Vienna and Memory: Reflections on a Visit.¹

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Vienna, the birthplace of psychoanalysis, was also the place where I was born. It is a city I was fortunate to be able to leave with my parents in 1938, not long after the Anschluss. I returned to Vienna for the first time in 1992, after an absence of 54 years. While there I was struck by a poster at the Burgtheater, the city's major classical theater, announcing in large letters: Der Besuch der alten Dame. The reference was to Dürrematt's play, The Visit. But might it not apply to me? The return of a woman, after many years, to her "home town," where "bad things" had happened to her. But the "bad things" were collective events, not merely a private drama. And I was not on a mission of vengeance; and only partly on one of putting order into old memories, of integrating the past and the present. This essay attempts to deal with some reflections prompted by that visit.

There are perhaps a number of aspects of my theoretical interests and orientations as an anthropologist that might be linked to this early experience of discontinuity and emigration: an interest in bilingualism (or multilingualism), in cultural diversity; a need to grasp historical factors, as well as cultural, structural and psychological ones; a need for explanation rather than merely contemplation of cultural differences; and lastly, with respect to my own life and work, some sense of the fortuitous, of how one element in a sequence leads to another, in often unpredictable, or at least, unpredicted, ways. The choice of anthropology as a field of study is itself relevant here. True, I was influenced by memorable teachers², but from my college years on I came to see anthropology as a discipline that could help me stand back from my own

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² I have elsewhere written about my teachers Hortense Powdermaker (Bourguignon 1991a), A.I. Hallowell (1991b) and M.J. Herskovits (n.d.).
experience and to attempt to make sense of it: anthropology as an intellectual stance, anthropology as cultural criticism, anthropology as mechanism of defense. Yet though these connections may appear obvious, it is equally obvious that others of my "cohort," who survived and came to this country for the most part have followed quite different paths. One significant factor here is, of course, age of arrival in this country. I was young enough to have been required to attend high school. Some of my peers, two or three years older when they came, went to work and never returned to school. Among those who did receive their education here, other factors -- talents, influences, opportunities, needs -- came into play in diverse ways, leading to different life histories and careers. However tempting it may be to look at the experiences of others, my discussion here will focus on my own impressions and will not attempt any larger task.

The second term in my title is Memory. What did I remember about Vienna, a city I left at the age of 14? How reliable is memory, how does it work? Memory has become a subject of public debate in current American popular culture, as well as in technical writings of various orientations. Memory, or its absence, is also related to the subject I have spent much time studying and thinking about, namely culturally patterned dissociation.

Here is one example of the work of memory in regard to my trip to Vienna. That space in front of the Burgtheater, where I saw the placard announcing The Visit, constitutes a large open area. The theater faces the Ringstrasse and directly opposite it, flanked by a pair of parks, the Rathaus, the imitation Gothic city hall. That space brings to mind two images, some eight years apart. At the first of these occasions I was present, the other is historic and has been seen by me and millions of others repeatedly in still photographs and newsreels. The first was a May Day parade I attended with my parents. That was the period of the "Red Vienna," under the Social Democratic regime (1919-1933). We attended regularly, for several years, I believe. There were marches and banners, music and shouting, group gymnastic performances, and, of course, speeches. On the specific occasion I speak of, there were police on horseback, charging into the
crowd. I don't know why. I only know that we, with many others, ran as fast as we could, into side streets, where we were not followed far. I think that was the last of the May Day parades, for us.

That scene came to mind many years later when the police in Columbus, Ohio acquired horses from local well wishers and instituted a horse patrol. This innovation was received with great public enthusiasm: such nice horses and how lovely for the children, who were encouraged to treat the horses as pets. Public donations were solicited for the upkeep of the horses. Clearly, historic memories and cultural meanings are variable....

The second memory image of that space in front of the Burgtheater is the picture showing Hitler's triumphant arrival, with a large body of troops, in March 1938, driving up to the Rathaus. These memories are largely visual and constitute so many layers of images. They are, needless to say, highly charged. Other, numerous occasions of being present in that part of the city, have left no specific traces. Because so many of these memories are visual, a particular dreamlike quality adheres to them, but these particular "dreams" are devoid of any element of wish fulfillment. Whatever private, pleasant occasions there were have been overwhelmed by these more powerful, historic ones. It is this relationship of the private and personal with the public and historic that particularly intrigues me, and that presents a challenge to the task of integrating past and present. Is it possible to consider the multilayered past, the various pasts, and arrive at a coherent whole?

Here is another example, one where later information interacts with memory in a different way. In 1936, on the occasion of Freud's 80th birthday, one of our teachers at the Chajes Gymnasium -- Vienna's Jewish university-preparatory, secondary school -- thought we should know about the city's most famous Jewish citizen. To introduce us to him, and to psychoanalysis, he selected a topic he seemed to think appropriate to twelve-year olds, the psychopathology of everyday life. He cited a number of examples. I did not then know where
Freud lived, or that his address might have some personal meaning for me. But it so happens that earlier, in that fateful year 1932-33, the year of Hitler's rise to power in Germany, my parents and I lived in an apartment on Liechtensteinstrasse, around the corner from Berggasse. The inner courtyards of the various buildings in the block, though divided by walls, formed a common open space. What was notable for us was that, from our windows, we could see trees in one of these yards, a very unusual feature in this city, one that bespoke above-average well being. The trees, I now know, were in the courtyard of the Freud house. Jones (1955, 2, 380) mentions the trees and they can be clearly seen in the Engelman photographs (Engelman 1976). Some years ago, in speaking of the Engelman book, I think, I mentioned our residence in that area of Vienna to an American friend. The return question: "Did you know members of the Freud family, in the neighborhood?" was startling to me. The very notion of "neighborhood," in a city where one was unlikely to know the people in the next apartment, seemed incongruous.

Bettelheim (1990 [1977]) speculated on why Freud might have chosen Berggasse 19 as a place to live and work for almost fifty years. He refers to it as a "nondescript four storey apartment building" and to Berggasse as a "dull and undistinguished street in a nondescript part of the 9th district ... [that] conveys middle class respectability [but] not that of the upper or intellectual classes" (p. 19). Peter Gay (1976, 13) says that "Berggasse 19 is an unpretentious apartment house in a respectable residential area, in northern Vienna." He is referring to the fact that it is situated a few blocks to the north of the Ringstrasse. It might be noted here that the use of cardinal directions in urban orientation, so common in this country, is quite alien to Viennese thinking. There one orients oneself with regard to the inner core of the city and the surrounding Ringstrasse, from which major traffic arteries radiate. Ransonoff (1976, 55) says the house was built in the 1870s. (Curiously, Jones [1955, 2, 379] speaks of "massive eighteenth (!) century structures, typically Viennese.") Bettelheim also says that the name of the street is "a misnomer, calling exaggerated attention to the short steep hill at one end" (1990, 19-20). It is, however, the
oldest part of the street, as shown by its buildings, and therefore the first named. Bettelheim speculates that this location might have appealed to Freud because it was midway, he says, between the University quarter and the Leopoldstadt, where his parents lived, thus showing his reluctance to distance himself too far from his origins, and to join his betters.

There is a good deal of speculation here and not much evidence. Yet there are other reasons why the building might have been attractive to Freud. When the family moved there in 1891, it was fairly new, having been constructed during the boom of residential building that was stimulated by the construction of the monumental edifices of the new Ringstrasse: the University, the Rathaus, the Parliament were all built in that period. [Schorske (1980) has examined these urban and architectural developments in their historical context. See also Haiko's (1993) study of the architecture of Vienna between 1850 and 1930, together with R. Schezen's photographs.] The apartment that the Freuds eventually occupied was unusually large; their first residence in the building was originally less expensive, Jones (1955, 1, 152) tells us, than that which they previously occupied in the Sühnhaus, the site of the Ringtheater that had burned down, with much loss of life. (Bettelheim does not discuss the choice of that initial residence.)

Be all of this as it may, I am tempted here to substitute my own associations with that area of the city to those of Bettelheim, and they are a great deal more personal. However, whether they shed any particular light on Freud and his motivations is doubtful. The stretch of Berggasse on which No. 19 is located, a flat stretch as Bettelheim insists, constitutes one side of a rough square of houses, with Porzellantasse at one end and Liechtensteinstrasse at the other. That street is so named because it leads out to the Liechtenstein Palais and its gardens, some of which were open to the public. When the Nazi regime closed city parks to Jews, the Liechtenstein Park remained open to us and my friends and I spent time there in that spring of 1938. But to return to Berggasse, the starting point of this discussion. Looking at these
apartment houses now, one of the striking differences from the inter-war period, the time of which various visitors to the Freud house speak, is the fact that Vienna is so very clean now. The buildings have been painted or sandblasted. They look bright and new, almost as fixed up for a fair. In the '20s and '30s Vienna was poor and shabby. Heating with wood and coal contributed to the drab and dirty look of the buildings, and this may well have contributed to the less than enthusiastic tone in which the various authors speak of the building and the street.

Going up the steep incline of the Berggasse, one faces the Anatomical Institute of the University, across the broad Währingerstrasse. The continuation street, however, is no longer the Berggasse but has a different name: Schwarzspanierstrasse -- the street of the Black Spaniard or Spanish Moor. There stands the house that was Beethoven's last residence and where he died. Beyond that is the Allgemeine Krankenhaus, the General Hospital. Walking in the other direction from the Freud house, across the Porzellantasse, one soon came to the Schubertschule, the school where Schubert's father was principal and where the composer himself is supposed to have taught for a while. The school no longer stands, but it was there, minimally modernized from its 18th century origins and equipped with gas light, when I attended third grade. Did Freud choose his residence between the old Beethoven and the young Schubert? Yet, given Beethoven's habit of changing residences, other locations could have been found in proximity to one of them.

What this discussion tells us is not why Freud and his family might or might not have wanted to live and work in a particular place. Rather, it tells us something about the historical density of Vienna.

In 1992, this matter of "historic density" pressed in on me. Travelling with an American friend, I exhibited a compulsion to explain, to show, to illustrate and cross-reference; I was, in short, the intolerable, incessant commentator, tour guide and lecturer. Quantities of information about the city, long stored away, were surfacing. The contrast to the radically unhistorical and
ahistorical American Midwest was intense. Here history has a time depth of a mere 200 years. Beyond that one quickly arrives at the world of Native Americans: protohistory, prehistory, archaeology. Nor is there any significant knowledge of history, or interest in it, among current generations of college students.

How is it that I was so deeply steeped in Vienna's past? And what do "steeped" and "past" mean? Clearly, I had been exposed to some version of that past in the early grades. Patriotism -- synonymous with "history" -- was intensely local, it seems to me, and, as much as possible, tied to specific sites and objects and monuments. The most dramatic stories centered about the Turkish sieges of the city at the beginning of the 16th and the end of the 17th century, and how the city was saved by Prince Eugene of Savoy and King Jan Sobieski of Poland. The monument to Prince Eugene, mounted on his charger, still stands in the Heldenplatz, the hero's square, in front of the imperial palace, the Hofburg. His own palace, the Belvedere, was the site of the treaty that, in 1955, freed Vienna (and Austria) from the post-war four-power occupation. That occupation was the theme of Orson Welles' film (and Graham Greene's novel), The Third Man. I recall seeing that film in Columbus about 1950, and being preoccupied less with the story than with attempts at identifying the various locales in the city -- even of having the sensation of seeing, in this black and white film, some things in color.

The Turks play a large part in Vienna's mythic past, where the city's heroic resistance stemmed the tide of invasion from the East and thereby saved Europe from the "savage" foe. And we learned the ballad about Prince Eugene, the "noble knight," who crossed the Danube, won back the city and the citadel of Belgrade for the Emperor, and beat the Turks. The red silken cord that, after his defeat, the Pasha sent his Grand Vizier Kara Mustafa to strangle himself, was still in the museum of the Rathaus. Much later, as a graduate student at Northwestern, I had occasion to compare this version to that of a Turkish fellow student, as she had been taught it in her school days.
The Turks abandoned sacks of coffee before Vienna in their rout, making possible that great invention, the Viennese Kaffeehaus and 18th century Europe's addiction to coffee. There is also the Kipfel, the Viennese crescent-shaped hard roll, ancestor to the French croissant. And there are traces of the Turkish presence in the names of streets and parks and, both caricatured and idealized, in Mozart's music. Today, there are sizable numbers of Turkish workers in Vienna. The struggles over Bosnia, with its Moslem minority, are a relic from that 17th century past, too.

In my school days this emphasis on Vienna's historic and mythic past was the more important, since the city had only recently lost its significance as the large, industrial, cosmopolitan capital, a center of artistic, intellectual and political life, of an old, extended, multiethnic empire. In the inter-war period of which I speak it was merely the disproportionately large head of a small, impoverished, backward, unindustrialized country. Schwarz (1992) calls it a "Wasserkopf," a hypertrophied, hydrocephalic head on a puny body.

Much of my learning and feeling about Vienna comes from my parents. Both were intensely attached to the city and suffered greatly from its loss, among the many other losses. Much of what I know, or thought I knew, was learned or gleaned in walks with one or the other or both. "Spaziergehen," walking for pleasure as well as exercise, was considered a significant part of daily activity, taken as a measure of hygiene in a city fearfully poisoned by tuberculosis and rickets. My mother, a physician, held strong views on health and hygiene. Walking was to be enjoyed, taking pleasure in the city and in each other's company. Returning to the city after long summer vacations in the country was something to look forward to.

For Vienna, now a city with virtually no industrial production, the past -- or a version of it -- has been a major commodity and economic asset in the post-WWII period. The city has capitalized on its history and legend, its music and art, on the names of its great artists and intellectuals, as well as on the country's status as a neutral in the now-ended Cold War. It is a
center of international traffic: tourism, refugees and international conferences play a major role in the city's self image as in its economy.

Grasping the visible history, however, is a complicated matter. There are traces of the past to be seen: the Middle Ages, the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Red Vienna and post-war democracy. There are archaeological sites, visible in several preserved locations in the Inner City. These go down many layers, to Roman times, when Vienna, Vindobona, was the site of a military camp. Marcus Aurelius wrote, fought and died there. We learned that in school, too. Other periods are less visible: the Austro-Fascism of the 1933-38 period, the Nazi period; much of that has been excised.

Traces of the past have been interlaced with reconstructions and enhanced by the general clean-up mentioned earlier, and by massive quantities of Habsburg kitsch -- from the names of hotels to the horsedrawn fiacres and their drivers. While Vienna was bombed relatively little during World War II, compared to many other European cities, some historic sites were severely damaged, such as St. Stephan's Cathedral and the Opera. In 1992, at some of these sites, detailed photographic displays documented the destruction and the miracle of the recovery. Many of these structures have been rebuilt in minute detail. But now they are, to a significant extent, copies, facsimiles of their historic selves, no longer quite the real thing.

The Czech novelist Ivan Klima, writing about Prague during the Communist regime, says in one of his books: "In our country, everything is forever remade: beliefs, buildings, street names. Sometimes the progress of time is concealed, at others feigned, so long as nothing remains as real and truthful testimony" (Klima 1991, 45). These lines could be applicable to Vienna, too. I have been told that parts of the Schönbrunn Palace and grounds have been placed under commercial management, and that such undertakings are being considered for parts of the Hofburg, the imperial palace, also. Are we to think of the ancient cities of Europe as theme parks representing themselves?
It was a surprise to me to see so much of the physical presence of the city apparently unchanged. Indeed, New York, Chicago or Columbus have changed a great deal more in the years I have known these cities. Vienna, however, appears to have been rejuvenated, the clock turned back to a past that never was. The mixture of the old and the new, the new masquerading as old and the old as new, all that has been part of Vienna for a long time. Thus, as a child, I thought the buildings of the Ringstrasse did indeed date to the historic periods to which their styles pointed: the Gothic Rathaus, the Renaissance University, and so on. In fact, however, these constructions and the whole broad avenue circling the old city core are the product of a massive "urban renewal" effort of the period between 1860 and 1890. In contrast to other European capitals, Vienna maintained its fortifications and military terrains to the middle of the 19th century, a time when most of its population lived in several bands of communities circling the inner core. The Ring consists of a series of buildings, in competing styles, constructed virtually simultaneously. The architecture thus alludes to various historic periods, including the modern.

To be fair, the physical aspect of the general clean-up that struck me is not unique to Vienna. The cleaning of buildings arguably can be traced to Malraux's much criticized initiative in Paris during his tenure as Minister of Culture. Then too, there is a notable British "National Heritage" industry, active in the creation or reinforcement of legends. Statues are gilded in New York as well as Vienna; tourism and its attendant kitsch are all pervasive. Yet Vienna has some special features of its own, given its particular and peculiar history. Kitsch involves the selection of specific icons to represent the "essence" of the city to tourists -- what they know about the city, and what the city, i.e., its representatives, wants them to know about it. And not incidentally, what the city, so personified, wants to know, to remember, about itself. What is selected, then, may be seen as an expression of the city's self image, putting its best foot forward, as it were. The elements selected are primarily visual and musical, which is helpful since they
require only minimal translation. For the native speaker, however, there are tones and overtones. For the visiting native, the use of visual and auditory modes involves levels of perception and meaning that are particularly direct and inarticulate, stirring up further memories, visual and auditory, that are distorted by a need to put them into words.

The "rejuvenation" process of the city involves the internal upgrading of buildings, too, not only the treatment of the façades. Buildings could be seen that were in the process of reconstruction; in some cases only the external walls were left, hollow shells shielded by netting. The largest of these ghostly structures that I saw was the military barracks on the Stiftgasse. To my startled surprise, a massive tower loomed over it. It turned out that there are several such structures, built during the war as platforms for anti-aircraft guns. Too solid to tear down, they have remained as ambiguous monuments. The one in the middle of the Esterhaszy Park has been turned into an aquarium. Across the street, the Appollo movie theater, that had brought Mickey Mouse to Vienna and where I had seen Charlie Chaplin in Modern Times, is still there.

In Vienna, Esterhaszy is a name to conjure with. It brings to mind Haydn, Beethoven and Schubert, but also my nanny and the Dreyfus Affair. The "nanny" (Kinderfrau) was a woman of fifty who took care of me afternoons, when my mother went to work. Never married, and born in Vienna, she had a Slavic name and was a Catholic. She disapproved of my parents, not only for being Jewish but also for their lack of religious observance and their Social Democratic and "modern" attitudes. She disliked the things my mother read to me -- Dr. Doolittle and Winnie the Pooh. She brought me old issues of Die Gartenlaube, a conservative German magazine, full of stories with themes of Spring and lilacs, of tubercular girls with attachments to noble young men, girls dying of broken hearts. She would have liked to convert me, to save my soul, but she knew that my father, if he found out that she was taking me to church, could be scathing in his antireligious sarcasm. She did convert our maid, who, to the distress of her parents, became a
The nanny read Das kleine Kirchenblatt, a church sponsored paper. And I recall -- I could not have been more than 6 or 7 -- her showing me a story about the terrible accusations that had been made against an officer, an Esterhaszy, about spying, when it had all been done by a Jew called Dreyfus. I knew even then that there was something wrong with that story, that it was anti-Semitic slander. I don't remember asking my parents about it, but I do recall a queasy feeling of discomfort. In 1938, not long after the Anschluss, the nanny came to visit us on a Sunday afternoon. It had been several years since we had seen her, we had moved, and I don't know how she found us. She was older and stouter, and wore her Sunday best suit, with a swastika in her lapel. She came to inquire about our well being, asked how we were, about other family members she had known and generally carried on a pleasant social conversation. It seemed a visit of condolence. That was the last I ever saw or heard of her.

Historical writing in the Soviet Union, where revisionism was blatant, was frequently the butt of jokes in the United States. However, the rewriting of history in Austria seems just as blatant. At the site of the Gestapo building on the Morzin Square, near the Danube Canal, there is a small structure dedicated, it says, "to the victims of Fascism" by the "Federal Capital City Vienna." That is, this is a municipal, not a national, memorial. Decorated with a pink triangle on the left and a yellow Star of David on the right, its inscription, all in capital letters reads (my translation):

NEVER FORGOTTEN

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3 The German text reads:
NIEMALS VERGESSEN
HIER STAND DAS HAUS DER GESTAPO/ ES WAR FÜR DIE BEKENNER/
ÖSTERREICHS DIE HölLE/ ES WAR FÜR VIELE VON IHNEN/ DER VORHOF
DES TODES/ ES IST IN TRÜMMER GESUNKEN/ WIE DAS TAUSENDJÄHRIGE/
REICH ÖSTERREICH ABER/ IST WIEDERAUFERSTANDEN/ UND MIT IHN
UNSERE TOTEN/ DIE UNSTERBLICHEN OPFER.
HERE STOOD THE HOUSE OF THE GESTAPO/ IT WAS HELL FOR THOSE WHO
BELIEVED IN AUSTRIA/ FOR MANY OF THEM/ IT WAS THE FORECOURT TO
DEATH/ IT FELL INTO RUINS/ LIKE THE THOUSAND YEAR/ REICH AUSTRIA
HOWEVER/ REVIVED/ AND WITH IT OUR DEAD/ THE IMMORTAL VICTIMS.

This is a thoroughly opaque text, incomprehensible to those who do not know or do not wish to know.

The translation is difficult. One might read the heading as an admonition: "never forget." The word "Bekenner," here translated as "those who believed in," has a strong religious connotation, as in "one who professes" a religion. The revival, more literally resurrection, of Austria, too has a religious connotation. It is stated with the use of an active verb, suggesting an absence of complicity. The sacrificial victims ("Opfer" stands for both victim and sacrifice) are "our" dead, and immortal. Who were these victims? Homosexuals and Jews, as the symbols suggest? And the killers, only Nazi Germans -- the Gestapo and the Third Reich? I can do no better than to quote Egon Schwarz (1992, 31), who writes:

The myth, entirely unbelievable for anyone who was there, irrespective of side, that Austria was a victim and not an agent of fascism, undoubtedly brought political advantages, but causes a blunting of intelligence ("Verdummung") and other psychic damages among those who suddenly begin to believe it themselves. (My translation)

Schwarz (1992, 318) notes something ghostly ("gespensterisch") about Vienna: "a sinful past, which must return again and again, because it has not been liquidated." (my translation)

4 Der Mythos, völlig unglaublich für jeden der dabei war, egal auf welcher Seite, Österreich sei ein Opfer und nicht ein Agent des Fascismus gewesen, hat zweifellos politische Vorteile gebracht, aber er erzeugt Verdummung und andere psychische Schäden, bei denen die plötzlich beginnen, selbst daran zu glauben.
I, too, noted a ghostliness, a spookiness, about Vienna, even before reading these words. For me, it took several forms: the netted shells of buildings mentioned earlier are perhaps its most concrete expression. There was the apparent, artificial "sameness" of the city, when so much had changed. Most powerfully, it was felt in the absence of a significant portion of the population. No one I had known, none of their descendants. Most of the tiny Jewish community of Vienna are recent arrivals. And the knowledge of why there was this absence -- it was not due to the orderly processes of the passage of time over the long span of 54 years. The synagogue my grandparents attended had been destroyed in 1938 during the infamous Kristallnacht. But in the absence of the people, there is their ghostly presence, in the names of stores and businesses, whether they were purchased, at crisis prices, or "Aryanized" -- confiscated that is, thus presenting an appearance of continuity and normalcy in the absence of normal continuity. A well-meaning person explained it all to me: The Viennese are conservative people and the stores had established reputations, vouchsafed by the continuity of the names. But who would remember that now?\footnote{5 See Lore Segal's account of a visit to the Austrian town she had left in 1938, as a child.}

It has often been noted that historically, anti-Semitism was endemic in Vienna to a greater extent than in Germany. Schwarz (1992, 318) (my translation) notes that "anti-Semitism lies deep, so deep, that it no longer needs Jews at all to nourish it." As to the events of the Spring of 1938, immediately after the Anschluss, Walter (1992, 346), in his appendix to Schwarz's book, speaks of them as a "pandemonium," and of "the hounding of Jews as popular celebration." He says "Judenhatz als Volksfest." The dictionary defines Hatz as "hunt, coursing; pack of hounds; rout; tumultuous revelry." It was all of that.

There is a presence of the Jews in their very absence. The Jewish section of the Central cemetery has been vandalized. And Jews and their history have become a commodity. There is
a Jewish Welcome Service, and there was a touring exhibition entitled "Heritage and Mission: Jewish Vienna." It says that Jews had lived in Vienna for more than ten centuries.

And then there is the Freud Museum.⁶

Other return visitors have remarked to me that the first visit is "difficult." Afterwards, it seems, cicatrization takes over, there are some positive new experiences, with people and landscapes, and a blunting of affect. It is, then, perhaps worthwhile to record these impressions while they remain fresh and relatively undigested.

I read little about Vienna over the years and have never done so systematically. The collection of essays on Fin-de-Siècle Vienna by the American historian Carl Schorske (1980), dealing with Vienna's politics and culture at the end of the 19th century fascinated me, as did somewhat later the massive volume on the same period published by the Centre Pompidou in Paris (Clair 1986) documenting an extensive exhibition that had, several years earlier, been initiated in Vienna. That exhibition was originally entitled 'Traum und Wirklichkeit: Wien 1870-1930.' (Dream and Reality: Vienna 1870-1930.). The French exhibition was called "Apocalypse Joyeuse" -- the Gay Apocalypse, after an expression coined by Hermann Broch. Indeed, talk of the apocalypse was much in the air. Levine (1979) taking note of the writings as well as the paintings of Franz Mark, calls his study of that artist The Apocalyptic Vision. Haskell (1993, 25) writes "Talk of the Apocalypse was heard throughout Europe in the decades around 1900." That the Apocalypse might be "joyous" would then be a Viennese peculiarity -- a denial of the obvious, or, at least, of what appears so obvious with the cleverness of hindsight.

Waissenberger, the initial organizer of the Viennese exhibition, writes (1984, 7):

[N]owhere else was the premonition of change, of impending collapse, so much in

⁶Charney (1993) speaks of the "dead-Jews tourist trade" of Prague. Under the heading "Rock the Ghetto" The Prague Post (4-10 August 1993) announced a musical festival to promote the preservation and reconstruction of the Jewish ghetto of Boskovice in Moravia.
evidence....Art represented in some degree a reaction to the disquieting nature of reality." And he speaks of the reaction of artists as "prophetic." In the same volume, Leupold-Löwenthal (1984, 101) speaks of Vienna's "collective defense mechanism in which reality is subordinate to fantasy." Curiously, these references concern primarily the period just prior to World War I and the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, rather than the continuing disasters of the interwar period and the Anschluss. (Indeed, while the Pompidou exhibition and book takes its subject to 1938 and what it calls "Finis Austriae," Waissenberger is satisfied to leave his subject earlier, in 1930, or even 1920.

As Jean Clair (1986, 46) writes in his introduction to the Pompidou volume (my translation):

That Vienna, at the turn of the century, and more particularly between 1897 and 1907 -- the decade during which Mahler was the director of the Opera -- was the geographic locus of an ensemble of political events, of ideological gambles, of artistic and literary creations of such importance that we are still today in their debt -- no one would think to deny.

That is pretty strong stuff.

What was suggested here was that there was not only the Vienna of my childhood experience, but Vienna as an historical and intellectual problem, a city whose politics and art, music and literature could explain much of the 20th century. George Steiner (1980), in his review of Schorske's book, points to the author's glaring omission of philosophy and science of Vienna. Not only Freud and psychoanalysis but also Mach and Wittgenstein and Carnap must be considered. Vienna, in the critical time period, might explain the two world wars and Hitler, as well as much of modern art, architecture, music and literature. Yet, seen from the perspective of U.S. teaching of, for example, history and literature, one might not know that Vienna ever existed. The only names that come readily to mind are Johann Strauss and Sigmund Freud.
I did find my memories of Vienna remarkably revived by auditing a course -- a very exceptional course -- on Vienna on the interwar period, taught in 1991 by two colleagues, specialists, respectively, in German and Yiddish languages and literatures. About the same time I read C. Zuckmayer's (1966) memories of prewar Austria, the Anschluss, his dramatic escape, and his and his wife's war time stay in the U.S. I have been struck by how much of my memory of events has been confirmed by that of other, more adult observers, and how much my current impressions have been confirmed by the impressions of others. My parents, who died in this country many years ago, never returned to Vienna. My mother occasionally fantasized about it, in a humorous way.

My reading, in German, of what has come to be known as Exilliteratur is quite recent, in fact, for the most part -- and I haven't read much -- it post-dates this trip. There is now a considerable body of literature by and about German speaking artists and intellectuals who arrived in this country as refugees from Hitler in the period 1933 to 1941, that is, between Hitler's rise to power and U.S. entry into the war (e.g., Heilbut 1983). These writings refer to people who arrived here as established artists or scholars, or in their twenties, with their careers initiated. Most of them came from Germany, and most, but clearly not all, were Jewish. So far, those who were in their teens have not received much attention. However, as members of what I must loosely call my "cohort," reach retirement and look back on their lives, autobiographic statements begin to appear. Noteworthy among these is a volume by the literary scholar Egon Schwarz (1992), whom I have cited.7

7 Special mention should be made here of the work of A. Wimmer (1990), Professor of Anglistik and Amerikanistik at the Universität Klagenfurt, who is interested in the exile experience of Austrian Anschluss victims. He notes that some 63,500 Jews, about a third of the pre-war Jewish population of Austria, unable to escape, was deported and murdered.
On rereading this paper, I note an error in my use of the past tense in the very first sentence. I write "Vienna ... was the place where I was born." After all, one might say, Vienna "is." Or is it? That question may well be the meaning of that *Fehlleistung*, and the sense of this essay.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


Vienna’s forward-thinking spirit is underscored at Mumok in the MuseumsQuartier. A dark-gray cube clad in basalt stone, this modern art museum is home to quirky collections that draw from Pop Art, Photorealism, Fluxus, and Nouveau Réalisme. Exhibitions change often, highlighting a range of works from Cécile B. Evans to Bruno Gironcoli. The soaring central hall at MAK. Photo: Katrin Wißkirchen / Courtesy of MAK. Planted on a banquette, beneath a staggering vaulted ceiling, it’s clear this Old World hangout at the base of Palais Ferstel remains just as atmospheric as on the day it debuted in 1876. The Hotel Sacher, a longtime Viennese institution, is worth stopping by for a slice of its namesake torte. Photo: Courtesy of Hotel Sacher. And so a legendary partnership began: Mozart and Vienna, which go together like Beethoven and Vienna. Or Schubert and…, well, you get the message. This truly is a city of music. See also location guides for: Haydn | Schubert | Beethoven | Strauss. Weihburggasse 3: Mozart lived here on a visit to Vienna in the autumn of 1767. It’s now the Hotel Kaiserin Elisabeth. He’s not the only prominent musical guest to grace the corridors of the building. These are for the dedicated collector of Mozart memories: Café Mozart (Albertinaplatz 2): The first coffee house on this spot dates back to 1794. Café Mozart received its current name in 1929, in honour of the Mozart monument then located opposite. The sights of Vienna will delight you. On wien.info you will find out which sights in Vienna are not to be missed. Want to know what are the places to visit in Vienna so that you don’t miss a thing? Here’s an overview of all of them, from the magnificent Baroque buildings to Art Nouveau, to the latest architecture. And over 100 museums beckon.