

72. Gerhard Östreich has laid the foundations of such a study in the essays collected in *Geist und Gestalt des frühmodernen Staats* (Berlin, 1969) and *Strukturprobleme der Neuzeit*, ed. G. Östreich (Berlin, 1980). I have benefited from conversations with Raoul Kneucker and Waltraud Heindl on this subject.
73. Erna Lesky, *The Vienna Medical School of the Nineteenth Century*, trans. J. Levij (Baltimore, 1976).
74. Richard Hofstadter, *Anti-Intellectualism in American Life* (New York, 1967). Like Dahrendorf's study of society and democracy in Germany, Hofstadter's well-documented book claims to be an exercise in civil courage more than an academic study. If they are accurate in describing their work, the importance of both of these books ought to tell us something about standard "academic" priorities. One important reminder to American students of Austrian culture implicit in Hofstadter's work is the closeness of American and Austrian forms of political fundamentalism. Schorske himself has pointed out how the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 was a model to Schönerer (Schorske, *Fin-de-Siècle Vienna*, 129), whereas Pauley has indicated that the quotas on Jewish students that Viennese antisemites demanded in the 1930s were already in effect at American elite institutions like Harvard (Pauley, *From Prejudice to Persecution*, 94, 128).

Chapter 2

RETHINKING THE LIBERAL LEGACY



Pieter M. Judson

In a review of Carl Schorske's influential *Fin-de-Siècle Vienna: Politics and Culture* two decades ago, John Boyer noted the "uneven monographic base" from which Schorske had drawn his portrayal of Austria's liberals.¹ At that time the study of imperial Austrian politics and culture around 1900 relied on a tentative, preliminary, and often inadequate reading of a few limited sources on liberalism. This was highly problematic in Boyer's view because much of the Schorske thesis and many of its later variants relied on important, if unexamined, assumptions about the nature of liberal influence on Austrian society. These assumptions cast liberalism as the philosophy of the nineteenth-century fathers against which the early twentieth-century sons rebelled. In political terms, this thesis depicted liberalism as a rootless elitist movement against which defiant populists established a new mass-based politics. The ease with which rabid nationalists, antisemites, and Christian Socials routed the Viennese liberals confirmed for many observers that such a Western phenomenon as liberalism was ill suited to conditions in Central Europe. According to this story, the normalization of radical nationalism and antisemitism in Austrian political culture around 1900 marked a simultaneous rejection of all things liberal and a decisive middle class retreat from politics. At the same time, disillusioned artists, writers, and philosophers moved well beyond liberalism's empirical-rational norms to

Chapter 3

*FIN DE SIÈCLE OR JAHRHUNDERTWENDE*The Question of an Austrian *Sonderweg*

James Shedel

Prominent in our current vision of Vienna 1900 is the image of the *Secessionsgebäude* and the famous inscription above its portal, “Der Zeit ihre Kunst, der Kunst ihre Freiheit” (To the time its art, to art its freedom). Less prominent, indeed almost vanished from our line of sight, however, is another coeval fixture of Vienna’s landscape, the *Burgtor*. It too carries an inscription above its entrance, “Justitia Regnorum Fundamentum” (Justice is the foundation of kingdoms). Two more contrasting structures and sentiments are hard to imagine; one a pioneer of geometric art nouveau, the other a prudent example of neo-classicism; the former announcing a vernacular declaration for the era, the latter proclaiming a Latin verity for the ages. Of course, unlike the *Secessionsgebäude*, the *Burgtor* was not a product of the 1890s; completed in 1824, it appears distant in time and alien in its spirit to the phenomenon of Vienna 1900. Therefore, it seems only natural that we should focus on what members and friends of the Secession, such as Gustav Klimt or Hermann Bahr, were thinking rather than be concerned with the words Kaiser Franz I chose to signify his philosophy of government.

Yet, was the symbolism of the *Burgtor* and its inscription really so out of step with an Austria on the threshold of the twentieth century? After



FIGURE 1 *The Burgtor at Night*, c. 1930. Courtesy of Bildarchiv der Österreichischen Nationalbibliothek.

all, in 1900 the state and dynasty that built this ceremonial gate were still very much in evidence, so much so that the Secession actively courted their patronage and even Bahr, the titular head of the literary Jung Wien movement, proclaimed his “schwarz-gelb” patriotism.¹ The answer to this question depends very much on whether we interpret that moment in time as a *fin de siècle* or a *Jahrhundertwende*; that is to say, as a caesura that underlines the historical abnormality of a *Sonderweg*, or as a transitional moment that points to a unique but hardly deviant continuity of historical development. In the historiography of nineteenth and early twentieth century Austria, the former interpretation with its connotation of modernity gone awry has tended to dominate, but it is the intention here to suggest a revision of that view by arguing for an Austrian version of modernization that can be seen as a separate and valid model of this historical process.

At the center of this alternative version is the Austrian manifestation of the *Rechtsstaat*. Like the *Burgtor* which linked the urban modernity of the Ringstraße with the city’s old imperial core, the *Rechtsstaat* served as a bridge between change and continuity, the modern and the traditional in Austrian state and society, while at the same time firmly linking these factors to the Habsburg dynasty. “Justitia Regnorum Fundamentum” expressed both the Enlightenment idea of the rule of law and the European

reality of its monarchic foundation. That even an emperor as conservative as Franz I saw no contradiction between his traditional authority and the limits to it implied by his motto indicates the unique flexibility represented by this Austrian version of the *Rechtsstaat*. Thus, in the Vienna of 1900 movements like the Secession and Jung Wien could proclaim sentiments that suggested a critical break with the dominant culture while at the same time function firmly within the established order precisely because that order was stable yet dynamic enough to accommodate them.

This proposition, as much as it distances itself from the interpretation it seeks to challenge, has in common with that interpretation a fundamental recognition of an Austrian exceptionalism. What separates the rhetorical characterizations of Vienna 1900 as either a *fin de siècle* or a *Jahrhundertwende* is the type of exceptionalism each connotes. It has already been stated that the term *fin de siècle* rests on a basically negative view of this exceptionalism, a historical *Sonderweg*, while the alternative offers a more positive and less prescriptive approach in its expectations of what constitutes a viable form of historical development. Both positions, however, play off of the same definition of what constitutes the normative development of modern states and societies, the difference between them in this regard being that the interpretation based upon the phenomenon of the *Rechtsstaat* modifies this definition in significant ways. Before the “*Rechtsstaat* interpretation” outlined above can be elaborated upon, however, the normative definition and its characteristics need to be identified and their connection to the notion of an Austrian exceptionalism made specific. Accordingly, that process has to begin with an examination of the normative implications of the *fin-de-siècle* concept and the “*Sonderweg* interpretation” it stands for.

The origin of “*fin-de-siècle* Vienna” as a historical phenomenon in Austrian studies dates back to 1961 and the appearance of Carl Schorske’s article on “Politics and Psyche in *fin-de-siècle* Vienna: Schnitzler and Hofmannsthal.”² Against the backdrop of a skillfully rendered prose description of the frenetically decaying melody in Ravel’s “La Valse,” Schorske depicted late nineteenth century Austria as a society in crisis due to the decline of liberalism and the ascent of its Christian Socialist, antisemitic, social democratic, and nationalist enemies who were making it impossible for the rational culture of law favored by the upper bourgeoisie to flourish. In this atmosphere, he argued, the crisis of liberal culture forced the children of liberal fathers into the cultural escapism offered by the traditional sensual, Catholic culture of the aristocracy thereby giving up the productive political pursuits innate to liberalism. This led, however, from political frustration directly to intellectual inspiration, the discovery of

“psychological man” and the construction of modern culture around him and his needs. With turn-of-the-century Vienna as the location of this entire process, Schorske focused on two prominent scions of the declining liberal bourgeoisie, Arthur Schnitzler and Hugo von Hofmannsthal, each of whom in his own way mirrored the crisis of Austrian liberalism and the search for a way out of a disintegrating society through aesthetics. Yet there was a crucial difference between the two. Schnitzler became a critical observer of the breakup of liberalism’s “moral and scientific” heritage, evincing a lingering, if pessimistic, attachment to it, while Hofmannsthal, as an admirer of “Habsburg traditionalism,” embraced an irrationalist conception that fused art and politics in an unrealistic unity. Schorske concludes with Hofmannsthal, and in so doing underscores not only the hopelessness of the poet’s politics of the aesthetic, but also the doomed nature of his faith in Habsburg tradition as a source of anything constructively positive.³ The article left little room for doubt that substituting an aristocratically based *Gefühlskultur* for the liberal culture of reason and law was a decisive symptom of Austrian society’s sickness unto death. Thus was born the persona of Vienna’s *fin de siècle*.

Although in subsequent essays Schorske elaborated on the various aspects and figures of Viennese culture in the *fin de siècle*, when these essays were brought together in a single volume in 1980 it was clear that they were essentially only more detailed variations on the original theme. Still, taken together, these well written and original analyses of Viennese art, architecture, literature, and music have been immensely influential, such that no one has had a greater impact on how we have looked at late nineteenth and early twentieth century Austria than Carl Schorske. His interpretations and the work inspired by them, have helped not only to associate a movement like the Secession with our vision of Vienna 1900, but also to place it in a nexus of other creative developments that symbolize the ironic birth of cultural modernism in conditions dominated by the social and political anachronisms of a dying state. Its irony notwithstanding, this image of efflorescent creativity has served to add an element of elegant justification to the hard-edged earlier interpretations of such historians as Oscar Jaszi, A. J. P. Taylor, and Robert Kann, for whom the entire edifice of Habsburg Austria was either doomed or seriously crippled long before 1900.

Schorske’s interpretation internationalized this decadent vision of Austrian history by wedding Habsburg decay to a European-wide phenomenon of late nineteenth century world-weariness. The feeling that the end of the nineteenth century somehow presaged an unhappy conclusion to man and his aspirations was, of course, present in the musings

and forebodings of many of Europe's intellectuals at the time and has been a favorite topic of many historians besides Schorske.⁴ What he accomplished, however, was to describe the Austrian version as more creative, more filled with the spiritual uncertainties of modern life because it was born of circumstances more the result of historical development gone wrong than could be found in most countries at the time. As Steven Beller has put it, Schorske sees "modern culture" as hinging "on the idea that Vienna was the first place in Europe where bourgeois rationalism met its demise, and that therefore the figures of that culture were in a better position to express the problems of the forthcoming age."⁵ Along with that failure of bourgeois rationalism, however, went the failure of bourgeois political and social values. This is the *fin de siècle* as the *fin d'un monde* for the Austrian bourgeoisie and it is at this level that Schorske connects with his predecessors in the historiography to form a powerful *Sonderweg* interpretation of Austrian history. To understand the significance of such an interpretation we need to look at the context in which this term has taken on interpretive meaning.

In Central European history the term *Sonderweg* is normally used in connection with German, not Austrian, history, and it represents an interpretive school that seeks to explain German responsibility for two world wars, the rise of Hitler, and the Holocaust as the result of a fundamental deviation from the norms of historical development that have characterized modern European history since the French Revolution.⁶ At the core of this explanation is the belief that the histories of France, Britain, and the United States represent normative models of development, and the degree to which the histories of other countries have managed to duplicate the essential features of these models, preferably as nation-states, indicates how successful they are as modern societies. Within this pattern of normative development, participation in the Industrial Revolution or its successor forms of technological change is a necessary but not sufficient condition of being modern. Far more important in this model of historical development is that positive political, social, and technological change must be carried forward by the bourgeoisie who are historical agents of progress. In the Marxist view, they are the historical instrument necessary to create conditions for the ultimate class revolution that will lead to the establishment of an earthly utopia, while in the non-Marxist argument they are the permanent carriers of human progress and liberty as defined in the world view of the Enlightenment. Without the triumph of this class, usually through an armed revolution that displaces the old agrarian-based feudal elites, there is no real modernity and, therefore, no normal historical development. Such

a deviant scenario must sooner or later result in a social and/or political disaster of some kind that clears the way for normative development.

In Germany's case that disaster became the crisis of the century. With no revolution in 1789 that paralleled the French or even the American Revolution, not to mention no history in the early modern period of a gradual shift in power as in the British model, on top of which 1848 appeared to be a disappointing failure, Germany was doomed to pursue an aberrant form of development, a *Sonderweg*, made fatefully dangerous by German power. Only with its total defeat in 1945 and subsequent reconstruction under the guidance of the West's normative states did Germany's *Sonderweg* come to an end. This is, of course, a very simplified account of the *Sonderweg* interpretation and its major application, but it has the virtue of highlighting its uncompromisingly normative stance when it comes to how we define what is modern and therefore positive in historical development, and the penalties every society must suffer for significant deviation from this model.

Happily for Austria, no one has sought to rank it with Germany in the rogues' gallery of history's deviants, but a deviant it is nonetheless, for it has failed in key ways to follow the course of normative development along the road to modernity. As with Germany, its penalty was the destruction of the Empire, a sojourn in the wilderness of interwar Europe, and a time in purgatory with the Third Reich, all of which was ultimately followed by normative reconstruction under its "liberators." But unlike Germany, no stigma as the enemy of humanity has been attached to Austria for its historical failures, even if those failures may have meant it was the real cause of World War I. Officially classed by the Allies as the first victim of fascism in World War II, the period of Austria's *Sonderweg* has been limited to its pre-1918 incarnation as the Habsburg Monarchy. Its historical sins did not extend beyond the Monarchy's collapse, which was itself the punishment and one that has since come to serve as a kind of historical object lesson for revolutionary failure, an unsuccessful bourgeoisie, multinationalism, and a dynastic/aristocratic order that outlived its usefulness.

The elements of this Austrian *Sonderweg* can be seen in most of the major general treatments of the Monarchy written since World War I. Prior to the war, views of the Monarchy, like that written by Henry Wickham Steed in 1913, had often been critical, but conceded the presence of strengths and the probability of its survival.⁷ In the wake of World War I, Austria-Hungary's demise appeared to be proof of its unsuitability to exist; and voices from historians on the Allied side, some of whom like R. W. Seton-Watson had championed the cause of the

Monarchy's so-called "subject peoples" even before the war,⁸ pointed to the supposed triumph of the principles of nationality and Western democracy or parliamentarism in the successor states as a sign that normal development had finally come to this part of Europe. Even truncated Austria itself became a republic. This transformation also represented the triumph of America's Wilsonian values and, by extension, those of its compatible allies, Britain and France. Victory carried with it Clio's seal of approval and the elevation of the histories of "the big three" to normative status. Like that of Germany, the history of Austria was now to be placed *de facto* into the category of a *Sonderweg*.

Interestingly, in the effort to delineate the traits that made the Monarchy's demise inevitable, the focus was largely on the Austrian half of the Monarchy, the common institutions between Austria and Hungary created by the *Ausgleich*, and the policies and personalities of the Habsburg dynasty. Until recently, Hungary occupied a subordinate position in the historiography, being cast in the role of a chauvinistic villain whose overweening nationalism oppressed the non-Magyar majority within its borders and made the *Ausgleich* system highly problematic as the basis for a workable state. In the interwar years, treatments of Hungary in histories of the Monarchy were within the context of the nationality problem, which became the major explanatory factor for the Monarchy's collapse. From multinationalism in an age of nation-states, combined with Austria's other historical transgressions, flowed a pattern of interpretation that would change very little until the 1980s.

Two principal historians who helped lay the foundation for this pattern between the wars were themselves products of the Monarchy. One was the Austrian jurist and sometime politician, Josef Redlich. In 1926 Redlich published the second and last volume of his massive narrative-based analysis of nineteenth century Austria,⁹ and in 1928 his highly perceptive biography of Franz Joseph appeared.¹⁰ Both books emphasized the centrality of the nationality problem and the lost opportunity to solve it by instituting the federalist and liberal Kremsier constitution, following the failure of the revolution in 1848. Hungary's dark role in the nationality difficulties and the creation of the problematic character of the *Ausgleich*, as well as the inherent weaknesses of the dynastic state, were also cited as obstacles to the Monarchy's viability. Echoing this list of problems in his 1929 book on the collapse of the Monarchy, the émigré Hungarian politician-turned-historian Oscar Jászi added the political incapacity of the Monarchy's bourgeoisie and the connected weakness of their liberal ideology as reasons why this class was never "capable as in the great Western states of directing the evolution of the

state."¹¹ Out of Jászi's analysis emerges the classic *Sonderweg* factor of a missing bourgeoisie. When this is added to the opinion held by both him and Redlich, that 1848 was a lost opportunity to create a healthy federal state based on liberal principles of government, the essential ingredients of 1848 as a turning point that failed to turn, thereby preventing a Western style development for the Monarchy, factors that had supposedly been so telling in creating Germany's *Sonderweg*, were all in place for an Austrian version.

The emphasis placed on the nationality problem as the central cause of the Monarchy's demise remained a constant in the subsequent histories, but with the difference that the experience of World War II resulted—with one notable exception—in a more favorable view of the Monarchy as a multinational great power that, had it survived, might have prevented the rise of the Third Reich and the war itself. Especially in light of the Cold War fate of its successor states, Habsburg hegemony appeared infinitely more benign than that of Soviet Russia. Of course, this nostalgia for the positive traits of the Monarchy's multinational structure had been voiced even between the wars, but the post-1945 variety was less wistful and more careful to point out why only the supranational *ideal* was attractive as opposed to the reality of its flawed application.

The notable exception to this tendency was expressed by A. J. P. Taylor in his influential history of the nineteenth century Monarchy. He was convinced that the post-Napoleonic Empire never had a chance of surviving and that "The national principle, once launched, had to work itself out to its conclusion."¹² Taylor's history paints an almost unrelieved picture of *ancien régime* anachronism, failed bourgeois liberalism, and an inevitably triumphant nationalism. Only his more detailed treatment of Austrian foreign policy as a factor in her fall added something new to the list of negatives that had doomed the Monarchy. In its uncompromisingly negative evaluation of the Monarchy it is one of the strongest supports of an Austrian *Sonderweg*.

* * * *

More typical of the general post-war historiography and its less strident *Sonderweg* tendency is the equally influential, but more scholarly work of Robert A. Kann. Especially in his two-volume work on the nationalities of the Empire,¹³ Kann made what is probably the most persuasive case for seeing 1848 and the rejection of the Kremsier constitution as the decisive lost opportunity for saving the Monarchy. Published in four editions between 1950 and 1977, it became the standard work in English

on the nationality problem and its potential solutions, but in its lack of analysis concerning social forces it cannot be claimed as a full-fledged advocate of the *Sonderweg* interpretation. Indeed, even in Kann's 1974 general history of the Empire, while he ascribes the collapse of the Monarchy primarily to internal causes, he made no unequivocal judgments about the role of the bourgeoisie and liberalism. Rather, it is nationalism that remains his consistent leitmotif for the modern period and he even denies that the collapse of the Monarchy was inevitable.¹⁴ Still, the effect of Kann's work with its emphasis on the unrealized Kremsier constitution makes the Revolution of 1848 and its bourgeois liberal aspirations toward an imperial federalism the unexperienced turning point necessary to the *Sonderweg* argument.

The *Sonderweg* tendency is also discernible in the two main German language histories of Austria. The conservative historian Hugo Hantsch in the 1968 fourth edition of his general history laments the unrealized constitutional solution of 1848–49 and the unsuitability of the Hungarian dominated *Ausgleich*, while the more liberal Erich Zöllner in the 1979 edition of his survey considers the federal constitutionalism of Kremsier a victim of autocracy and he sees the *Ausgleich* as raising questions about the unity of the state, the well-being of Hungary's non-Magyar peoples, and also as subjecting the Monarchy to periodic crises.¹⁵ Additionally, Hantsch in discussing the situation at the time when the introduction of universal manhood suffrage was being debated makes a judgement about the demise of bourgeois liberalism in which he says, "Der bürgerliche Liberalismus war keine entwicklungsfähige Substanz mehr."¹⁶ Although the period 1905–07 is rather late for bourgeois liberalism to go missing, it still points to the less than dominant role played by this modernizing force in the Monarchy. While neither of these historians consciously sought to argue a *Sonderweg* position, key parts of their explanations for why the Monarchy was beset with problems involves failure of popularly based constitutionalism in the fateful year of 1848, an ultimate inability to adequately address the force of nationalism, and, in one case, the weakness of bourgeois liberalism, all of which are factors outside the mainstream of "normative" development.

The impact of these points in the literature is cumulative and suggestive. Even as judicious and thorough a historian as C. A. Macartney writing in 1969 implied in his massive work on the Habsburg Empire that the start of its problems began when Joseph II retracted his centralizing reforms for Hungary in 1790 signaling a long retreat before "the new forces of nationalism and democracy, until at last the peoples of the Monarchy, allied with its foreign enemies, repudiate not only the

character of the Monarch's rule, but the rule itself."¹⁷ Of course, in the more than 800 pages that comprise the narrative Macartney presents the pros and cons of the Empire in great detail and even debunks the significance placed on 1848 and Kremsier, while at the same time finding positive things to say about the *Ausgleich*, yet as the quote above indicates, there is a strong suggestion that the Monarchy succumbed ultimately because it was out of step with key elements of modern history. If such an impression can come from a work as generally favorable to the Monarchy as Macartney's we need only to set it along side that conveyed by the interpretations already discussed to see how the idea of an Austrian *Sonderweg* can find resonance within the historiography. It is not surprising then that by 1980 Carl Schorske's interpretation should find an audience already prepared to receive it.

The Schorskean concept of an Austrian *fin de siècle* represents the capstone of an Austrian *Sonderweg* interpretation. With 1848, Kremsier, the *Ausgleich*, an anachronistic supranational dynastic state, and proto-*Sonderweg* arguments like that of Oscar Jászi standing behind it, Schorske's depiction of the final act of the Monarchy's history in terms of the failure of the bourgeoisie and liberalism makes the *Sonderweg* complete. But unlike its German counterpart, Schorske is able to add a positive coda to Austria's *Sonderweg*. In his interpretation failure to be socially and politically normative resulted in Austria's ironic success as the normative source of modern culture. Thus Schorske unites historical irony to the attractive simplicity of the *Sonderweg*, but is this an enduring union? Most of the recent historiography suggests it is not.

Since the early 1980s a substantive revision has been underway in our understanding of the Habsburg Monarchy. In English some of the more notable contributions have been by John Boyer, David Good, and Steven Beller, while in German the *Habsburgermonarchie Bürgertum* project with contributions by, among others, Peter Urbanitsch, Hannes Stekel, and Ernst Bruckmüller are all providing a much more variegated and nuanced picture than was previously available.¹⁸ With respect to the specific issue of an Austrian *Sonderweg*, this work has raised points that bring it into question. In Boyer's examination of the origins of Christian Socialism the Viennese bourgeois liberals emerge as a far more complicated group than conceived of by Schorske and their support for Lueger's party raises fundamental questions about the nature of Austrian liberalism in the first place. The analysis of the Monarchy's economic development by Good suggests that it was more economically normative than previously thought. Beller's work on Vienna's Jews in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries demonstrates their role as the core of the city's liberal bourgeoisie

and the main force behind Austria's version of modernity. This argument when combined with his view that Vienna must share the origins of modern culture with such normative centers as London, Paris, and New York forms a persuasive corrective to Schorske's thesis. Finally, the *Bürgerturn* project, though lacking any overall conclusions is also showing an image of the Monarchy's bourgeoisie that is too complex to be contained any longer within the assumptions of a *de facto Sonderweg*.

Although these works represent only the tip of the iceberg in current Habsburg studies, they demonstrate that the central issues concerning the roles of the bourgeoisie and liberalism in Austrian society are in considerable flux. Especially now that recent scholarship has demonstrated a more or less "normal" course of economic development in the Monarchy replete with *Bürger* involvement, it suggests that a more fundamental form of bourgeois success occurred than Schorske's model can account for. Evidently, all sons of the bourgeoisie did not become aesthetes. What all this revisionism points to is the need for a new interpretive framework that drops the biased idea of a *fin de siècle* and its *Sonderweg* baggage. This brings us back to the concept proposed earlier, of Vienna 1900 more appropriately being considered a *Jahrhundertwende* and as the product of a developmental continuity defined by the concept of the *Rechtsstaat*.

It needs to be reemphasized that what is being argued here is an interpretive model that retains the concept of an Austrian exceptionalism. It is, however, Austrian only in recognition of the Habsburg Monarchy's "Cisleithanian" roots and represents an exceptionalism only in so far as the Monarchy's historical development is no more abnormal, but also no less different, one from the other, than that of any European or Western country. Rather, that it is simply a variant of a general process that in the case of the Habsburg Monarchy allowed it to acquire the necessary elements of a modern state and society within an institutional structure that in a normative theory of development is considered after 1789 to be pre-modern and anachronistic. While the impact of the French Revolution certainly brought changes to the then Austrian Empire, these changes were imbedded in a continuity based on the rule of law as understood in both rational and traditional terms such that up to 1914 a basic positive stability was maintained that allowed for the accommodation of change. Thus, the phenomenon known as Vienna 1900 cannot be viewed as a caesura that must be explained as the culmination of a long process of historical failures, but as a transitional event that does not negatively prejudice our understanding either of what went before or came after. It is to be understood simply as a turn of the century, a *Jahrhundertwende*, and on its own terms within this overall continuity.¹⁹

Therefore, our discussion will begin at the point chronologically opposite to it when the Austrian *Rechtsstaat* took on its basic form.

While the idea of the *Rechtsstaat* did not originate in Austria, in the late eighteenth century the rule of law came to occupy pride of place in the dynastic state as its *raison d'être* and chief means of achieving, accommodating, and influencing change and modernization. As Mark Raeff has pointed out, by 1700 the German states, including Habsburg Austria, had become the focal points of instituting positive change from above through the law. By means of ordinances and regulations it was thought that the commonweal, "der gemeine Beste," could be served and the ruler carry out his or her duty toward guarding the well-being of the subject. Of course, this process was also aimed at increasing the power of the state through the control of its subjects and regulation of the country's economic resources. The result was the *Polizeistaat*, that is, the well-policed (i.e., well-regulated) state. With the spread of the Enlightenment, this concept of rational utilitarian administration was transformed into an ideology of human improvement through rational progress which in Central Europe took on the form of so-called Enlightened Despotism.²⁰ Beginning with Maria Theresa's reluctant rationalization of the state into a more centralized monarchy, and reaching fruition in the self-conscious policy of officially sponsored Enlightenment for the benefit of mankind and the state under Joseph II, the Habsburg Monarchy became one of the leading examples of state-led modernization.

This process was profoundly secular and could be used, as it was under Joseph, to bring even the Catholic Church and the practice of religion under state control. Joseph's 6,000 decrees on everything from religious toleration to the size of coffins constructed an edifice of law to support a machine for progress and state power. As is well known, however, Joseph went too far and by 1790 much of his work was undone, but the basic legacy of Josephism, including the Habsburg dynastic state as a *Rechtsstaat*, remained. In the dynasty itself the role of the monarch was consciously reconstructed after the Frederickian model as "first servant of the state" who, as the executor of a social contract without the escape clause of revolution, was bound to be both creator and guarantor of the law as the subject's basic source of security. This rational image of the ruler as both above and under the law was part of the internalized self-image of all Habsburgs through Franz Joseph.²¹ As Waltraud Heindl has demonstrated, the Josephist spirit of the *Rechtsstaat* and the state as responsible for a progressively regulated social order was reified in the bureaucracy from Joseph onwards²² so that both the master and servants of the dynastic state were bound by law. Finally, a dynasty that so closely

identified itself with the rational and legalistic spirit of the Enlightenment could also acquire a new source of legitimation to augment that bestowed by God and traditional right. Indeed, this combination of modern and traditional sources of legitimation became the nexus that defined the Austrian *Rechtsstaat*.

Even Joseph II never disavowed the Catholic and Christian character of the dynasty that was so much a part of the post-Reformation Monarchy. The heritage of "Pietas Austriaca" that claimed a special divine sanction for Habsburg imperium was tacitly recognized by Joseph in his preservation of the official Corpus Christi procession despite his abolition of so many other similar religious events. The Eucharist as the symbol of his family's fortunate connection to God could not be dispensed with.²³ Similarly, Joseph appreciated the utility of religion as a form of social control to maintain order through a divinely ordained morality. In his world rationalism did not equal atheism. As far as the authority of the emperor and the dynasty were concerned, Joseph's policies had the effect of maintaining side by side both the old and the new sources of legitimacy. Divine selection and earthly reason served to keep the dynasty with a foot in both the new and the old worlds, with the intention of benefiting from both. In terms of the *Rechtsstaat*, this meant that the dynastic state became an expression of both divine and earthly law through the agency of government. The emperor followed divine law by acting as a traditional Christian shepherd to his worldly flock, protecting their souls by upholding the church and controlling their sinful bodies by the power of the secular sword. By the same token, when the emperor acted through the persona of reason as law, he could claim to exercise power for the common good, whether to control the actions of his subjects or to encourage their participation in some enlightened scheme for their benefit. This combination of the new and the old under the aegis of the *Rechtsstaat* would prove a powerful asset to the Monarchy, for it could now simultaneously maintain its ties to its traditional allies in the church and aristocracy, while finding new ones in the people and assure its authority by acting as the balancing point between them.

Through Josephism, the Monarchy claimed the high ground in the process of change. By connecting change from above with improvement, the dynastic state identified itself with the cause of the Enlightenment and, therefore, with modernization. From 1780 to 1914 it provided either the direct or indirect incentives for economic development, the growth of the bourgeoisie, virtually all major cultural changes, and, ironically, even the early growth of national consciousness. Additionally, by setting the example of the rule of law as a source for and a structure within

which positive social development could occur it arguably provided the intellectual basis for Austrian liberalism, just as the Josephian bureaucracy provided most of that movement's initial followers. In essentials, the developmental process in the Habsburg Monarchy followed a scenario that, except for the more prominent role played by the dynastic state and the special difficulties of multinationalism, resulted in outcomes that were not significantly different from those of the so-called normative countries of Europe.

In its economic policy the Monarchy went from mercantilist to physiocratic/cameralist, and ultimately to the classical economics of laissez-faire; that is to say, from interventionist to non-interventionist policies culminating in a legal framework that guaranteed the rights of private entrepreneurial activity for the benefit of the individual and society alike. The Monarchy chose a well trodden European path of economic development that even during the conservative period of 1815–1848 laid the groundwork for industrial development in the Austrian and Bohemian crown lands.²⁴ After 1848 and the end of manorialism, as Good has demonstrated, the Monarchy followed a reasonably successful course of economic development, the extent of which was geographically based on the varying levels of regional receptivity. In this regard, except for a somewhat slower pace in its traditionally more agrarian areas, by 1914 Austria-Hungary had a modern mix of industrial and non-industrial economic activity. With this modern economy a modern bourgeoisie was not lacking.

In the *Sonderweg* interpretation a successful bourgeoisie is indispensable. Certainly even Schorske acknowledged that the Habsburg Monarchy possessed a bourgeoisie, but the problem, of course, was whether it was the right kind of bourgeoisie with the right kind of influence in the society. Schorske answered this in the negative, as did others. But was this the right answer? Like its German counterpart, the Austrian bourgeoisie evolved out of the early-modern *Mittelstand* of artisans, merchants, professionals, and functionaries with the addition, in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, of the newly created bureaucrats. Indeed, it can be argued that this is the same, with variations, everywhere in Europe. Moreover, except primarily in France and England, this social grouping related to the state as either the protective shell in which it existed or as the source of its livelihood through service to it. Grievances and projects for reform were habitually directed to it following the pattern established under Josephist and traditional paternalistic models of government. Discontent became insurrectionary or revolutionary only when the state's response was perceived as inadequate

or out of keeping with its established role of positive leadership. In its broadest terms, a surfeit of negative action and a consequent lack of Josephinian initiative on the part of the Habsburg Monarchy is what made the Revolution of 1848 possible. But if inaction by the state caused the Revolution, the state's actions created the class from which the revolutionaries came and its subsequent response to the Revolution would ultimately bring them back into the state's orbit.

Nowhere in 1848 did the revolt happen because of a conscious bourgeois liberal plan of action and nowhere was this more true than in Austria. To be sure, once under way the bourgeoisie and their liberal ideology became active in promoting modified French and English models of constitutional monarchy such as that represented in the Kremsier and Stadion constitutions of 1849, but, aside from their federalist provisions, these were basically constitutional *Rechtsstaat* models for enhanced bourgeois participation. After 1850 and the institution of neo-absolutism that participation in the state remained the goal of this group, and they showed themselves willing to realize it within the structure of a *Rechtsstaat* that was heavily defined by its monarchic base. As for the dynastic state, it was willing to reform that *Rechtsstaat* to accommodate and coopt the participation of its bourgeois subjects.

What caused the state to lose control in the Monarchy in the period leading to 1848 can be seen as an imbalance in the relationship between the rational and traditional aspects of the Austrian *Rechtsstaat* as expressed by government policy. The existence of a traditional divinely sanctioned concept of the just ruler as part of the Habsburg embodiment of the *Rechtsstaat* reflects the underlying dynastic character of the state and its power. It was willing to be progressive, but not at the cost of its existence. Even Joseph accepted this premise, and therefore, when forced to it, he retreated from his reform posture after 1788. He had allowed the rational, enlightened, modernizing side of the *Rechtsstaat* to become excessive. Joseph's retreat, however, was tactical and pragmatic, as were the measures taken by his brother Leopold. When reason proved excessive, tradition was called in to strike a balance and reestablish order, but key elements of the rationally based reforms remained, including the legal base of the *Rechtsstaat* itself.²⁵ Under Franz fear of revolutionary change led to stasis and only sporadic intervention by the state in either a rational or traditional mode. Franz's motto, however, emphasized that the *Rechtsstaat* was still at the heart of the Monarchy, but no longer as a transforming agent.²⁶ Under the less-than-capable rule of Ferdinand, it continued to slumber with the state, only occasionally either encouraging positive change in an area such as industry or using its traditional persona in a defensive manner,

as in the raising of the Ruthenian peasantry against their revolutionary Polish overlords. These, however, were more like the inept stumblings of a sleepwalker than the actions of government as the embodiment of divine and rational justice. With 1848 as an object lesson, the state returned in neo-absolutism to a more Josephist stance that coopted liberals, such as Alexander Bach, into the government, and consciously sought to put the state once again at the forefront of progressive, modernizing change from above, whether in the economy or in education. Additionally, this kind of aggressive enlightened policy could appeal to the progressivist sympathies of the liberal bourgeoisie.²⁷ This was clearly the modernizing, interventionist *Rechtsstaat* in action supported by both rational and traditional justifications of state power. Why did it not work?

The answer to that question is the combination of financial weakness and a failure to recognize initially the need for more active cooperation from the liberal bourgeoisie. On top of these factors, military defeat in 1859 and 1866 damaged both the credit and prestige of the state to the point where it was forced to make concessions to the constitutional variant of the *Rechtsstaat*. While Franz Joseph would clearly have preferred the continuation of the neo-absolutist version, he accepted the final constitutional reform of 1867 as an act of pragmatism not unlike those carried out by his great uncle and grandfather.²⁸ The document that embodied the new liberal parliamentary system with its guarantee of individual rights also made it clear that the source of all sovereign authority came from a "sanctified" emperor, not from the people, and that he retained direct control over the bureaucracy, selection of the government, foreign affairs, the military, and the powers of war and peace. Moreover, no law could be enacted without his signature. The December Constitution was therefore a document well within the parameters of the *Rechtsstaat* that originated with Joseph II, since it combined the rational modern side of progress with the divine, traditional side of the dynasty's authority. From 1867 until the end of his life Franz Joseph punctiliously observed his constitutional status as the monarch of what was now generally described as a *Rechtsstaat*.²⁹ While the establishment of this updated version of the *Rechtsstaat* was far from perfect and would not banish all further problems for the Monarchy, it did succeed in remaining in place until 1918.³⁰

Of course, 1867 was also one year after the other great change in the Monarchy, the *Ausgleich* with Hungary. It too became a kind of adjunct to the *Rechtsstaat* since it provided an update to the rational authority of the state by creating the quasi-federal structure of dualism while preserving the traditional power of the dynasty. Accompanying it was a

constitutional *Rechtsstaat* for Hungary. The *Ausgleich*, however, pointed to the nagging problem of nationalism that, with the defeat of imperial centralism after 1866, now became manifest in the popular political life of the state. Still, it was a problem that was innate to the dynastic supra-national character of the Monarchy and one the state had nurtured early on by encouraging nationalism's cultural variety as a substitute for political activity. True to the liberal conception of rights, the new constitution in Article 19 even specifically recognized the rights of all nationalities in the Cisleithanian half of the Monarchy including that of equal treatment for their languages in public and private life. Under these circumstances the constitution and the parliament itself would become important legal forums for dealing with the gradual exacerbation of national animosities, especially those between Czechs and Germans. Indeed, until the Badeni crisis, the liberals, now influenced by theories of a very statist-oriented liberalism developed in the 1860s,³¹ could be used, along with the constitutional order they had called into being, as allies in the state's struggle to maintain the equilibrium of the *Rechtsstaat*. From 1867 on, nothing was so central to the continuing existence of the Monarchy from the Cisleithanian side as the reality of the *Rechtsstaat*, in both its constitutional and Josephist forms. It acted as a kind of legal containment field for a struggle that would otherwise have become endemically violent rather than only sporadically.

Because of these nationality problems, Austrian political life in the constitutional era saw the *Rechtsstaat* under its greatest threat, but in its response at its most resilient. While the bourgeois, liberal elements of all national groups could be said to have benefited from both the pre- and post-1867 *Rechtsstaat*, it had been the Germans among them who, because of their more advanced position as the erstwhile *Herrenvolk* of the Monarchy, had formed the main stream of the bourgeoisie and liberals. With the advent of parliamentary politics and the spread of economic development, their dominance was gradually threatened by their nationalist counterparts among the non-German, mostly Slavic, peoples of the Monarchy's Austrian half. This threat played itself out in the central parliament and the legislatures of the crown lands. The political decline of this group was recognized by the state as early as 1879, when the emperor chose to form a more conservative government, not with the German liberals, but with their conservative and Slav opponents instead. The creation of Minister-President Taaffe's "iron ring" of political support, that lasted until 1893, was the first of many occasions when the rational, constitutional side of the *Rechtsstaat* would be subject to its traditional side, to maintain what were perceived as the state's vital interests.

With the onset of obstructionism from both the German liberals and their Czech counterparts after 1897, the *Rechtsstaat* was maintained not only by forming shifting alliances among parties for the sake of viable ministries, but also by the use of the infamous Article 14 that gave the government (i.e., the emperor, his ministers, and bureaucracy) the right to rule while parliament was not functioning. Its frequent invocation and the willingness of the parties to allow its use rather than act to resolve their differences showed that they recognized the traditional aspect of the *Rechtsstaat* as a valid, useful, and still powerful force even in the constitutional era.³² Moreover, parliament's consistent acceptance of all measures taken during its use demonstrated the degree to which imperial power, as such, was seen as legitimate.³³ It is not surprising, then, that the rational, constitutional side of the *Rechtsstaat* was being supported in this period by its traditional alter ego precisely because of the latter's ability to invoke a legitimacy that transcended purely rational authority. Thus, in an effort to bolster the parliamentary system, it was the emperor who insisted on introducing universal manhood suffrage in 1907 and it was his agents who facilitated and approved the regional compromises between national groups in Moravia in 1905–06, the Bukovina in 1909–10, and Galicia in 1913–14. It was also with imperial assistance that the efforts to bring the Czechs and Germans together over the issue of Bohemia were tried before 1914. Indeed, the rule of law had become such an indispensable tool to the dynasty in regulating the affairs of the Monarchy that the aversion felt by Franz Joseph toward his heir, Franz Ferdinand, could be interpreted, in part, as stemming from the latter's willingness to solve the Monarchy's problems through extra-legal means that would nullify the *Rechtsstaat*. But perhaps an even more telling fact regarding the centrality of the *Rechtsstaat* in maintaining the continuity of peaceful change is that all the main schemes advanced for resolving Austria's nationality problem were couched entirely as a matter for constitutional adjustment.³⁴

Clearly, by 1914 the Habsburg Monarchy and its *Rechtsstaat* were confronting significant problems, but being a modern state is no guarantee against even the life-threatening variety. As serious as its nationality problems were, before World War I there was no sign of the state's imminent collapse and nothing suggesting a revolutionary situation. Even the ostensibly revolutionary social democrats were among the constitutional monarchy's strongest supporters.³⁵ All this suggests that the Austrian *Rechtsstaat* not only served to facilitate the Monarchy's transition to the basic forms of modern economic, social, cultural, and political life, but that it also provided an element of stabilizing continuity for

the change this process involved. If this is the dominant context within which developments in nineteenth century Austria are to be viewed then we must place the phenomenon of Vienna 1900 in that context as well.

In the Schorskean model, the cultures of law and grace are opposites. The supposed triumph of the latter over the former is part of a major crisis in which the liberal German bourgeoisie, as Austria's principal bearers of modern, rational, Weberian social and political values have been rendered tragically ineffective by the rise of mass socialist and conservative parties, not to mention by the nationality conflicts. Their sons then created modern culture in reaction to, and as an escape from, a situation that prevents them from engaging in the constructive political and, presumably, commercial pursuits of their liberal fathers. If we look at this scenario in light of the *Rechtsstaat* interpretation it becomes far less dramatic and critical.

It is true that the German bourgeois liberals were in political decline and being replaced in the public sphere by the forces Schorske identifies, but it was a decline that had begun in 1879. Where they lost power in the public sphere they were arguably gaining it in the less public administrative one, not to mention exercising influence as the leaders of industry and finance.³⁶ They still retained a considerable and vital role within the society. But the point also has to be made that the bourgeoisie, both German and non-German, in their origins and political orientation were heavily beholden to the Josephinian source of the modern Habsburg Monarchy. When they gained the right of participation in it, they did so as collaborators and beneficiaries in its *Rechtsstaat*, not as outsiders. While this is in no way meant to diminish the importance of the bourgeois achievement in Austria, it is meant to see it in a less Weberian light. Vienna's liberal elites were so well integrated into the structure of the state that it is difficult to take seriously the kind of crisis Schorske posits. So long as the *Rechtsstaat* continued, their influence did as well. Moreover, the forces that threatened to displace them were themselves operating in the context of that *Rechtsstaat*: the social democrats could not exist without it and Christian Socialism, for all its antisemitic and seemingly anti-liberal characteristics, was actually working to maintain the continuity of the *Rechtsstaat* by both strengthening its traditional dynastic character and pressing for ministerial government in its modern constitutional persona.³⁷

Yet what of the cultural dimension of Austria's *fin de siècle*? Undoubtedly, Schnitzler and Hofmannsthal were sons of the liberal bourgeoisie, as were other cultural figures such as Stefan Zweig and Hermann Bahr; but while all of these men may have been representatives of the avant-garde, they were not all agonizing over questions of decline nor seeking

to escape it through the creation of a new culture. Certainly, as Schorske points out, they were all raised in an atmosphere saturated with the cultural inheritance of the Habsburgs,³⁸ but is this really as significant as he maintains, given that high culture in nineteenth century Europe was fairly similar everywhere? The question also needs to be asked as to whether the sons of other wealthy bourgeoisie in the "normative" countries of England and France were not also pursuing careers in culture and if so, is this a sign of crisis or simply a case of enjoying the fruits of a previous generation's labor? The cultural dimension of Schorske's argument loses its significance if the kind of bourgeois liberal crisis he describes did not occur. Without it, the dominant cultural context in which Schnitzler and Hofmannsthal functioned comes to be of greater significance than their individual experiences.

It was in fact a context that in the fine and musical arts was heavily influenced by the Habsburg dynasty and state.³⁹ It was also, however, a context that most creative figures wished to be a part of. This was true for the Secession, for Loos (despite his independence), for Zweig, Bahr, and for Gustav Mahler, who was quite happy to be conducting at the *Hofoper*. Even radical expressionists like Schiele and Kokoschka were at most detached from the establishment rather than alienated from it, with Schiele before his death actually planning to become an active part of it.⁴⁰ As for Schnitzler and Hofmannsthal, the traditions, orderliness, and façades of the Habsburg Monarchy were the indispensable means to Hofmannsthal's end of creating a new Austrian *Gemeinschaft*, while to Schnitzler they were simply the structures of a flawed reality, neither good nor bad, but susceptible to delineation and criticism like any others. Indeed, in Schnitzler's case it is difficult to reconcile his capacity to write a critical work like *Der Weg ins Freie* with his composition of the patriotic *Der junge Medardus* unless he is viewed as the self-conscious fellow-traveler of an ongoing social and political enterprise. Indeed, the variety and creative vitality manifested in the Vienna of 1900 can as easily be ascribed to the underlying, if imperfect, stability of the Austrian *Rechtsstaat* as to any notion of its impending dissolution. A few well-known scandals notwithstanding, like Schiele's brief incarceration for "pornography," in Austria the rule of law tended overwhelmingly to guarantee freedom of expression rather than to suppress it. Thus when Otto Wagner was once asked if he feared for his teaching position because of his association with the controversial Secession, he could reply, "Das könnte man unter einem autokratischen Regime. Aber Kaiser Franz Joseph—ich bin deshalb Anhänger der Monarchie—hält sich starr und anständig an die Konstitution."⁴¹

The social and political hierarchy of the Habsburg Monarchy displayed broad tolerance in cultural matters, and its not infrequent patronage of the avant-garde, as in the case of the Secession, was more typical of the Austrian establishment than were the hostile opinions of Franz Ferdinand.⁴² Unlike imperial Germany to the north, the Habsburg Monarchy was more willing to coopt creative change than to fear it.⁴³ Certainly, this was not a less healthy reaction to cultural modernism than could be found among the establishments of Great Britain, France, and the United States; “normative” countries where one would be hard pressed to find models of Weberian behavior among the bourgeois sons and daughters attracted to the Bloomsbury Group, the circles of post-impressionism, and the “ashcan” school. As in these other “modern” societies, Austrian civic life could not be threatened by modern culture while the *Rechtsstaat* was still an effective institution.

Finally, where does this leave the concept of a Viennese *fin de siècle*? Hermann Bahr, who is often cited as a bellwether of cultural matters around 1900, admitted to using the term in 1891, but only because of its topicality and three years later “admitted that he had no clear idea of its meaning.”⁴⁴ In the *Neue Freie Presse*’s editorial for 31 December 1899 the writer was critical of those who placed too much significance on a mere change of numbers and noted that there would still be a continuity between the centuries with much of the old one still in the new. Like most of the other major Viennese papers on the eve of the new century, the *Presse* acknowledged the seriousness of the lingering political crisis caused by the Badeni language ordinances, but professed to optimism about its solution in the near term.⁴⁵ Even when three days later the *Presse* published a long, rather world-weary feuilleton by the Danish philosopher Georg Brandes entitled, “Zur Wende des Jahrhunderts,” his pessimism about the new century was directed at Europe’s general bellicosity and the disappointment he felt over France’s deplorable behavior during the Dreyfus affair, and not at Austria. For him, Austria was a positive spot in his recollections from the century just ended, and he declared himself pleased with the scholars, ministers, and poets he had met there, including the young Schnitzler and Hofmannsthal, but with no suggestion whatsoever of their representing the dying spirit of their class or country.⁴⁶ If any of this is at all indicative of the atmosphere in Austria, and Vienna in particular, at the end of the century, then the Schorskean *fin de siècle* is a less than useful concept for understanding it.

The image of “*fin-de-siècle* Vienna” and the *Sonderweg* concept it feeds into are dubious constructs, at best. Rather, we should look on the phenomenon of Vienna 1900 as a transitional period within a modern

culture and society, one that had its own developmental “peculiarities,”⁴⁷ but none that were setting it on the road of ineluctable crisis. It is the image of the *Burgtor* with its inscription, “Justitia Regnorum Fundamentum,” that offers a more accurate picture of an Austrian society based on a functionally unique version of the *Rechtsstaat* in which there could be change with continuity. Once the period 1890–1914 is freed of its *fin-de-siècle* label in favor of the less deterministic *Jahrhundertwende* image, so too will our understanding of Austrian history be freed of an intellectually inhibiting interpretation. Certainly Vienna 1900 deserves to be seen as a time of historical significance, but not on the basis of representing the culturally rich death of one of history’s notorious non-conformists.

Notes

1. See James Shedel, *Art and Society: The New Art Movement in Vienna 1897–1914* (Palo Alto, 1981), 75–76; on Bahr’s conversion in the late 1880s from pan-Germanist to Austrian patriot, see Donald G. Daviau, *Der Mann von Übermorgen: Hermann Bahr 1863–1934* (Vienna, 1984), 61–62; and on his perception of the Secession and its art as Austrian, see Hermann Bahr, *Secession* (Vienna, 1900), 257–259.
2. See Carl Schorske, “Politics and Psyche in *Fin-de-Siècle* Vienna: Schnitzler and Hofmannsthal,” in *The American Historical Review* 66 (July 1961): 930–946.
3. Schorske, in *Fin-de-Siècle Vienna* (New York, 1980), quotes Hofmannsthal’s observation that modern poets seemed to stand “‘under the decree of necessity, as though they were all building on a pyramid, the monstrous residence of a dead king or an unborn god.’ Hofmannsthal, with his Habsburg traditionalism and his daring quest for a new politics of sublimation, seemed to be at work on both” (22).
4. See Mikuláš Teich and Roy Porter, *Fin de Siècle and Its Legacy* (Cambridge, 1990), 1.
5. Steven Beller, *Vienna and the Jews 1867–1938: A Cultural History* (Cambridge, 1989), 3.
6. For a complete presentation of the *Sonderweg*’s normative implications and the role played by this concept in the historiography of modern German history, see David Blackbourn and Geoff Eley, *The Peculiarities of German History: Bourgeois Society and Politics in Nineteenth-Century Germany* (Oxford, 1984).
7. See Henry Wickham Steed, *The Hapsburg Monarchy* (New York, 1969); this is a reprint of the 1914 second edition.
8. See the discussion of their father’s activities before, during, and after the war as they relate to the destruction of Austria-Hungary and the Slav successor states in Hugh and Christopher Seton-Watson, *The Making of a New Europe: R.W. Seton-Watson and the Last Years of Austria-Hungary* (Seattle, 1981); in particular, pages 433–436 present a useful summary of his responsibility and sometimes conflicted reaction to political developments within the successor states.

9. Josef Redlich, *Das österreichische Staats- und Reichsproblem: Geschichtliche Darstellung der inneren Politik der Habsburgischen Monarchie 1848 bis zum Untergang des Reiches*, 2 vols. (Leipzig, 1926), 2.
10. See Josef Redlich, *Emperor Francis Joseph of Austria* (New York, 1929).
11. Oscar Jászi, *The Dissolution of the Habsburg Monarchy* (Chicago, 1966), 171.
12. A. J. P. Taylor, *The Habsburg Monarchy, 1809–1918: A History of the Austrian Empire and Austria Hungary* (Chicago, 1976), 7.
13. See Robert A. Kann, *The Multinational Empire: Nationalism and National Reform in the Habsburg Monarchy 1848–1918*, 2 vols. (New York, 1977).
14. Robert A. Kann, *A History of the Habsburg Empire 1526–1918* (Berkeley, 1977); see the summation on 518–520.
15. See Hugo Hantsch, *Geschichte Österreichs 1648–1918*, 2 vols. (Graz, 1968), 2; and Erich Zöllner, *Geschichte Österreichs: Von den Anfängen bis zur Gegenwart* (Munich, 1979).
16. Hantsch, *Geschichte Österreichs*, 458.
17. C. A. Macartney, *The Habsburg Empire, 1790–1918* (New York, 1969), 1.
18. See John Boyer, *Political Radicalism in Late Imperial Vienna: The Origins of the Christian Social Movement, 1848–1897* (Chicago, 1981) and *Culture and Political Crisis in Vienna: Christian Socialism in Power* (Chicago, 1995); David F. Good, *The Economic Rise of the Habsburg Empire, 1750–1914* (Berkeley, 1984); also the previous citation of Beller's work; and Ernst Bruckmüller, Ulrike Döcker, Hans Heiss, Hannes Stekl, and Peter Urbanitsch (Hg.), *Bürgertum in der Habsburgermonarchie*, 2 vols. (Vienna, 1990 and 1992, respectively).
19. See Beller, *Vienna and the Jews*, 4, where he points out Carl Schorske's projection of the United States in 1950 as the model for Vienna 1900.
20. For a full exposition of the argument, see Mark Ræff, *The Well-Ordered Police State: Social and Institutional Change through Law in the Germanies and Russia, 1600–1800* (New Haven, 1983).
21. Joseph, Leopold, and Franz all accepted this by virtue of their education and personal conviction. Ferdinand undoubtedly had this communicated to him at the behest of his father, but whether he understood it is open to question. Franz Joseph, whose punctiliousness in observing the law as both an absolute and constitutional ruler is well known, clearly reflected this principle as Kaiser. For a discussion of how the ruler could be both above and under the law see Leonard Krieger, *The German Idea of Freedom* (Chicago, 1972).
22. Waltraud Heindl, *Gehorsame Rebellen: Bürokratie und Beamte in Österreich 1780 bis 1848* (Vienna, 1991), 327–333.
23. See Anna Coreth, "'Pietas Austriaca': Wesen und Bedeutung habsburgischer Frömmigkeit der Barockzeit," *Mitteilungen des Österreichischen Staatsarchivs* 7 (Offprint, 1954); and James Shedel, "Emperor, Church, and People: Religion and Dynastic Loyalty During the Golden Jubilee of Franz Joseph," *The Catholic Historical Review* 76 (January 1990).
24. See the argument in John Komlos, *Nutrition and Economic Development in the Eighteenth Century Habsburg Monarchy: An Anthropometric History* (Princeton, 1989), in which he maintains that the Habsburg state under Maria Theresa and Joseph II may have encouraged an early onset of the Industrial Revolution in Austria through their policy of improved nutrition among the peasantry to provide the country with a more productive population and healthier recruits for the army. In this way a population explosion was stimulated that in turn stimulated increased economic demand.
25. The *Bürgerliches Gesetzbuch*, the reform of the penal code, of court procedure, the application of the common law to virtually all regardless of Stand, not to mention the legal procedures regulating the actions of the bureaucracy survived and were augmented after the reign of Joseph II. For a brief discussion of his legal reforms, see Macartney, *The Habsburg Empire*, 126.
26. See Boyer, *Political Radicalism*, 4–7.
27. *Ibid.*, 18–19.
28. Redlich, *Francis Joseph*, 344–345.
29. In both popular and scholarly expositions on the constitutional character of the state after 1867, the nature of the Monarchy as a balance between the power of the crown and of the people is emphasized. In doing so it is described as a constitutional monarchy, but also with equal frequency as a *Rechtsstaat* whose legal origins begin with the Pragmatic Sanction and run through the December Constitution of 1867. Thus, the historical/traditional as well as the rational/constitutional character of the *Rechtsstaat* as a kind of legal duality is recognized. An example of a popular exposition of the constitution that ran into multiple editions is that of the anonymously edited *Katechismus der österreichischen Staatsverfassung*, 4th ed. (Vienna, 1884), which on page 2 compared the constitution favorably to those of any other state, saying that in many instances only that of Britain was comparable. That Austria was a *Rechtsstaat* was also specifically stressed as something teachers should impart to their students; see the oft-reprinted handbook for *Bürgerschule* teachers by Ludwig Fleischer, *Österreichischer Bürgerkunde: Ein Lehr- und Hilfsbuch für Bürgerschulen und die mit denselben verbundenen Einjährigen Lehrkurse*, 4th ed. (Vienna, 1908), 13–14. For the more scholarly view of the Monarchy as a historically and constitutionally based *Rechtsstaat*, see the work of the jurist Friedrich Tezner, especially *Der Kaiser* (Vienna, 1909).
30. For a very interesting and persuasive argument about the ability of the Monarchy to remain fundamentally viable until military defeat caused its collapse, see Alan Sked, *The Decline and Fall of the Habsburg Empire, 1815–1918* (London, 1989).
31. Boyer, *Political Radicalism*, 23.
32. See Tezner, *Der Kaiser*, 4; Tezner saw the emperor's power as partly analogous to that of the English crown in a historical/constitutional sense and cites the strong position of that power within the constitutional system as a partial explanation for why the parties are willing to obstruct the business of the Reichsrat and Landtage; i.e., they can be irresponsible because the crown is not and has the legal power to govern when necessary. While he sees the positive side of the imperial authority, he suggests that if it were less strong, the parties would be forced to accept more political responsibility for their actions.
33. For a complete discussion of the origin, use, and significance of Article 14, see Gernot D. Hasiba, *Das Notverordnungsrecht in Österreich (1848–1917): Notwendigkeit und Mißbrauch eines Staatserhaltenden Instrumentes* (Vienna, 1985).
34. In surveying the contemporary literature on the nature of the post-1897 nationality conflicts, their origins and potential solutions, it is striking to note the degree to which it is taken for granted that these conflicts are primarily legal/constitutional in character and can therefore be solved within the fundamental framework of the existing Austrian *Rechtsstaat*. As examples of this approach, see D—s [full name not given in original], "Die Lösung der Nationalitäten- und Autonomiefrage in Österreich auf historischer und verfassungsmäßiger Grundlage," *Österreichisch-Ungarische Revue* 25 (1899); and Alfred Freiherr von Offermann, *Die Bedingungen des constitutionellen Österreichs* (Vienna, 1900).

35. The social democrats supported the multinational state from a mixture of political legalism and a feeling that it was a historically valid source of economic rationalization and internationalism that could pave the way for the eventual advent of socialism.
36. Shedel, *Art and Society*, 60–61.
37. See Boyer, *Culture and Political Crisis in Vienna*, chaps. 2–3.
38. Schorske, *Fin-de-Siècle Vienna*, 298.
39. For an excellent study of state influence in the arts at the turn of the century and earlier, see Jeroen Bastiaan van Heerde, *Staat und Kunst: Staatliche Kunstförderung 1895 bis 1918* (Vienna, 1993).
40. For a discussion of how Schiele and Kokoschka related to the official artistic establishment, see Shedel, *Art and Society*, 151–197.
41. See n. 47 in van Heerde, *Staat und Kunst*, 271.
42. See van Heerde, *Staat und Kunst*, 271–273.
43. See Peter Paret, *The Berlin Secession: Modernism and Its Enemies in Imperial Germany* (Cambridge, Mass., 1980).
44. Donald G. Daviau, *Hermann Bahr* (Boston, 1985), 31.
45. *Neue Freie Presse*, 31 December 1899 (morning edition). For a digest of the views expressed in other major Viennese dailies on Austria's nationality problem and the future, see the survey entitled "Zeitungsschau," *Wiener Abendpost*; Supplement to *Wiener Zeitung*, 2 January 1900.
46. *Neue Freie Presse*, 3 January 1900.
47. See Blackbourn and Eley; the use of this term to describe unusual, but not abnormal, historical development originates with their characterization of nineteenth-century German history and their critique of the *Sonderweg* interpretation.

Chapter 4

THEODOR HERZL AND RICHARD VON SCHAUKAL

Self-Styled Nobility and the Sources of
Bourgeois Belligerence in Prewar Vienna



Michael Burri

The years following the deaths of Theodor Herzl and Richard von Schaukal have added to the distance that already separated the two during their lifetime. At the turn of the century in Vienna, neither writer could be said to have been close to the other, personally or creatively. Herzl, after a brief term as Paris correspondent of the *Neue Freie Presse*, had become its feuilleton editor. An author of short stories, dramas, and novels, he was also the renowned leader of the Zionist movement. Younger and less accomplished, Schaukal was an Austrian civil servant with great expectations, a writer known for his early success as a poet, and a contributor to the leading literary journals. Today, even these connections seem trivial. The legacy of the Burgtheater playwright Herzl is as clear as that of the "new Hofmannsthal" Schaukal. Herzl is the founder of political Zionism, a man with a flair for the theatrical, a dramatist who, like Václav Havel or Pope John Paul II, found a second career in public life, while Schaukal is regarded as a minor figure in what might be called "Austrian decadence," a conservative whose bloody-minded verses during

Chapter 10

AFTERTHOUGHTS ABOUT *FIN-DE-SIÈCLE VIENNA*

Problem of Aesthetic Culture in Central Europe



Mary Gluck

Fin-de-siècle Vienna conjures up a complicated set of images. It is, of all, a famous book of essays that reinterpreted Viennese culture at the turn of the century. But it is also an academic phenomenon that was inspired and generated by those essays. On the most fundamental level, however, we have to see "*fin-de-siècle Vienna*" as a general theory of modernist culture, based on a particular theory about the relationship between aesthetics and politics. Fundamentally, the most immediate association of the term is with Schorske's *Fin-de-Siècle Vienna: Politics and Culture*, first published in 1980, though well-known as individual essays years earlier. *Fin-de-Siècle Vienna* succeeded in capturing both scholarly and popular imagination as few academic books have done in recent years. Though an elegantly written, cogently argued, and powerfully hypothesized hypothesis, it linked the political and social developments of Vienna with a flourishing aesthetic culture, whose defining characteristics were a retreat from politics, extreme sensitivity to subjective experience, and a systematic interest in psychic phenomena.

A testimony to the fertility of Schorske's conception is the endless flow of articles, dissertations, popular books, conferences, seminars, art exhibitions, and undergraduate courses that *Fin-de-Siècle Vienna* has inspired since its publication. Thanks to these activities, older stereotypes of Vienna, the city of waltzes, operettas and coffeehouses, have given way to a new myth of Vienna, the habitat of aesthetes, connoisseurs and psychoanalysts. Vienna has been transformed, according to a witty parody, into "a city vibrant with intellect and sex ... [where] Freud, seizing his unique opportunity, used the first to explode the second."¹

The tremendous resonance of Schorske's work is not accidental. For his book is far more than a case history of a local aesthetic culture. Though undoubtedly intended strictly as a historical reconstruction of certain aspects of Viennese aestheticism, Schorske's vision, nevertheless, implicitly presents a paradigmatic case for the historical understanding of all modernist cultures. Perhaps the central accomplishment of this historical theory is the link it forges between the modernist self and *fin-de-siècle* politics. According to its argument, the rise of Psychological Man and the internalization of modernist culture were a direct response to a political world in disarray, which had rejected the norms of enlightened liberalism and had turned to the irrational, collectivist values of mass politics. Through this theory, Schorske became, as one commentator put it, the "historian of de-historicization," the scholar who accomplished the paradoxical task of "weaving a history around the modern retreat from the historical."²

But the very conception of modernism as a cultural retreat from history, which lies at the heart of Schorske's work, is an unexamined theoretical construct. As an axiomatic assumption that links Schorske's historical hypothesis with academic and popular public opinion, it represents the third, perhaps most general, dimension of the "*fin-de-siècle Vienna*" phenomenon.

This particular conception of modernism has deep theoretical and ideological roots in twentieth-century liberal culture. It was formalized into a coherent aesthetic philosophy during the interwar years by critics such as Theodor Adorno, Clement Greenberg, Meyer Schapiro, Joseph Frank, and others. But it quickly acquired the status of an ideology of modernism among the general public. According to its tenets, the work of art constitutes an autonomous, organic, self-referential universe, free from the contaminations of history; the true artist is a radical iconoclast, divorced from social, political, and professional affiliations; and aesthetic creation is a subjective act, fundamentally incompatible with the marketplace and popular culture.

How do these different components, implicit in the Vienna 1900 idea, coexist with each other? What do the popular myth, the historical theory and the aesthetic philosophy contribute toward our understanding of the cultural world of the Habsburg Monarchy and its successor states? Does “*fin-de-siècle Vienna*” continue to have validity as an analytic tool for further research? These were some of the overarching questions posed by the conference, “Beyond Vienna 1900: Rethinking Culture in Central Europe,” hosted by the Center for Austrian Studies at the University of Minnesota in October 1995.

No simple or unambiguous answer emerged to these questions in the course of the two-day conference, which brought together over twenty scholars from the United States, England, Austria and Hungary. Based on the high quality of the presentations, many of which are being published in this volume, there is little doubt that Viennese and Habsburg cultural history is a vibrant field that continues to generate innovative and sophisticated scholarship. However, the relationship of this new scholarship to the idea of “*fin-de-siècle Vienna*” is a deeply ambiguous one. The very notion of “*fin-de-siècle Vienna*” as a cultural paradigm with multiple sites of interpretation is a point of contention among scholars active in the field.

Schorske’s students and admirers are, perhaps, the most critical of the “*fin-de-siècle Vienna*” idea. Protective of the integrity of Schorske’s individual achievement, they have been eager to extricate his book from both popular images of Vienna 1900, as well as from generalized theoretical conceptions of aesthetic modernism. As Michael Roth recently pointed out in the introduction to a collection of essays honoring the distinguished historian, “Schorske proposes no meta-narrative to provide closure,” in *Fin-de-Siècle Vienna*. His collage-like, fragmented strategies were indebted, Roth insists, “to the aesthetic sensibility of the moderns,” rather than to the ideological narratives of the orists of modernism.³

Understandable as such arguments are, they are ultimately contradictory, since they are forced to deny the very elements that lend broader significance to Schorske’s individual scholarship. The attempt to restrict the meaning of *Fin-de-Siècle Vienna* to a particular historical achievement and to separate it off from the aesthetic philosophy on which it is grounded and the popular myth which it helped create is misconceived. Vienna 1900 has become a cultural paradigm precisely because of its complexity. For this reason, the real question is not whether it constitutes a paradigm or not, but rather, how we can understand the nature of the implicit relationship between its different component elements.

It is this latter issue that forms the subtext of the essays that have been brought together in this volume. The authors of these essays are implicitly agreed that there exist irreconcilable conflicts, both between and within the historical and aesthetic hypothesis, that constitute the interpretative ground for the Vienna 1900 phenomenon. Empirically, the authors have thematized these conflicts around two separate, though obviously interrelated, issues. The first has to do with the fate of liberalism and its relationship to Austro-Hungarian political culture at the turn of the century. The second revolves around the interpretation of modernism as an ahistorical, apolitical enterprise that exists in isolation not only from the political realm, but also from commerce and popular culture.

Austro-Hungarian political culture, according to these accounts, was considerably more complex, more fluid, and more differentiated than the Vienna 1900 model implies. Schorske’s portrait of an individualistic, rational Austrian liberalism, which, after a brief moment of flowering, was overshadowed by nationalist mass movements, has been challenged in a number of ways. Austrian liberalism has been reinterpreted as a movement not necessarily in conflict with chauvinistic nationalism, but rather as a prelude to such politics. From this vantage point, there was no decline of Austrian liberalism in the strict sense of the word, but rather a logical extension or playing out of its innermost tendencies. On the other side of the picture, the politics of ethnic nationalism has also been shown to be less homogeneous and less single-mindedly opposed to classic liberal agendas and identities than previously imagined. Finally, even the centrality of liberalism to Austro-Hungarian political culture has been questioned by some who have shifted attention to the dynastic traditions of the Habsburg state as the defining factor in Austrian politics and public life.

What is noteworthy about these recent reassessments of Austrian politics at the turn of the century is their silence on the question of culture and aesthetics. However the nature of Viennese liberalism is interpreted, its fate does not seem to point unambiguously toward a particular type of aesthetic development. The links between politics and psyche have proven to be unexpectedly hard to demonstrate on the empirical plane.

The aesthetic vision implicit within the Vienna 1900 idea has turned out to be equally at odds with the empirical findings of recent scholarship. At the heart of these new approaches to aesthetic modernism has been a growing skepticism about the supposed ahistoricity of the modernist project, especially as expressed through the metaphor of the retreat into the garden or the psyche. Art historians and literary scholars have

out that aesthetic culture at the turn of the century was not only synonymous with individual passivity, narcissism and the life of the political and economic realms of modern life. On the contrary, aesthetic self-fashioning could be a politically charged, aggressive self-assertive project whose impact was not necessarily restricted to the realm of aestheticism. Moreover, aesthetic production itself did not occur in a vacuum, but was an integral part of the commercial art market that increasingly defined the fate of avant-garde art at the *fin de siècle*. Far from being above history, the modernist aesthetic project has appeared as deeply implicated in the political values, commercial practices, and social practices of the world of bourgeois modernity that emerged.

Recent empirical reinterpretations of Viennese modernist culture and art have undeniably opened up new perspectives for further reflection. They have deepened and made more complex our understanding of liberal ideologies and institutions in this part of the world. They have also redirected our attention from the autonomous work of art to the multiple contexts—political, institutional, commercial—which have defined modernist aesthetics at the turn of the century. This is a more nuanced picture of the world of *fin-de-siècle* Vienna than we have had a price, however. It has resulted in the unraveling of the theoretical and methodological assumptions at the root of the Vienna 1900 model and the inevitable collapse of the generalized model of aestheticism that has dominated the field for over two decades. The biggest challenge has been intellectual historians of modernism, who have implicitly relied on this model in their efforts to conceptualize the meaning of modernist high culture as a general historical phenomenon. What remains for intellectual historians, in the absence of a synthetic methodology, is establishing the place of aesthetics within the field of modern art and social experience?

The answer to this question cannot be given with certainty at this time. What seems clear, however, is that the concept of culture as a generative factor will play an increasingly important role in the methodologies of intellectual historians. Culture is, of course, one of the most pervasive and overused ideas in contemporary academic debates. It is often restricted to canonical high art, as created by exceptional individuals with a socially privileged insights into the nature of the self and society. It is also frequently used to imply popular cultural expressions, reflecting the ethnic and class identities of particular groups. It can also mean, more broadly, the everyday practices and habitual customs of an entire society, understood as a symbolic unit. The need to clarify and make permeable

the boundaries between these different versions of culture is a precondition for a viable model of the cultural history of modernism.

This is not a new agenda. Since the 1980s, thoughtful practitioners in the field of intellectual history and cultural studies have been calling for the clarification of the relationship between high and popular cultures and the bridging of the “Great Divide” between the two realms.⁴ As Andreas Huyssen, who coined the phrase, has pointed out, the fragmentation of the idea of culture into hierarchically defined realms, with elite culture occupying the highest status, and popular and everyday cultures relegated to lesser forms of expression, was a historical development whose roots were in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.⁵ It has produced not only philosophic distinctions, but also methodological divisions between analysts of high art and popular cultures. In Roger Chartier’s words, there grew up a sharp differentiation “between the culture of the greatest number, which calls for an external, collective and quantitative approach, and the intellectuality of the highest form of thought, which requires internal analysis to individualize the irreducible originality of their ideas.”⁶

The call for a new model of cultural history that could heal “the discursive separation of art from culture” has not had tangible results yet.⁷ There has not emerged a generalized theory of culture or a new methodology for students of modernism. Yet, as the essays in the present volume indicate, the cumulative impact of empirical research has substantially changed our inherited paradigms of modernism. They have not only deepened our understanding of the inner dynamics of high culture, but have also expanded our knowledge of what lies outside the aesthetic realm. What needs to follow now is a growing theoretical clarification of the implications of this new vision of cultural production beyond the dualistic spaces of the “Great Divide.” Such a theory would no longer talk of high art or popular culture, but rather of different human responses to the problem of creating values and meaning in an unprecedented modern world, where such values and meanings are no longer given in existing social and religious structures.

Notes

1. Peter Gay, *Freud, Jews and Other Germans: Masters and Victims in Modernist Culture* (New York, 1978), 30.
2. Michael S. Roth, "Performing History: Modernist Contextualism in Carl Schorske's *Fin-de-Siècle Vienna*," *The American Historical Review* 99 (June 1994): 735–736.
3. Michael S. Roth, ed., *Rediscovering History: Culture, Politics, and the Psyche* (Palo Alto, 1994), 3.
4. Cf. Fred Inglis, *Cultural Studies* (Oxford, 1993).
5. Andreas Huyssen, *After the Great Divide: Modernism, Mass Culture, Postmodernism* (Bloomington, 1986).
6. Roger Chartier, "Intellectual History and the History of *Mentalités*: A Dual Re-evaluation," in *Cultural History: Between Practices and Representations*, trans. L. G. Cochrane (Ithaca, 1988), 37.
7. George E. Marcus and Fred R. Myers, "The Traffic in Art and Culture: An Introduction," in *The Traffic in Culture: Refiguring Art and Anthropology* (Berkeley, 1995), 6.

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