effectiveness and the wishful thinking it entails, instead of rational decision-making based upon the greatest good for the greatest number, the basis of political life. Invented by the fanatical Pan-German racist Georg von Schönerer, this “politics of fantasy” is perfected in the opportunistic antisemitism that paved Karl Lueger’s way to power as mayor of Vienna on the basis of a Romantic vision of a medieval corporate state—and, astonishing as it seems, in Theodor Herzl’s Zionist utopia, which exploited Jewish messianism in just the same way that Lueger’s Christian Social movement exploited ideologically the archaic image of medieval Catholicism, or Schönerer’s Pan-German movement a mythical *Deutschtum*. Freud fits into the picture as providing, if not a fantastic ideological vision of utopia, a radical skepticism about rational motivation and moral values by producing an account of motivation entirely rooted in egoism. Like Schönerer, Lueger, and Herzl, Freud’s personal frustrations with his father and the values of his father’s generation provide the crucial clue about why he rejects liberal rationality. Gustav Klimt’s withdrawal from being the public-spirited artist producing frescoes for the “Apollonian” embellishment of public life in the Burgtheater into an ever-deepening glorification of unbridled, “Dionysian” sexuality in the monumental paintings for the university *Aula* exemplifies the tendency of the society as a whole to withdraw from the public into the private, from society into the self, and ultimately from rationality to irrationality. So widespread was this withdrawal that not even the work of such Viennese giants as Arnold Schoenberg and Adolf Loos could escape its temptations entirely. Thus we should not be shocked when we find Hitler at once admiring Schönerer and Lueger, as well as referring to Vienna as the most difficult, most thorough school in his life.²³ Indeed, the “failure of liberalism” thesis would appear to be based to a great extent on Hitler’s view of Vienna before the Great War.

The “failure of liberalism” model is, then, a thesis about the inability of liberal high culture to respond rationally to failure in the political arena, and its withdrawal, at worst, into complete hedonism; at best, into a nostalgic, mystical concept of public life that was completely incapable of facing the challenges presented by rapidly modernizing Viennese society. Its three pillars are an analysis of the Viennese “politics of fantasy,” an account of the Viennese rejection of literary naturalism, and the conceptual apparatus of psychoanalysis, which supplies simultaneously the conceptual basis of the rejection of delayed gratification in politics and the substitution of an aesthetics of wish fulfillment for engagement in the arena of actual political conflict.

The result of such bold moves as associating the founder of modern Zionism with antisemitic demagogues or interweaving an analysis of the external disorder of the brawls in the Viennese parliament with the internal disorders in the psyches of Nietzschean decadents, as well as Schorske's graphic portrayal of the way that the cultural burden on the liberals' sons often evoked self-destructive tendencies to cultural patriicide in them, is simply dazzling—so much so that on first glance we are easily tempted to accept uncritically the magnificent set of portraits that he presents.

Because many readers failed to pay attention to the claim that the real theme of Schorske's work was how we could find striking examples of the retreat from history that was ubiquitous in Viennese society, they posed a number of questions about the incompleteness of Schorske's work, which Schorske himself does not seem to consider relevant to *his* work, but which remain, nevertheless, crucial to the "failure of liberalism" paradigm. Above all, for anyone with the slightest tinge of historical materialism in his consciousness, the question, "Who were these liberals, after all?" jumps out of the book. Schorske himself offers us no answer. Apart from the names of two of the liberal mayors of Vienna, liberalism was little more than the set of values that informed the writings of Stifter and Saar but that found their most perfect realization in the decoration of—and the debates surrounding—the buildings on the Ringstraße. In fact, John Boyer would tell us who they were.

Just at the point when *Fin-de-Siècle Vienna: Politics and Culture* began to circulate, a powerful challenge to its main thesis was issued so quietly in Boyer's work that scholars for the most part have failed to this day to notice the vast implications of his brilliant researches into Viennese politics for the study of Viennese culture.²⁴ In showing us exactly wherein Karl Lueger's political achievements lie, Boyer also explained what political liberalism in Vienna was really all about, that is, what liberals aspired to and why fundamental contradictions in their program determined that they *had* to fail. I refer to the antidemocratic stance of the Viennese liberals' efforts to maintain the franchise exclusively for those who paid ten florins tax—that is, at about 5 percent of the population—which was wholly incompatible with their cultural "mission" of uniting the *Bürgertum* and thus could only be regarded as a provocation to the excluded "little men," who were, after all, the vast majority. In effect the liberals of the 1870s betrayed the cause of the liberals of 1848, namely the political unification of the middle classes.²⁵ To put it glibly, the liberals were not very liberal and in their own illiberalism provoked an even more dangerous illiberalism that destroyed them politically.

Moreover, Boyer's analysis deftly demonstrates that Lueger, far from being a fanatic, was in fact Vienna's first professional politician,²⁶ something best illustrated by his refusal to settle political debates in duels. In bringing disparate, indeed conflicting, economic groups such as artisans and their landlords into one party, Lueger in fact realized the highest aspiration of Viennese liberals of an earlier generation. Boyer argues—actually less convincingly than he might have done if he had given us some examples of comparative rhetorical tactics—that Lueger's type of political leadership actually had more in common with the Baroque notion of the ruler as "father" than with that of the totalitarian "leader," that is, that Lueger was paternalist rather than "protofascist."

In creating a successful political party out of conflicting interest groups, Lueger was wholly sensitive, as the genuinely fanatical and self-destructive Schönerer was *not*, to the dual dimension of Viennese political life. From the Baroque onward its *public* face had been profoundly *theatrical*.²⁷ Think of how the emperor would wash the feet of twelve poor men and wait upon them in the imperial palace on Holy Thursday,²⁸ or the ceremony of the burial of an emperor in which the grand master of the court would stand before the door of the Capuchin church in the first district asking three times for admittance, being refused first as emperor and king, and then as "Apostolic King of Hungary, King of Bohemia, Dalmatia, Croatia, Slavonia, Galicia, Lodomeria, Illyria, Jerusalem [!], Archduke of Austria, Grand Prince of Transylvania, Grand Duke of Tuscany and Cracow, Duke of Lorraine, Salzburg, Styria, Carinthia, and Carniola," only to be admitted at the moment that the deceased emperor was identified as a man begging God's mercy.²⁹ So Lueger knew that theatricality was necessary to success in public life. To that end he espoused antisemitic rhetoric as "spice" for the public's taste for entertainment (in direct imitation of the way that liberals used anticlerical rhetoric).³⁰ But he well knew that this was only the public side of Viennese politics; in *private* there was in fact very little elbow room for maneuvering: *compromise* reigned supreme. In short, Boyer's Lueger has very little to do with the merely charismatic Lueger of the "failure of liberalism" thesis—even if he presents as many problems as he illuminates—but Boyer's treatment of Lueger does draw our attention to aspects of Viennese *tradition*, especially the Viennese tolerance for *ambiguity* with respect to the difference between the public and private meanings of words and events that are crucial for understanding Viennese culture.³¹ In a nutshell, Boyer's research shows clearly that we cannot begin to understand the relationship of culture to politics until we raise the question of the nature of Viennese *society* and its values. Without a

social history of Vienna, the relation between politics and culture is a purely hypothetical one.

After Boyer's work, the "failure of liberalism" thesis had begun to limp badly, for it was no longer possible to lump together the immensely successful, if vulgarly, even dangerously, opportunistic, Lueger with the fanatic, ne'er-do-well Schönerer, whose main achievement was to get himself banned from Austrian public life. Subsequent work by Klaus Dethloff shows that the picture of Herzl presented in the "failure of liberalism" thesis was equally one-sided. To be sure Herzl did, like Lueger, have a marked flair for the dramatic, with his deep debt to Wagner and the concept of the *Gesamtkunstwerk*,³² both of whose importance for Vienna 1900 is immeasurable. Consider, for example, his plan for a baptism *en masse* for the Viennese Jews or a duel to the death with a leading antisemite. However the principle behind Herzl's thinking was eminently rational, namely legal recognition of the Jews as a "nation"—the only move that, as we now know, could really have undercut the evil thrust of political antisemitism. Indeed, Dethloff argues convincingly that Herzl, an educated lawyer, in fact was entirely realistic in his efforts, first, to achieve recognition for the Jews as a "Volk," second, to establish a state for that "Volk" on the basis of the principle *negotiorum gestio* drawn from Roman Law.³³ That principle permits a person to act on behalf of another when the latter's property is endangered. As a precedent it could be appealed to in order to make a "Volk" out of Central European Jewry.

Reading Dethloff carefully, it is clear that Herzl was fully conscious of the dual aspects of Viennese politics, the theatrical and the pragmatic, to which Boyer has called our attention, and was prepared to act strategically, both histrionically in the theater of public politics and with sober legal acumen behind the scenes. If this is true, the "politics of fantasy" involved in winning recognition for his people in a duel or through mass conversion in Saint Stephen's Cathedral is but the Romantic political husk of a politics whose rational kernel is to be found in its attachment to legality—something very Jewish. However, that would imply, as does Boyer's revised portrait of Lueger, that the concepts and strategy that have given us the "failure of liberalism" hypothesis hardly do justice to the complexities of Viennese political culture.

These are just some of the problems that have led scholars to seek an alternative that would be able to accommodate the main points in the "failure of liberalism" thesis but at the same time tell a more comprehensive story.

At this point I want to introduce Robert Kann into the picture. Kann's thesis, which to my knowledge has never really been explored, is

that there is a cyclical pattern in Austrian intellectual life, inasmuch as two alternating constellations of values dominate within Austrian society in succeeding generations. In short, there are not one, but two "Austrian minds," between which the country vacillates—*roughly* corresponding to the theatrical and the pragmatic sides of political life.³⁴ One of these mentalities is at once sentimentally nostalgic and highly moralistic in the spirit of Counter-Reformation Catholicism: eloquence and wit are its earmarks. The other is more dryly reformist and rationalistic, seeking to introduce the "values of the Enlightenment" into a country to which they are basically foreign.³⁵ Kann made his thesis come to life by illustrating it vividly in the persons of the antisemitic Baroque court preacher Abraham a Santa Clara, who ultimately represents entertainment and the culture of the picture, and the assimilated Jewish professor of "Polizei- und Kameralwissenschaft," later president of the Academy of Fine Arts, Josef von Sonnenfels, the leading representative of the Enlightenment, who represents the critical culture of the word. These two were important to Kann as much for what they symbolize as for what they actually did, or failed to do: the one for his dazzlingly witty mixture of moralizing entertainment, the other for his Promethean, if frustrated, effort to introduce the values and practices of secular "civil society" into Austria.³⁶ They were "type-forming characters" who were the key to understanding the dominant mentality in successive generations.

The speculative character of Kann's thesis doubtlessly accounts for its neglect by historians of Austrian culture. This mode of attacking the problem of understanding Austrian intellectual history would seem to be indebted in some loose sense to Giambattista Vico's view of history as a spiral process of *corsi* and *recorsi*.³⁷ It is hardly a secret that such cyclical views of history are neither particularly easy to grasp nor easy to reconcile with empirical detail. Moreover, the idea of a "type-forming pattern" is not particularly easy to fathom: is he giving us criteria for the *explanation* of Austrian cultural development over generations, or heuristic hints about what to look for in the "mentality" of succeeding generations? There is a big difference here. The former is hard to swallow; the latter is, however, highly suggestive with respect to the hermeneutic possibilities it offers, both with respect to the peculiarities of Austrian Catholicism and the situation of "assimilated" Jewish "enlighteners," neither of whose importance can be exaggerated.

Be that as it may, Kann had very specific ideas about the way these alternating periods would illuminate one another. Thus he insists that we shall only understand developments in one generation by looking carefully into developments *in the last generation but one*. But is this not

exactly what Boyer suggests we must do if we want to see Lueger rightly? For readers of Kann, Boyer's account of Lueger contains no surprises. So, even if we are suspicious of sweeping generalizations, we disregard Kann at our peril. Kann's model can usefully guide us by reminding us of the need to think of the long term when we are trying to get hold of the basic values of specific individuals in specific epochs.

That brings us to Ilsa Barea. In her superb *Vienna: Legend and Reality*, she employs just such a long-term perspective to explain how Vienna came to have a carefree image, "cheerful Vienna," which has precious little to do with life there. With an irony seldom surpassed in Austrian cultural historiography she relates how even figures who contributed significantly to that image were in fact victims of harsh Viennese realities. Mozart is perhaps the most dramatic case in point. Always happier in Prague, he lies buried ignominiously in a common grave, whose whereabouts will probably always remain unknown, while his music has become the very symbol of a city that for the most part rejected him in life, only to celebrate him after his death by erecting a lovely memorial to him in a cemetery where he does not lie—and, finally, to name the national bonbon, the *Mozartkugel*, after him. This is not an atypical Viennese destiny.

Barea's explanation for this attitude takes us all the way back to the Counter-Reformation, which imposed Catholicism on a city that had gone overwhelmingly over to Protestantism almost as soon as Luther nailed his theses to the door of the Wittenberg Cathedral.³⁸ While it took a century to do so, the Catholic Habsburgs wiped out Protestantism by forcing emigration or reconversion. The implications of Barea's position, which she does not herself elicit from her position as I do here, are as deep as they are wide for our understanding of Viennese culture. Thus the effects of this forced conformity go a long way to explaining the most prominent characteristics of the Viennese popular mentality in comparison with, say, the Berliner mentality circa 1900: obsequiousness, melancholy, and irony (the phrase "assimilated self-haters" suggests itself). In effect the forcible re-Catholicization of Vienna and much of eastern Austria produced a quasi secularization of society, as people were forced to pay lip service to a set of values in which they had ceased to believe. Think of the situation of former inner-directed Protestants, who had to observe Catholic ritual despite their consciences. The only possible result would have been cynicism with respect to both religion and politics, as well as an inner emptiness that often prompted them to seek theatrical surrogates for the missing self-fulfillment. If this is true, we should find Viennese hedonism and escapism linked to a

peculiar set of "alienated" religious values—and, indeed, we do. Boyer, for example, calls attention to the fact that underneath the surface glitter of Viennese Catholicism there lurks another religion, that of the Biedermeier "Herrgott," which at best employs certain Catholic symbols and expressions, but is really a kind of sentimentalized, fatalistic theism:³⁹ "Wenn der Herrgott nicht will, nützt es gar nix" (which might be loosely translated, "if the Good Lord ain't willin', fergit it"), runs a well-known *Wienerlied* that captures perfectly the popular Viennese concept of Providence.⁴⁰ Thus the Viennese disposition, which extends into the political sphere, to melancholy, and the tendency to escape into an operetta-like fantasy world, is part of a long story that takes us back to Luther's time.

This thesis, like Kann's, has not yet been put to the test, but it certainly should be. Doing so would raise the kind of questions—about the *transmission* of Baroque values from the seventeenth century—that are typical of French, anthropologically oriented history and that have yet to be applied in the Austrian context. The work of R. J. W. Evans on the transition from Renaissance to Baroque (although not in the French tradition) marks a serious move in this direction.⁴¹ Considerations of space allow me to do little more than hint at its importance. Evans has tried to specify how the Austrian variant of the Baroque only half succeeded in producing absolute monarchy but ended up "a complex and subtly balanced organism, not a 'state' but a mildly centripetal agglutination of bewilderingly heterogeneous elements" linked by a common mentality,⁴² which was too traditional to accept modernization but too modern to be content with tradition. The result was that by the turn of the century Austria held fast to all sorts of colorful traditions officially, while ignoring them in practice, or worse, exploiting them for commercial purposes, as has been the practice in Salzburg.⁴³ It is crucial to fill in the outline he has sketched from the end of the Counter-Reformation to the *fin de siècle*, for example, to see how magic and superstition have been transmitted from the Baroque to the *fin de siècle* (and farther). More important, the half-completed centralization process would seem to account for the curious sort of "melting pot" that Vienna 1900 would become. Evans's work suggests at once certain comparisons with centralized capitals such as Paris or Stockholm and with American cities such as New York or Chicago. Finally, it goes a long way to explaining the half-heartedness of the Viennese use of language, that is, more as ornament to social life than as a vehicle for conveying literal significance.

If Boyer has emphasized the distance between the public and the private in nineteenth-century Viennese politics, Barea and Evans have

offered us an explanation of how that gap came into existence. In doing so, both of them have given us an explanation of what is perhaps the major difference between a typically Austrian and a typically German mentality, for, as Ralf Dahrendorf has emphasized, Germans are only able to cope with conflict so long as they believe that a solution at some “higher level” is possible.⁴⁴ This is exactly the opposite of the Austrian—especially east Austrian, as opposed to the Alpine—and, above all, the Viennese mentality, which has no problems with conflicts but skeptically and even cynically considers all *solutions* to pressing conflicts absurdly utopian, while accepting, and almost masochistically glorying in, the resultant ambiguity. Thus it could be that, as Kraus put it, in Berlin a situation could be serious but not desperate, while in Vienna it could be desperate but not serious.

And this brings us—finally—to our second paradigm. Where the devil is abroad, the Holy Ghost cannot be far away, to paraphrase Ferdinand Ebner.

It is precisely because the “value vacuum” of which Broch speaks, that obsession with novelty that arises as one set of values becomes *passé* without yet being replaced by another, evoked a far deeper response than the “mysticism of nerves” that gave us the avant-gardism of “Young Vienna,” Jugendstil, and the Secession, as well as Lueger and company, that the “failure of liberalism” thesis has been challenged by what I have termed the “critical modernism” thesis. I have coined the term “critical modernism” in explicit contrast to superficial postmodernism, which has sometimes wanted to claim *fin-de-siècle* Viennese “decadence” as an anticipation of certain crucial aspects of “postmodernity.” The “critical modernist” paradigm, on the contrary, turns on the hypothesis that the most important contribution of *fin-de-siècle* Vienna to our culture is a peculiarly skeptical healthy reaction against the spellbinding power that modernity exerts upon us. Its Viennese representatives, who were by no means its only representatives and were never particularly popular in Austria down to our own day, are distinguished by the power of a critique of modernity that, nevertheless, was not a rejection of modernity pure and simple, but an immanent critique of its limits.

“Critical modernism,”⁴⁵ then, is a label that I have invented after the fact to describe a cast of mind, not a conscious movement or even all of the works of the figures that I use to designate it; rather critical modernism as the property of their foremost achievements. It has two aspects: critical modernism refers, first, to a *scathing diagnosis* of that attitude to culture that considers art’s power to move us emotionally by being bigger than life as a drug to get “high” on; second, it is a *strategy*

for combating the narcissistic, theatrical solipsism that was part and parcel of both the Viennese religion of art and its “politics of fantasy,” which was the correlative of that narcissism. The figures whom this term designates⁴⁶ were for the most part influenced by the critique of *fin-de-siècle* Viennese mores inspired by Karl Kraus, Adolf Loos, and the much misunderstood Otto Weininger, whose work we have only recently begun to comprehend, thanks to the researches of Hannelore Rodlauer, Waltraud Hirsch, and Steven Beller.⁴⁷ They include, for example, Arnold Schoenberg, Egon Schiele in the last years of his lamentably short life, Ludwig Wittgenstein, Georg Trakl (a figure who has hardly even been mentioned in connection with *fin-de-siècle* Vienna), Hermann Broch, and later the Theodor Adorno of the “Meditations on Metaphysics,” and Erwin Chargaff, to mention but a few.⁴⁸ However, I would also insist upon including any number of figures outside the sphere of Kraus’s influence and even some of his antagonists, such as Freud, Schnitzler in some of his moods (for example, *The Far Country*), Robert Musil, and Rosa Mayreder, among the critical modernists.⁴⁹ Mayreder’s feminism, with its skeptical attitude to many feminist clichés, such as the universal enemy “man” or the “sacrificing” woman,⁵⁰ for example, is exactly the sort of thing I want to call attention to under the rubric “critical modernism.”

Inasmuch as they concentrated upon art, critical modernists were all concerned in one way or another with extricating Viennese aesthetes from their cultural daydreaming, that is, what the *Brenner* philosopher Ferdinand Ebner called *Traum vom Geist*, or “intellectual fantasizing.”⁵¹ The critical modernists press crucial questions about the aims and goals of artistic activity based upon profound medium-immanent reflections in their creative work itself, as Kraus does by making texts out of the texts of others. Thus, explicitly or not, they rejected with Nietzsche the monumentality of the Wagnerian *Gesamtkunstwerk* for a minimalist *Gesamtkunstwerk* that found the message in the medium itself. Thereby they could build a pregnant Wittgensteinian “silence” into the very structure of, say, their music, in the case of a Schoenberg or a Webern, or their poetry, in the case of a Trakl.

Indeed, it was Trakl who produced the most devastating critique of Viennese aestheticism, because his critique of aestheticism was entirely *immanent*. Long confused with “primitives” and expressionists, careful study has shown that Trakl was an absolute perfectionist whose art was directed against the “value vacuum” in a “cursed, godless century.”⁵² Master of all the avant-garde techniques for writing poetry that Symbolist poets had inherited from Rimbaud and Baudelaire, Trakl turned

those techniques against avant-garde art, as he did the symbols of Baroque Catholicism or German Romanticism, to *show*, in Wittgenstein's sense, the emptiness of an art that poisoned itself in its own beauty. In the very structure of his poems, Trakl contrasted the Symbolists' narcissistic obsessions with the personalism of Dostoyevskian Christianity, with all its sensitivity to the lot of the helpless and the downtrodden. It is a mark of his success that this poetic critique of the spiritual barrenness of his age remained powerful enough to inspire the likes of Ingeborg Bachmann, Paul Celan, Christine Levant, Thomas Bernhard, and many others decades after his death. Trakl is particularly important as a contrasting figure to the Schorske thesis because his poetry contains probably the most scathing critique of Nietzsche ever written.⁵³

Kraus set the tone for this group by providing a critique at once of the "politics of fantasy" and the "Romanticism of nerves," not to mention the hypocrisy of an authoritarian church, precisely by refusing to tolerate a situation in which words did not mean what they said. His campaign against Austrian slovenliness (*Schlamperei*) took the twofold form of an assault upon the Austrian public's tolerance for ambiguity and artistic cultivation of it. Although he would increasingly, after World War I, assume the role of an Old Testament prophet in ways that became problematic, Kraus, as Harry Zohn and Reinhard Merkel emphasize,⁵⁴ began his career as a sort of casuist critic of the misuse of language in public life. His first polemics were directed in good liberal fashion at the collusion of public officials, priests, and journalists who allowed the moral and the criminal, the private and the public aspects of conduct to become fatally confused, but worse than that exploited that very confusion for profit. In a society in which such confusions were possible, rational intercourse between citizens was impossible. In fact Kraus was among other things protesting that the kind of gap that existed in Vienna between what people said and what they meant made "civil society" (what Jürgen Habermas calls "Öffentlichkeit") impossible.⁵⁵ The assumption behind his early polemics is that without integrity there could be no public life. Without the integrity of language there could be no personal integrity. If we start by debasing language, we end up debasing people. From his early campaigns for the rights of prostitutes and homosexuals to his attacks on Lueger and later Imre Bekessy and Johannes Schober, and, above all, in his commentary upon the sort of "doublethink" that lay behind the rhetoric of the Central Powers' leadership in World War I, expressed in his monumental play *The Last Days of Mankind*, Kraus was doing nothing more than objecting violently to Viennese and Austrian tolerance toward the very sort of ambiguity in

public life that made Lueger possible. This is not to say that Kraus was always right in his judgments, but that the target of his polemics, lack of integrity in the use of language, was precisely what was separating Austria increasingly from the mainstream of Western liberalism. If liberalism failed in Vienna, it was not the fault of Karl Kraus.⁵⁶

Be that as it may, the most exciting development in Austrian studies recently has been the recognition of the "Jewish" character of critical modernism. It is the merit of Steven Beller to have done so (before the concept existed as such). This is particularly impressive because once upon a time it seemed that it would be impossible to prove that the achievements of the Viennese Jews, of which everybody had always been conscious, were due to their Jewishness rather than their liberalism. On the basis of an astute statistical analysis, Beller shows us how Jewish overrepresentation within the educated class (that is, Gymnasium graduates) put them in a position to dominate Vienna's intellectual life from 1867 to 1938,⁵⁷ in much the same way that Jews have come to dominate, say, that of New York for most of this century—that is, by "setting a tone" to intellectual life so as, for example, to draw a young Catholic philosopher like me to finish his education at a Jewish university. Beller emphasizes that before and after these dates Vienna has been a relatively uninteresting place. Moreover, on the basis of an even more astute analysis of the moral values of so-called assimilated Jewry, he demonstrates why it was imperative for them actively to "Judaize" Austrian society,⁵⁸ and exactly what it meant to do so. In stark contrast to Catholicism, whose hierarchical structure has made acceptance of Enlightenment highly problematic, if not outright impossible, to this day, the Jewish Enlightenment (*Haskalah*) was able to produce a secular synthesis of traditional Judaism and Kantian moral philosophy, which turns upon the absolute duty of rational beings to act rationally. Classical German culture took on virtual religious significance as the German classics, first in connection with natural science, later literary and aesthetic culture generally, replaced the Talmud.

Thus from 1848 onward, as "assimilating" Jews gravitated in increasing numbers toward the Habsburg capital, they came with the idealistic (both in the philosophical and the colloquial sense) project of becoming Germans. When they arrived in Vienna they discovered to their dismay that before they could do that, they had to liberate Austrians from the fetters of ignorance bound up with superstitious Baroque Catholic values, to replace an ornamental pictorial culture with a critical culture of the word.⁵⁹ "Assimilation," therefore, was anything but a passive process of adaptation to their new environment. Rather it was a *project*, not

unlike Habermas's project to become modern,⁶⁰ to introduce the culture of Kant, Beethoven, Goethe, and, above all, Schiller to a deprived people raised on Abraham a Santa Clara. However, it is important to emphasize that this critical spirit viewed "unenlightened," Orthodox Jewry as every bit as deprived and thus criticized its shortcomings roundly. This Jewish self-critique is often confused with another very different, very real phenomenon, self-hatred.⁶¹ Nevertheless, it was paradoxically a strongly Protestant value system that assimilating Jews imparted to Vienna's liberal intelligentsia (and supported financially), both by their example and in their salons. So it should not be particularly surprising that the crypto-Protestant "critical Catholicism" (sadly neglected by cultural historians) that emerged in Innsbruck after World War I in and around Ludwig von Ficker's *Der Brenner*, which bitterly and unqualifiedly condemned the Salzburg Festival as idolatrous, should have at once developed out of, and in reaction to, Karl Kraus in exactly the same way that, for example, the thought of Elias Canetti did.⁶² Both grew out of a secularized Jewish passion for truth in their very different ways.

I suspect that the achievement involved in laying bare the Jewish foundations of Enlightenment in Vienna 1900 would have pleased Robert Kann very much. When one reads his account of Josef von Sonnenfels in his *Study in Austrian Intellectual History* closely and carefully after Beller, and in connection with, for example, the penetrating studies of Bruce Pauley on the antisemitism of the interwar years,⁶³ one senses movingly the agony that the Jewish "enlighteners" of Austrian society were to experience "between the lines," as it were, in Kann's exposé. Kann's translator, Inge Lehne, told me that the book that became *Kanzel und Katheder* in German was far and away the most difficult she had ever undertaken and seriously entertained my suggestion that her practical difficulties were connected with the fact that Kann could not really bring himself to express all of the hard truths about the Viennese rejection of assimilated Jews and Enlightenment that he wanted to enunciate.⁶⁴ I have certainly been shaken, reading Kann again after Beller.

Be that as it may, we have our second paradigm. But do we have one, or two, paradigms here? We certainly have two very different, opposed theses about Vienna 1900. Both "the failure of liberalism" and "critical modernism" fill the three criteria for being a paradigm: they allow us to see things together that we could only previously see separately, both are exemplars that are being imitated in current research, and both have provoked an exciting and illuminating discussion. But are they "incommensurable and incompatible," as different paradigms must be, according to Kuhn? The answer would seem to be: yes and no. They are

certainly incompatible with respect to certain specific points, for example, in classifying Viennese upper-middle-class culture as a culture of "grace," which developed in imitation of aristocratic sensuousness. In fact Beller has argued that there was precious little in aristocratic circles that would count as high culture for liberals to imitate. The predominant role of military virtue, so central to callous villainy in the works of Schnitzler, and its leisure-time equivalent, hunting in aristocratic life, were as foreign to the Viennese liberal intelligentsia as they were to Orthodox Jews. To the extent that there was culture at all—even when it was verbal—it was musical and pictorial; amusing, not challenging; in a word, not literary, as was liberal culture.⁶⁵ So there are clearly points of deep disagreement. On the other hand, there is also a high degree of complementarity between the two theses, as the argument of Wittgenstein's *Vienna* itself would attest. In this view, critical modernism came into existence as a response to "the failure of liberalism." So there is room for doubt about whether we really have a clash of paradigms here. Time will tell.

Perhaps we ought to be developing a synthesis in the form of a "failure of Jewish liberalism" thesis. The depth of Jewish commitment to liberalism, by the way, can be measured by the fact that the right to vote in the Israelitische Kultusgemeinde remained attached to the payment of ten florins tax until the end of the monarchy.⁶⁶ Consider briefly the following caricature of a sketch: if we read "Jewish liberalism" where Schorske has simply spoken of liberalism, if we further consider with Boyer that Viennese liberals were illiberal in fundamental respects and we go on to substitute the traditional Viennese values, nostalgically evoked in the phrase "Backhendzeit," for the "aristocratic culture of grace," as Boyer and Barea suggest we should, we get a picture of a younger generation of Jewish liberals deserting the One True God, that is Kant's and Schiller's Rational Ideal, not for Catholicism itself, but for its debased, counterfeit, sentimental "Herrgott" mammonism, now in various secularized, aestheticized guises. That desertion then provokes a reaction on the part of equally dissatisfied contemporaries who insist that it is not "Jewish liberal values" that are at fault but the fact that the older generation failed often to live up to them. The resulting picture is one combining the corrected "failure of liberalism" thesis with the "critical modernism" thesis in a long-term story, which loses none of its poignancy for being in a very deep sense an internal "Jewish" debate. The result of such a thought experiment leaves us remarkably, even disquietingly, close to the argument of chapters 13 and 14 of part II in Otto Weininger's *Sex and Character*.⁶⁷

Perhaps the future lies in that direction, which of course is not without its thorny problems. Such an approach would have to “square the circle” by doing justice both to Kraus and to Lueger, to morality and to politics. That in turn would involve little more than analyzing the deepest problems in our own culture.⁶⁸ But then, is not all history contemporary history, as Benedetto Croce suggested? And is it not precisely this aspect of Schorske’s work that has made Vienna so important in the first place? Be that as it may, since squaring the circle is a good seventeenth-century Austrian preoccupation, as Evans points out, we should not shy away from it.⁶⁹

Problems for Future Research

I would like to conclude by enumerating a list of problems for future research (not all arising from the perspective of critical modernism), which I take to be particularly pressing. Most of them turn in one way or another upon the importance of social history for understanding the link between politics and culture. In doing so I in no way want to imply that my list is exclusive; it only claims to emphasize areas that are particularly neglected. Thus I have not mentioned such areas as women’s studies, philosophy, the social sciences, and so on, because considerable work is being done in those areas, even if its implications for our paradigms of Vienna 1900 have not become clear.

Analytic philosophy has taught us that we are in a position to understand the meaning of a word, sentence, sign, or symbol only to the extent that we know how it was used normally at the time it was uttered or written. Moreover, usage changes over time. Thus the history of the reasons for and causes of such changes in rhetoric will be crucial to the project of cultural history.

First, social history is also the key to the dynamics of the *transmission* of values. We desperately need a comparative study of the Viennese cultural elite such as Peter Burke’s *Venice and Amsterdam*, which reconstructs the political, economic, and cultural values of the respective elites of those cities by contrast to a similarly situated city.⁷⁰ We need to understand, for example, the genesis and development of the “Herrgott” religion, but we also need to know in *detail* how the north German ideal of *Haskalah* spread *to* and *in* Vienna. To that end, we need to cultivate the sort of social history that has been so highly developed in France, that is, history with a long-term perspective concentrating upon “those who have suffered, worked, declined and died without being able to describe their

sufferings.”⁷¹ Moreover, the sort of history of “moeurs” that Emanuel LeRoy Ladurie has brought to perfection in works like *Montaillou* and *Carnival* is wholly lacking in the area of Austrian studies. As a result we have had more or less to take Baroque Catholicism at its own word with respect to the significance of any number of beliefs and practices.

Another value constellation that has gone all but unresearched is the Neo-Stoic *ethos* of the civil service as it developed out of the political philosophy of Justus Lipsius into the Enlightenment through the nineteenth century and down to Kafka.⁷²

To understand the significance of many social phenomena in literature we need to know what the social reality was. For example, to understand the role of the ubiquitous prostitute in literature we must know what prostitution was like in practice in Old Vienna, a theme that has only of late been investigated for the first time, significantly by a scholar working in the Netherlands. Similarly, we shall certainly not be in a position to understand the world of Schnitzler’s *Anatol* until we have an accurate picture of what it was to be independently wealthy around 1900. The question of just who got rich and just how rich they got in the “Gründerzeit” remains to be posed, not in the context of industry but in the context of understanding how both Jugendstil art *and* a decadent lifestyle were financed.

Second, equally important and equally dependent upon the creation of a social history of Austria would be an Austrian equivalent of the project in civil courage that issued in Ralf Dahrendorf’s redoubtable *Society and Democracy in Germany*. Austrian history and social science will not come of age until an Austrian is *brave* enough to raise the question of why it took two world wars to achieve a semblance of Western “civil society” and *learned* enough to answer it plausibly. That person will have to explore notions of equality as they relate to the process of industrialization and economic modernization, the traditional elites and education, the development of law and the legal profession, attitudes to authority, modes of distinguishing between public and private, et cetera, et cetera. That person will, like Dahrendorf, probably have to be a member of the House of Lords and vice-chancellor of an English university as well as an Austrian.

Third, since most of the “big” questions that we want to raise about Viennese and Austrian culture in one way or another turn upon that question of just how “rational” developments there have been, one important desideratum concerns the history of natural science, which is perhaps our most important measure of “rational” activity. In this area there has been practically no research whatsoever. The sheer number of

first-rate scientists that came from *fin-de-siècle* Vienna is astounding. Four Nobel prize winners attended the same Gymnasium there at the same time. Erna Lesky has given us a comprehensive picture of the state of medical research in Vienna 1900 but has really only scratched the surface, so rich was Vienna's medical science at the turn of the century.⁷³ All of this needs to be integrated into our discussions of culture. If we want to learn about the mental habits of Viennese intellectuals before World War I, for whom natural science was a vitally important part of culture, we shall need to know more about the history of science.

Further, since the nature, importance, and social role of science is central to debates about Enlightenment, it is crucial when we are evaluating figures of the *fin de siècle* to establish how the opinions of philosophers, social critics, and literati along a broad spectrum, from racists to feminists, stood in relation to "best knowledge" in the natural sciences. For example, the number of "Monists" among Viennese intellectuals was simply huge. To evaluate their opinions, that is, to distinguish science from speculation in their thought, we need to know how they understood, say, Darwin and how that understanding relates to developments in zoology at a specified time.

In more remote periods, such as the seventeenth century, the Habsburg monarchy produced relatively few first-rate scientists, but what passed for science is highly revealing of the intellectual values of the society. I refer to the preoccupation with the "squaring of the circle." Now that reputable historians of science have taught us that it is not only legitimate but absolutely necessary to the enterprise of the history of science to concern ourselves with "false" ideas—which they assure us are usually less "false" than we think—we ought to start taking a serious look at the development of natural science and medicine in Vienna.

Fourth, another very different sort of study that we ought to be concerning ourselves with is making comparisons with the other great urban centers in Europe and America. To understand the role of Vienna in the monarchy with respect to Prague or Czernowitz, for example, we should be looking into, say, the relationship between London and Edinburgh, or Dublin, or Manchester. To some extent this sort of comparative perspective has begun to be employed as scholars from Prague, Budapest, and Zagreb explore their historical relations with the Habsburg capital. But we need yet other types of social comparative studies, too. Since there is absolutely no question that Vienna, like New York, Chicago, or London, was a magnet for immigrants, we ought to be seeking to determine what was unique about Vienna by comparing it with other "melting pots." The point of these comparisons is as much to clarify just what

a "melting pot" is as it is to clarify an issue like the role of immigration in Viennese politics. While the comparisons of Vienna with other centers within the monarchy are interesting and important, this theme is crucial if we are to understand the politics of "the little man" that, we should remember, was displacing liberalism in the great U.S. industrial cities increasingly after the Civil War.

Fifth and finally, the question that Robert Kann posed about explanations of Viennese culture in terms of alternating cycles of rational and irrational dominance within public life remains. If Kann's approach seems too speculative and abstract, I would remind skeptics that the best account we have of irrationalism in the United States, that of Kann's brilliant contemporary Richard Hofstadter, takes exactly that form by tracing the roots of American anti-intellectualism back to the "Great Awakening" in 1740.⁷⁴ As for the question of his use of ideal types, do we not in fact recognize them when we take a close look at today's Austria? Does not the demagogic voice of Abraham a Santa Clara, albeit in an institutionalized form and lacking the stylistic brilliance, resonate through the pages of the *Kronenzeitung*? Have not today's "enlighteners," such as Simon Wiesenthal, shared Sonnenfels's fate of ultimate rejection despite limited superficial success? There are indeed reasons for taking Kann seriously today. These issues and many more need to be reconsidered.

Notes

This is an amended version of the Kann Lecture, delivered at the Center for Austrian Studies, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, Minnesota, on 12 October 1995, which appeared in the *Austrian History Yearbook*, Vol. 28 (1997): 1–27.

1. Robert A. Kann, *A Study in Austrian Intellectual History: From Late Baroque to Romanticism* (New York, 1960).
2. Here we might paraphrase Kant and suggest that criticism of sources is blind in the absence of models of explanation that allow us to identify just what is worth researching in the first place, whereas models that are applied without mastery of sources are empty. The systematic study of sources, that is, documentation, yields a discourse for dealing with a particular set of "facts." However, to consider such research history is to confuse history with chronicle. It is in fact but the philological prolegomenon to history. Models, on the other hand, offer *perspectives* on those facts that can be seen as relevant to other groups of facts, that is, they are devices for unifying the various levels of discourse that have emerged from the study of sources. However, we often forget that we need models to do any research at all, that is, relatively simple "Vorbilder" of what the results of our study of sources should be like.

- Nevertheless, the insight that perspectives provide will lack convincing power if they are not developed from a close study of sources into a rich hermeneutic narrative yielding “thick” descriptions of *significant* facts.
3. Two problems crop up immediately as soon as one mentions “*fin-de-siècle* Vienna”: what do we mean by “turn-of-the-century,” and what is the relation between Vienna and Austria? “*Fin de siècle*” can refer to any period from the two to three years before and after 1900 to the whole period from 1867 to 1938. My own preference is for the period roughly from 1890 to 1914 (or 1918). Similarly, “Vienna” can refer to the city, or “Austria,” or eastern Austria. Normally these designations are not problematic. When they become so, the crucial questions are “As opposed to what?” And “For what purpose?”
 4. On the notions of “paradigm,” “normal science,” and “revolutionary science,” the *locus classicus* is Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, 2nd ed. (Chicago, 1970). For critical estimates of Kuhn, see the essays in the volume *Criticism and the Growth of Knowledge*, ed. Imre Lakatos and Alan Musgrave (Cambridge, 1970); cf. Martin Brody and Allan Janik, “Paradigms, Politics and Persuasion: Sociological Aspects of Musical Controversy,” in Janik, *Style, Politics and the Future of Philosophy* (Dordrecht, 1989), 225–231. For a fuller account of my views on the problem of method in cultural history, see Janik, *How Not to Interpret a Culture: Essays on the Problem of Method in the Geisteswissenschaften* (University of Bergen Philosophy Department Stencil Series, no. 73; Bergen, 1986).
 5. Harriet Anderson, *Utopian Feminism: Women's Movements in Fin-de-Siècle Vienna* (New Haven, 1992); Lisa Fischer, *Lina Loos oder wenn die Muse sich selbst küßt* (Vienna, 1994); Ivar Oxaal, *The Jews of Pre-1914 Vienna: Two Working Papers* (Hull, 1981); Steven Beller, *Vienna and the Jews, 1867–1938: A Cultural History* (Cambridge, 1989); Marsha Rozenblit, *The Jews of Vienna, 1867–1914: Assimilation and Identity* (Albany, 1983); Monika Gletler, *Die Wiener Tschechen um 1900* (Munich, 1972).
 6. Peter Vergo, *Art in Vienna, 1898–1918* (London, 1975); Alessandra Comini, *Egon Schiele's Portraits* (Berkeley, 1974); idem, *Gustav Klimt* (New York, 1975); George Clare, *Last Waltz in Vienna* (London, 1983); Henry-Louis De La Grange, *Mahler*, 3 vols. (Paris, 1979–84); Frederic Morton, *A Nervous Splendor* (New York, 1980).
 7. For a typical example, see the report of the research project *Ambivalenz des Fin de Siècle. Wien-Zagreb*, ed. Damir Barbari and Michael Benedikt, research report, Ministry of Science, Research, and Art (Vienna, 1995).
 8. Hermann Broch, *Hofmannsthal and His Time*, trans. Michael Steinberg (Chicago, 1984); William Johnston, *The Austrian Mind: An Intellectual and Social History, 1848–1938* (Berkeley, 1972); Ilsa Barea, *Vienna: Legend and Reality* (New York, 1966); Kann, *A Study in Austrian Intellectual History*.
 9. Carl E. Schorske, *Fin-de-Siècle Vienna: Politics and Culture* (New York, 1980). Since most of the French literature on Vienna descends from Schorske, it can be considered as part of the “Schorskean paradigm”; see Michael Pollak, *Vienne 1900: Une identité blessée* (Paris, 1986), 10; cf. Jacques Le Rider, *Modernité viennoise et crises de l'identité* (Paris, 1989) (the recent symposium on women at the turn of the century, “Wien um 1900. ‘Such-Bewegungen,’” indicates that much of current feminist thinking about Vienna 1900 proceeds from Le Rider). William McGrath, *Dionysian Art and Populist Politics in Austria* (New Haven, 1974); Michael Steinberg, *The Meaning of the Salzburg Festival: Austria as Theater and Ideology, 1890–1938* (Ithaca, 1990).
 10. John W. Boyer, *Political Radicalism in Late Imperial Vienna: Origins of the Christian Social Movement, 1848–1897* (Chicago, 1981) (the second volume of Boyer’s study, *Culture and Political Crisis: Christian Socialism in Power, 1897–1918* [Chicago, 1994] was not available to me at the time of writing this essay); Beller, *Vienna and the Jews*; cf. Janik, “Neuerscheinungen über die Kultur der Jahrhundertwende,” *Mitteilungen aus dem Brenner Archiv*, 1990, 101–102.
 11. For a full account of the conundrums surrounding the nature of a Kuhnian paradigm, see Margaret Masterman’s “The Nature of a Paradigm,” in *Criticism and the Growth of Knowledge*, ed. Lakatos and Musgrave.
 12. Arthur May, *Vienna in the Age of Franz Josef* (Norman, Okla., 1966).
 13. “Τολμητέον ἐπιτίθεσθαι τῷ πατρικῷ λόγῳ,” *Sophist*, 242.
 14. Allan Janik and Stephen Toulmin, *Wittgenstein's Vienna* (New York, 1973).
 15. Personal communication from Stephen Toulmin. Neither he nor I take this story as more than an amusing anecdote. For an account of what he and I saw ourselves as doing in writing that book, see Janik, “In Place of an Introduction: Writing *Wittgenstein's Vienna*,” in *Essays on Wittgenstein and Weininger* (Amsterdam, 1985), 5–25. I have never been happy with the title of our book. The words “ethics” or “ethics of silence” should have appeared, but they made the title too unwieldy. It was only around 1988 that I realized that the book should have been called “Cordelia’s Silence,” alluding to the inappropriateness of demanding that a supreme moral value (in her case, love) be put into words.
 16. This has nothing to do with generations as they are conceived in political or military history, for intellectuals can be the same age and represent different constellations of values whereby one reacts upon the other, as did Hugo von Hofmannsthal and Karl Kraus, who were both born in 1874.
 17. The first and third appeared originally in the *American Historical Review* 68 (July 1961): 930–946 and *American Historical Review* 72 (July 1967): 1283–1320, respectively, whereas the second was first printed in the *Journal of Modern History* 39 (Dec. 1967): 343–386.
 18. Schorske, *Fin-de-Siècle Vienna*, xii–xxii; cf. Michael Roth, “Performing History: Modernist Contextualism in Carl Schorske’s *Fin-de-Siècle Vienna*,” *American Historical Review* 94 (June 1994): 729–745.
 19. On the important distinction between the intentions of the artist and the intentions immanent in the work of art, see Tore Nordenstam, “Intention in Art,” in *Wittgenstein, Aesthetics and Transcendental Philosophy*, ed. Kjell S. Johannessen and Tore Nordenstam (Vienna, 1981), 127–135.
 20. Allan Bloom, *The Closing of the American Mind* (London, 1988).
 21. Hermann Bahr, “Die Überwindung des Naturalismus,” reprinted in *Die Wiener Moderne: Literatur, Kunst und Musik zwischen 1890 und 1910*, ed. Gotthart Wunberg (Stuttgart, 1980), 202.
 22. The last point is Michael Steinberg’s extension of Schorske’s thesis in *Fin-de-Siècle Vienna*.
 23. “Vienna was a hard school for me, but it taught me the most profound lessons of my life” (Hitler, cited in Alan Bullock, *Hitler: A Study in Tyranny* [New York, 1961], 13).
 24. Boyer’s work is a good example of work that is conceived and presented as “normal” or “monographic” history in the sense used here but is in fact “revolutionary,” that is, “interpretive.” This is possible in history, where, unlike the situation in natural sciences, the models that inform research are often largely unarticulated and are never formal.

25. Boyer, *Political Radicalism*, 26, 37.
26. *Ibid.*, 411–421.
27. *Ibid.*
28. Arthur May, *The Habsburg Monarchy, 1867–1914* (New York, 1968), 147.
29. Johnston, *The Austrian Mind*, 58.
30. Boyer, *Political Radicalism*, 210 passim.
31. *Ibid.*, 414. It is important to emphasize that Boyer's picture of Lueger in no sense absolves Lueger from responsibility for the spread of rabid antisemitism in Vienna, for, as Boyer emphasizes, Lueger certainly tolerated real fanatics in his entourage. However, Boyer's position does falsify Schorske's picture of Lueger as merely a charismatic figure whose political practices were somehow less realistic than those of his predecessors. The question of responsibility thus turns out to be more complicated than a thesis like Schorske's would suggest. But then responsibility in these matters is a highly complex matter, as Karl Jaspers insisted in his classic *The Question of German Guilt*, trans. E. B. Ashton (New York, 1947), 31–46.
32. The concept of *Gesamtkunstwerk* is a murky one, inasmuch as Richard Wagner developed a notion for the cooperation between artists under that rubric that does not in fact apply to his work. The term later came to be applied to his music dramas with respect to the way in which they captivate and overpower the audience with a view to moving the audience to see the world differently. In effect, the Wagnerian *Gesamtkunstwerk* aims at something akin to a religious conversion (see Peter Revers, "Erlösung dem Erlöser—Wer Erlöst uns von dieser Erlösung," *Zur Rezeption des Erlösungsgedankens bei Wagner und Nietzsche*, in *Der Fall Wagner*, ed. Thomas Steiert [Laaber, Ger., 1991], 137–146). For an example of the importance of this concept, see James Shedel, *Art and Society: The New Art Movement in Vienna, 1897–1914* (Palo Alto, Calif., 1981), 29–30.
33. Such recognition was the only move that would have undermined *political* antisemitism; that is, the concept of Jews as "parasites" in German culture (Klaus Dethloff, *Theodor Herzl oder Der Moses des Fin de Siècle* [Vienna, 1986], 36 passim).
34. Kann, *A Study in Austrian Intellectual History*, xiii.
35. Here it is worth quoting Kann at length: "The genuine Liberal in German Austria does not occupy a firm middle ground between the party ideologies of political Catholicism, integral nationalism, and Socialism. He is at times—more often than not erroneously—to some extent associated with one of them, but generally attacked by all of them.... The liberal position is even more seriously jeopardized by its later failure to cope with social, national, and historical traditional problems. Above all, it has never had a social group support equal in strength to that of any of the other groups mentioned" (255).
36. On civil society, see the contributions of Edward Shils and Charles Taylor in *Europa und die Civil Society*, ed. Krzysztof Michalski (Stuttgart, 1991), 13–51, 52–84.
37. On Vico, see Isaiah Berlin, *Vico and Herder* (London, 1976), 64 passim.
38. Barea, *Vienna: Legend and Reality*, 45ff.
39. Boyer, *Political Radicalism*, 117.
40. Thus Hitler's fanatical fatalism—which was the other side of the coin of his fanatical belief in his own will—can be taken to be continuous with Viennese sentimental fatalism even if it is not identical with it. On Hitler's fatalism, see J. P. Stern, *Hitler: The Führer and the People* (Berkeley, 1975), 61, 222, passim; cf. Sebastian Haffner, *Anmerkungen zu Hitler* (Munich, 1983), 153 passim.
41. R. J. W. Evans, *The Making of the Habsburg Monarchy, 1550–1700* (Oxford, 1979).

42. *Ibid.*, 447.
43. On "Modernisierung via Fremdenverkehr," see Ernst Hanisch and Ulrike Fleischer, *Im Schatten berühmter Zeiten. Salzburg in den Jahren Georg Trakls (1887–1914)* (Salzburg, 1986), 51–54. The little-discussed notion of modernizing through tourism is of the utmost importance for understanding the Alpine regions of Austria from the turn of the century, as well as the rest of Austria, including Vienna, which became "provincialized" in this respect as capital of rump Austria. Modernization via tourism helps to explain Austrian reluctance to come to grips with the shadier aspects of the Austrian past, such as antisemitism, in the great international exhibitions, which are principally conceived as tourist attractions.
44. Ralf Dahrendorf, *Society and Democracy in Germany* (New York, 1967), 129–155.
45. Here we must distinguish at the philosophical level between *modernism* understood as the view that there are true-for-all-time criteria of rationality that can be comprehensively represented in a single theory (the "verificationism" of the Vienna Circle, Lenin's "dialectical materialism," and Habermas's "theory of communicative action" would be three examples); *antimodernism* (the wholesale rejection of everything that has to do with industrialized society in favor of some romantic ideal of lost communitarian values); *postmodernism* ("anything goes": the simple negation of the modernist monolithic account of rationality); and *critical modernism* (the pluralistic, because practice-immanent, search for the criteria that make it possible to carry on particular activities based upon the analysis of specific cases, that is, for criteria that do not prejudge the normative issues by imposing a universally valid scheme, rather than giving up in despair at ever arriving at any criteria for evaluating anything). Popper's "falsificationism" is a step in the direction of critical modernism that finds its full expression in Wittgenstein's differentiating efforts to base reflection upon the nuances of particular cases. Martin Seel has made an eloquent case for a "second modernism"—free of the abuses of the first, corresponding to what I understand under "critical modernism"—in his "Plädoyer für eine zweite Moderne," in *Die Aktualität der Dialektik der Aufklärung. Zwischen Moderne und Postmoderne*, ed. Harry Kunneman et al. (Frankfurt, 1989), 36–60. In the critical modernist view, Enlightenment is more a matter of establishing the limits of reason than it is of improving society through the application of scientific knowledge. Here Diderot's dialogue *Rameau's Nephew* is perhaps the crucial text. In aesthetics, the critical modernist approach is heralded in Nietzsche's critique of Wagner (see n. 31). Nearly everything of interest in the postmodernist conception of culture is anticipated in one way or another by Egon Friedell, who has been all but completely neglected in discussions of Vienna 1900 both in Austria and in France. In his *Kulturgeschichte der Neuzeit* (Munich, 1927), we find clear anticipation, for example, of the rejection of any hard and fast distinction between truth and falsity, Derrida's "pharmakon," the rejection of the notion of the "author" (in the defense of plagiarism), an emphasis upon the importance of the fragmentary and the will to incompleteness, a love of paradox, the notion of the social construction of disease (Foucault) and "illness as metaphor" (Sontag), and a conception of a "laughing" philosophizing.
46. It should be pointed out that critical modernism is first and foremost an attitude to culture. None of the figures in question incorporated this attitude in all of their work—let alone their personal lives, as Lisa Fischer's *Lina Loos* clearly indicates with respect to Adolf Loos. Many of the designs of Adolf Loos, for example, are clearly products of classical modernist megalomania, such as his sketches for his Chicago

- skyscraper or his plans for the restructuring of Vienna. The point is that his most important achievements are precisely those that call the assumptions of classical modernism into question. I have profited from conversations with Hans Veigl concerning the ambiguities of Viennese "modernism."
47. See Rodlauer's introduction to Otto Weininger, *Eros und Psyche: Studien und Briefe*, ed. Hannelore Rodlauer (Vienna, 1990), 11–51; Waltraud Hirsch, *Eine unbescheidene Charakterologie: Geistige Differenz vom Judentum und Christentum als Lehre vom bestimmten Charakter bei Otto Weininger* (D.Phil. diss., University of Tübingen, 1995); Beller, *Vienna and the Jews*, 221–236; and Janik, "Weininger's Vienna: The Sex-Ridden Society," in *Vienna: The World of Yesterday, 1889–1914*, ed. Steven E. Bronner (New York, 1996).
 48. On Schoenberg's critical modernism, see Janik, "Schoenberg's Vienna: The Critical Modernism of a Viennese Composer" (in Dutch), *Nexus* 12 (1995): 43–68. On Schiele, see Leon Botstein, "Egon Schiele and Arnold Schoenberg: The Cultural Politics of Aesthetic Innovation in Vienna, 1890–1918," in *Egon Schiele: Art, Sexuality, and Viennese Modernism*, ed. Patrick Werkner (Palo Alto, Calif., 1994), 101–118. On Wittgenstein, see Janik and Toulmin, *Wittgenstein's Vienna*, and Janik, "Nyíri on the Conservatism of Wittgenstein's Later Philosophy" and "Wittgenstein, Marx and Sociology," in Janik, *Style, Politics and the Future of Philosophy*. On Trakl, see Janik, "Georg Trakl und die Zerstörung des habsburgischen Mythos," in *Studia Trakliana*, ed. Fausto Cercignani (Milan, 1989), 51–62; cf. Walter Methlagl, "Der schlafende Sohn des Pans," in *Studia Trakliana*, ed. Cercignani, 63–80, and Methlagl, "Nietzsche und Trakl," in *Frühling der Seele*, ed. Gerald Stieg and Remy Colombat (Innsbruck, 1995), 83–123. One of the few scholars to follow my usage is Christian-Paul Berger in his unpublished study "Georg Trakls Begegnung mit Ludwig Wittgenstein. Eine Kulturtheorie der österreichischen Moderne" (Innsbruck). Broch practically defined the aesthetic position that I refer to as critical modernism in an early essay, "Notizen zu einer systematischen Ästhetik," which was rejected for publication in *Der Brenner* by Ludwig von Ficker in 1913 (typescript, Brenner Archives); cf. Walter Methlagl "Der Brenner—Beispiel eines Durchbruchs zur Moderne!" *Mitteilungen aus dem Brenner Archiv* 2 (1983): 11–12. Theodor W. Adorno, "Meditationen zur Metaphysik," *Negative Dialektik* (Frankfurt, 1990), 354–400. On Chargaff, see Walter Methlagl, "Von Wright, Chargaff och *Heraclitus's Fire*," *Dialoger* (Stockholm) 26 (1992): 32–38.
 49. Arthur Schnitzler, *Das weite Land*, in *Das dramatische Werk*, 2 vols. (Frankfurt, 1962), 2:217–320. Musil's extended meditation on both "Genauigkeit" and "Seele"—on both natural science and what he called "the other condition," intense feeling or the state of being enraptured—is a case in point; see Robert Musil, "The German Personality as Symptom," in *Austrian Philosophy*, ed. J. C. Nyíri (Munich, 1981), 173–200.
 50. Anderson, *Utopian Feminism*, 52.
 51. Ebner's campaign against *Traum vom Geist* is a paradigm case for defining critical modernism. On Ebner, see Janik, "Offenbach—konsten mellan monolog och dialog," *Cordelias tysnad* (Stockholm), 1991, 45–63, and "Ebner contra Wagner. Erkenntnistheorie, Ästhetik und Erlösung in Wien um 1900," in *Kreatives Milieu Wien um 1900*, ed. Emil Brix and Allan Janik (Vienna, 1993), 224–241.
 52. Georg Trakl, Letter to Ludwig von Ficker, 26 June 1913, *Historisch-kritische Ausgabe*, ed. Walther Killy and Hans Szklener, 2 vols. (Salzburg, 1969), 2:519.
 53. See Methlagl, "Nietzsche und Trakl."
 54. Harry Zohn, *Karl Kraus* (New York, 1972), 42; Reinhard Merkel, *Strafrecht und Satire im Werk von Karl Kraus* (Baden-Baden, 1994).
 55. See Jürgen Habermas, *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit* (Neuwied, 1962).
 56. See Merkel, *Strafrecht und Satire*, 154–155.
 57. Beller, *Vienna and the Jews*, 33–70.
 58. *Ibid.*, 153.
 59. For a trenchant comparative analysis of the impact of the Enlightenment upon Judaism and Catholicism, see David Sorkin, "From Context to Comparison: The German Haskalah and Reform Catholicism," *Tel Aviver Jahrbuch für deutsche Geschichte* 22 (1991): 23–58.
 60. The difference is that Habermas is not "idealistic," in the colloquial sense, in the way that Viennese liberal Jews were. In a sense the ideal was more real than the world before them. The difference between them is the latter's belief in the ideology of "progress," which was extinguished by World War I.
 61. On the problems surrounding the notion of "self-hatred," see Janik, "Viennese Culture and the Jewish Self-Hatred Hypothesis: A Critique," in *Jews, Antisemitism and Culture in Vienna*, ed. Ivar Oxaal, Michael Pollak, and Gerhard Botz (London, 1987), 75–88.
 62. See Gerald Stieg, "Ferdinand Ebners Kulturkritik. Am Beispiel der Salzburger Festspiele," in *Gegen den Traum vom Geist*, ed. Christoph König et al. (Salzburg, 1985), 243; and Christian-Paul Berger, "Kritischer Katholizismus versus kritische Theorie. Der Brennerkreis und die ältere Frankfurter Schule," *Mitteilungen aus dem Brenner Archiv* 10 (1991): 72–92. I am grateful to Gerald Stieg for information about Canetti; see Stieg, "Ebners Kulturkritik," 241. On Kraus and *Der Brenner*, see Stieg's seminal study, *Der Brenner und Die Fackel* (Salzburg, 1977). For an overview of the history of *Der Brenner*, the only periodical to survive both world wars, see Walter Methlagl and Allan Janik, "Der Brenner," in *Major Figures of Austrian Literature: The Interwar Years, 1918–1936*, ed. Donald G. Daviau (Riverside, 1995), 83–106.
 63. See Bruce Pauley, "Political Antisemitism in Interwar Vienna," in *Jews, Antisemitism and Culture*, ed. Oxaal, Pollak, and Botz, 152–173, and Pauley, *From Prejudice to Persecution: A History of Austrian Antisemitism* (Chapel Hill, 1992).
 64. Personal communication from Inge Lehne regarding Robert A. Kann, *Kanzel und Katheder*, trans. Inge Lehne (Vienna, 1985).
 65. In this connection it is worth quoting Hilde Spiel quoting Madame de Staël: "Few books were read in the great houses to which she was invited and no writers were received. 'It results from that separation of classes that the literary people lack grace and the fashionable people rarely receive instruction'" (*Vienna's Golden Autumn* [London, 1987], 38). There is little reason to think that this changed much.
 66. Robert Wistrich, *The Jews of Vienna in the Age of Franz Josef* (Oxford, 1989), 90–91.
 67. Otto Weininger, *Geschlecht und Charakter* (Vienna, 1903).
 68. This claim should be compared with the provocative thesis of Isaiah Berlin in his "Political Ideas in the Twentieth Century," in *Four Essays on Liberty* (Oxford, 1969), 1–40, arguably the most trenchant study in twentieth-century Western political ideas yet to appear.
 69. On this "problema Austriacum," see Evans, *The Making of the Habsburg Monarchy*, 335. On Croce, see R. G. Collingwood, *The Idea of History* (New York, 1956), 202.
 70. Peter Burke, *Venice and Amsterdam* (Cambridge, 1994).
 71. Jules Michelet cited by Peter Burke, *The French Historical Revolution* (Cambridge, 1990), 8.