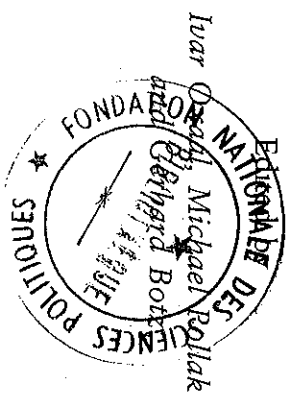


JEW, ANTISEMITISM AND CULTURE
IN VIENNA



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post-war extremist movements. In 1980 he emigrated to Israel and now teaches modern European and Jewish history at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. He has written a number of highly regarded books, including *Revolutionary Jews from Marx to Trotsky*, 1976; *Socialism and the Jews: The Dilemmas of Assimilation in Germany and Austria-Hungary*, 1982; and *Hitler's Apocalypse: Jews and the Nazi Legacy*, 1985. His history of the Jews of Vienna from 1848 to 1916 is in press.

EDITORS' INTRODUCTION: PERSPECTIVES AND PROBLEMS

This book has as its principal concern the attempt to show how the development of political antisemitism during this century might be explored in relation to certain cultural legacies and sociological characteristics which, while not unique to Austria or Vienna, were, for reasons to be suggested, perhaps more highly developed there than elsewhere in central Europe. The volume is the product of a colloquium deliberately organized along interdisciplinary lines with contributions from political and cultural historians, sociologists and witnesses of some of the relevant historical events, coming from Austria, Israel, France, England and the United States. We hope that the intersection of approaches and interests to which this combination of concerns and origins gave rise will shed some new light on familiar historical milestones and archetypes in the history of central European culture and antisemitism. We also hope that, while our primary intention is to present new studies and findings for the student of this subject and period, we have ensured that sufficient factual information is included, particularly in the earlier chapters, to enable the non-specialist to grasp the underlying sequence of developments.

Inevitably in a collective project such as this, important events and issues have had to be omitted or lightly passed over. But these studies do not, of course, stand alone. The present volume is only one additional building block in an edifice of research and conceptual analysis dating back many years. As early as 1893, the Viennese literary activist Hermann Bahr was conducting extensive interviews with a galaxy of leading European thinkers and public figures of the day, soliciting their personal views on the already contentious issue of *Der Antisemitismus*. About the same time Marxists, including the

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Viennese-based Social Democrats, were evolving the theory – still widely held today, even by non-Marxists – that the disturbing new use of antisemitism for the purpose of winning elections and gaining party adherents was to be regarded as a byproduct of the social conflicts created by the upheavals generated by liberal capitalism; that is, by the encroachment of large-scale industry and competitive (in the Viennese case, semi-competitive) market principles in the social and political as well as the economic sphere. The Marxist interpretation of political antisemitism as a type of false class consciousness which exploits traditional feudal stereotypes of the heartless Jewish moneylender in order to assign all the blame for the evils of capitalism to the Jews, bears such a close logical resemblance to the Freudian concepts of mechanisms of psychological projection and displaced aggression, that the eventual eclectic combination of elements from the Marxist with the Freudian paradigm in the work of Erich Fromm, Theodor Adorno and other members of the Frankfurt School – spanning the period from Weimar Germany and the rise of Nazism to post-Second World War America and beyond – seems in retrospect not only a logical, but an inevitable, conceptual progression. By the time that Peter Pulzer published his classic, and still essential, *The Rise of Political Anti-Semitism in Germany and Austria* in 1964 he had available a set of more or less already generic insights which he employed in a versatile manner in the interpretation of the psychological, cultural and economic aspects of antisemitism.

Antisemitism has loomed so large in Austrian and Viennese political history over the past century that its social and cultural ramifications have been ubiquitous and deep. The unparalleled influence of the cultural historian Carl Schorske in recent years, however, has not rested chiefly on his analysis of antisemitism but rather on his attempt to achieve a holistic yet intimate portrait of Viennese culture and society during the period coinciding with the high-point of political antisemitism in the city before 1914. The international acclaim which greeted the publication of his collected essays in 1980, *Fin-de-Siècle Vienna: Politics and Culture*, included a public ceremony in Vienna where he was held up as an example to Austrian scholars by Chancellor Bruno Kreisky. This high distinction was, for many admiring fellow scholars in the English-speaking world, merely a belated tribute to the stimulation and inspiration which Schorske's separately-published essays over the previous fifteen years had already conferred on those who, like several contributors to this volume, followed his footsteps to the archives,

libraries and museums in the quest of Freud's, Wittgenstein's or Herzl's Vienna. As must come to pass, however, the research and ongoing scholarship which he helped to set in motion have continued, with the consequence that there has now begun to appear a new generation of criticism and research, accompanied by stirrings of discontent with what are regarded as Schorske's leaps of interpretation or thinly-supported phenomenological procedures. Examples of this admiring, but critical, tendency will be found below.

A third component in our exploration of Viennese antisemitism, largely ignored until the present, is the study of the origins and social composition of the Viennese Jewish community itself. Several of our chapters attempt to delineate major internal features of that community. Although Austrian scholars have produced valuable historical studies of the Jews in Austria, there has been no attempt to supplement the accounts of the earlier histories by writers like Fietze with modern systematic accounts of Viennese Jewry in the present century. Thus the studies reported here have had to rely mainly on original digging into archival and other primary sources with the result that they may appear to the non-specialist as narrowly-focused and, in the first two chapters, overly statistical. The excellent study by Marsha L. Rozenblit, *The Jews of Vienna 1867-1914*, published in 1983, overlaps with that of several contributors to this volume, but with some contradictory results and interpretive differences on the question of Jewish assimilation in Vienna which remain unresolved.

The intersection, and the conscious attempt to try to link up studies of Viennese antisemitism with the city's cultural history and its Jewish social history constitute, then, the major objective of the first seven chapters of this book, those covering the closing years of the Habsburg era to the First World War. The emphasis in the chapters dealing with the subsequent periods concentrate on the development of Viennese antisemitism itself up to the Holocaust and beyond. Thus, we have followed, as far as possible, a chronological organization for the volume. Without attempting to provide an exhaustive set of thematic cross-references to the various individual approaches represented here, it may assist the reader to anticipate briefly some of the major issues and relationships.

The introductory chapter by Ivar Oxal has as its primary aim the provision of a preparatory overview of the history, origins, location and other sociological features of Viennese Jews in the immediate

pre-First World War society. As the author points out, a clearer picture of the actual structure of the Viennese community should help to dispel the hazy and impressionistic generalizations about that community, and Viennese antisemitism, which historians have frequently had to fall back on in the absence of reliable data. An issue which arises from Oxaal's re-analysis of Viennese occupational statistics for 1910 is to what extent the untypical pattern of Jewish occupations and economic status gave support to the antisemitic 'Socialism of Fools' in the Vienna of Karl Lueger and the young Adolf Hitler, whose shadow, of course, falls over the subsequent history of antisemitism throughout Europe. A continuing dialogue with Pulzer's pioneering work on this issue is explicitly indicated here, while the concern shown with the long-term historical dimension of antisemitism, in relation to the precarious and marginal position of Jews in Vienna over the centuries, can be read as a case study of the broader themes in Jewish history explored by Hannah Arendt in *The Origins of Totalitarianism* and other writings.

Steven Beller's contribution in the second chapter is also based on quantitative research, in this case aimed at discovering the degree to which the creators and publics of Viennese bourgeois culture in the terminal Habsburg era could be identified as coming from Jewish backgrounds. Beller's starting point is a sense of unease over what he regards as Schorske's reluctance to credit the Jewish presence in Vienna with any particular significance – except to serve as the butt of antisemitism. He is also concerned with the lack of specificity in Schorske's use of the term 'liberal bourgeoisie'. If Viennese culture was, as Schorske had argued, to an important extent a product of the failure of that class to gain social and political ascendancy, would it not be important to ask – given the admitted salience of antisemitism – to what extent that bourgeoisie was in fact Jewish? The answers to this apparently simple question were not easy to come by, but Beller supplies the first rigorous attempt to arrive at an approximation of the actual situation. He does not attempt here to go beyond indicating the degree to which the *personnel* of the Viennese cultural explosion were of Jewish descent. He raises, but does not have the scope here to answer, the equally interesting question of whether Jewish ethnic origins played a significant role in determining the *style* and *content* of Viennese culture – a charge laid against the Jews by the antisemites who raged against the *verjudung* of the Viennese press, theatre, literature, music, and cultural life generally, as a phenomenon involving both alien personnel and content.

Exploration of this problem is continued in the following chapter by Michael Pollak, but from a different approach. Pollak regards Schorske's attribution of central features of Viennese culture to the psychological consequences of the failure of liberalism as but a special case in a much wider historical process. Pollak shows that it is possible to deduce the wide variety of forms – literary, artistic, intellectual, political – of the Viennese *fin-de-siècle* from a consideration of the impact of a collapse of confidence in the future of the multinational Habsburg empire itself. This loss of confidence spawned new political movements like Pangermanism and Catholic, Christian Social antisemitism which intensified the pressures on the assimilating Jewish bourgeoisie and forced the population into warring camps, out of which arose collective crises of personal identities – of which the Jewish variants were perhaps the most acute, but not unique, manifestations. These conflicts, mediated through the personal experiences structured by the macro-political situation then found expression in the wide range of cultural and political tendencies – aestheticism, psychoanalysis, Austro-Marxism, Zionism – which gave Viennese bourgeois culture its distinctive concerns and flavour. It will be recognized that this dynamic, multi-level situational analysis represents a far cry from the tendency of either antisemites or some cultural historians simply to identify in an *ad hoc* manner 'Jewish' ethnic traits in the work of cultural innovators of this period.

Chapter 4 by Allan Janik, focussing on a critique of the Jewish self-hatred hypothesis, represents a personal protest against what the author regards as the over-reliance on psychological interpretations of Viennese culture. For Janik, whose co-authorship of *Wittgenstein's Vienna* produced a durable classic in the history of philosophy, neither Freud nor Schorske, nor even Pollak, are completely satisfactory guides to features of Viennese cultural life in the late Habsburg era. His basic concern is to argue that reductionist historical models of creative activity are, if not illegitimate in principle, nevertheless dangerous and difficult to substantiate empirically. He argues that modes of explanation of Viennese culture stressing psycho-pathological causal influences cannot be demonstrated even with reference to that Viennese almost universally styled as a textbook case of Jewish self-hatred, Otto Weininger. Weininger, Janik insists – in a polemic directed mainly at Peter Gay's interpretation of the Viennese thinker as a self-hating Jew in *Freud, Jews and Other Germans* – must be understood, at least in part, in

terms of the scientific paradigms fashionable in his own time; and in terms of his, admittedly muddled, attempts to employ typologies based on race and gender to convey more general concepts. Janik is also concerned to remind the reader of the origins of the concept of 'Jewish self-hatred' in the racist writings of Theodor Lessing, and attempts to show how the implications of its use by the pioneering social psychologist Kurt Lewin indicates how it might be more legitimately employed, although he remains clearly dubious of the tendency to attribute unique psychological dilemmas to the interpretation of the situation of Jews in general, and Viennese Jews in particular.

Chapters 5 and 6 both directly address, again for the late Habsburg period, the issue of what has sometimes been referred to as the 'endemic' character of antisemitism in Austria. Sigurd Paul Scheichl, approaching the problem from the standpoint of the literary historian, and as a leading interpreter of the great Viennese satirist Karl Kraus, argues for the need to distinguish between different types and degrees of anti-Jewish sentiment. Not everyone who uttered anti-Jewish attitudes were dyed-in-the-wool antisemites. The real antisemites were those supporters of von Schönener and Lueger who advocated institutionalized discrimination and racism, and should be distinguished from intellectuals whose expressed enmity toward Jews was part of an anti-liberal backlash, or the expression of the everyday interethnic hostilities of the multinational society. Scheichl urges that it is unfair to include those who, like Weininger and Kraus, utilized anti-Jewish imagery, *Judenfeindschaft*, as a part of their critique of modern Viennese society, in the same category with the real political forerunners of the Nazis. Scheichl's essay is an undisciplined apologia which poses the critical, complex and unresolved issue in Austrian historiography of the responsibility which may have to be assigned for the victory of antisemitism during the 1930s to the uncritical resort to anti-Jewish language and imagery — indistinguishable from that employed by the malevolent political antisemites — by the pre-First World War generation of Viennese intellectuals, many of whom happened to be Jewish.

At the outset of his paper Scheichl suggests that the habitual anti-Jewish rhetoric of the Viennese socialists should not be mistaken for genuine antisemitism. Despite the overlapping vocabularies of abuse, the *Arbeiter-Zeitung* was politically poles apart from the antisemitic press such as the *Reichspost*. This brings his analysis, as he is aware, on to that historical terrain which Robert Wistrich has made his own

in a series of major studies. Scheichl observes that Wistrich also has recognized the need to distinguish between degrees and types of anti-Jewish attitudes and behaviour but feels that the latter scholar has, in his previous work, emphasized the similarities between the Social Democrats and the antisemitic movements rather than the gulf in the political objectives which separated them. In chapter 6, however, Wistrich provides a concise account of the way he sees the relationship between the Viennese Social Democrats and antisemitism, which indicates that he regards the primary issue not so much one of the degree of anti-Jewish motivation as the actual consequences of the opportunistic policy of the Social Democratic leaders, including assimilated Jews like Otto Bauer and Victor Adler, to attempt to outdo even the Christian Social Party in pandering to the traditional anti-Jewish reflexes of the masses. What was even worse, perhaps, was the fact that the exploitation of antisemitism by the socialists derived from a presumably infallible Marxist theoretical analysis concerning the inevitability of the collapse of capitalism, and with it antisemitism, and hence it was not only permissible but even imperative to play the antisemitic game for political purposes because to do so would hasten the day when the primary cause of antisemitism, the class struggle under capitalism, would come to an abrupt end. In this process the felt need to distance the largely Jewish-descended leadership from the charge that they were soft on Jewish capitalism undoubtedly played a subsidiary role, as did the tendency toward social and psychological distancing by the assimilationist leaders from the growing numbers of uncouth, and much-reviled, *Ostjuden* who were increasingly prominent in the city's more ghettoized districts. In any case, the net result of socialist policy on the Jewish Question, Wistrich concludes, was to make antisemitism even more respectable.

Meanwhile, as Walter Weitzmann shows in chapter 7, the conservative stance maintained by the leaders of the organized Jewish religious congregation in Vienna, the *Israelitische Kulturgemeinde*, ensured that no major assault on antisemitism would arise from that quarter. Regarding the emperor as the ultimate, and indeed proven, protector of their major rights in civil society, and viewing the official state ideology of multinationalism as highly compatible with the preservation of Jewish religion and culture, observant middle-class Jews could acquiesce in the policy of maintaining a low profile for the *Kulturgemeinde* in external politics, directing most of their energies to the internal life and politics of the community. A notable

exception to this tendency was the famous rabbi from the Viennese suburb of Floridsdorf, Josef Bloch, who, from his seat in the Reichsrat and by means of his own weekly newspaper, waged a one-man crusade against antisemitism and related evils. Weitzmann reveals, however, that not even Rabbi Bloch was receptive to the appeals of political Zionism launched by the Viennese writer Theodor Herzl. The attempt made by Herzl and his band of Zionist followers to wrest control of the Kultusgemeinde through participation in its periodic elections came to naught in the pre-1914 period. Only after the destruction of the monarchy and the upheavals of the First World War, including the temporary influx of Galician *Ostjuden* as war refugees into Vienna, did the Kultusgemeinde acquire a pro-Zionist Chief Rabbi and a greater involvement in the menacing political struggles of the interwar period.

Writers on Austrian antisemitism appear divided in their assessment of whether the First World War represents such a radical fracture in Austrian consciousness that the increasingly acute manifestations of this ideology during the interwar period should be regarded as a phenomenon which is essentially discontinuous with the Habsburg variants. As will be seen, Bernd Marin's history of Austrian antisemitism in chapter 12 is at pains to periodize the setting and functions of antisemitism in various epochs. The consensus emerging out of the colloquium on which this volume is based, however, seemed to side strongly with the view that developments in the German-speaking Austrian rump of the dismantled empire, and most particularly developments in the capital city itself, were highly continuous with the prewar situation, involving strong continuities in political culture, parties and personnel. In chapter 8, Bruce Paulley traces both some of those continuities and the unique developments arising out of the crises of the First Republic. Christian Social antisemitism continued as a major force as part of the increasingly ferocious struggle between the Right and Left, fanned by the flames of economic crisis and the promotion of antisemitism to the status of government policy in Nazi Germany.

For our colloquium Richard Thieberger provided a rich and fascinating account of what it was like to come to intellectual maturity as an assimilated Viennese Jew during the postwar era, an account which is reproduced in chapter 9 and which provides at least some insight into the commitment of young Jews to cultural creativity in interwar Vienna, despite the protracted crisis which threatened the very survival of the Austrian polity and the first

manifestations of state-sanctioned antisemitism. The tragic *dénoûment* of that long process for the Viennese population has often been portrayed as the consequence of the takeover of the country by the invading German Nazis, leading to the *Anschluss* of 1938. But the reconstruction of subsequent events in Austria provided by Gerhard Botz in chapter 10 suggests a very different and, for the historical reputation of Vienna, sinister and horrific scenario. The major emphasis of Botz's account of policies toward the Jews after the German invasion is that it was the Viennese themselves who spontaneously, and with great enthusiasm, initiated the most brutal assaults on Jews, and Jewish assets, to such an extent that the occupying authorities were obliged, in the interests of 'law and order', to rein in their Viennese colleagues — before, that is, they themselves applied elsewhere the lessons learned in Vienna: mass expropriation of Jewish homes and capital in order to fund the 'socialist' welfare programmes of National Socialism, which in Vienna had enhanced the standard of living of tens of thousands of righteous citizens.

There is a sour, but none the less fortunate, irony to be found in the fact that the precocious talent for Jewish persecution in Vienna meant that the majority of the Jewish population were forced to take flight before the remorseless and unconditional policy of mass extermination came into effect in 1942. An immense literature exists on the various avenues of escape taken by Jews before the Holocaust consumed the majority of the remainder, but our colloquium yielded the remarkable case of the Viennese Jews who fled to the Orient, to Shanghai. Françoise Kreissler's account of that distant refuge for 'Wiener Juden' provides ample testimony to the resilience and courage of the far-flung Viennese Diaspora, members of whom have remained creative and prominent to the present writing.

Our colloquium concludes with two highly contrasting chapters which aim to provide a degree of theoretical summation and, indeed, personal catharsis. The theoretical summation is provided by Bernd Marin in chapter 12. Marin has conducted both pioneering empirical studies into the continuing antisemitic attitudes which Viennese and Austrians generally continue to hold, even after the Holocaust, and has developed a comprehensive theoretical and historical interpretation of the total process which we have been considering in these pages. His chapter will, we believe, provide that level of theoretical grasp, however conditional, which the subject deserves. His debt to the earlier studies of antisemitism by members of the Frankfurt School and their successors in the United States and central Europe is

manifest. At the same time, he provides a contemporary social-scientific updating of antisemitism in the Second Republic. It has been regarded as a sad and shocking fact by many observers that Vienna and Austria, for reasons cogently objectified and analysed by Marin, have managed, in the main – despite some worthy projects in public education – both to avoid and evade their complicity in the tragic events of the Nazi era. The skeletons mouldering in the family closet have, however, a persistent tendency to wreak revenge on the complacent present: The election in 1986 to the Presidency of the Austrian Republic of the former Secretary-General of the United Nations, Dr Kurt Waldheim, despite, or perhaps even partially because of, revelations concerning his formerly concealed service with the German army in the Balkans during the Second World War, and his physical proximity to the mass deportation of Jews from Salonika in northern Greece, was only the most publicized of the numerous ‘affairs’ concerning the Nazi past of Austria which displayed the Austrian talent for selective historical recall analysed by Bernd Marin.

The editors have felt it appropriate, however, to leave the last word to a survivor of Viennese and Nazi antisemitism, George Clare, a writer of rare honesty and spirit whose best-selling family history and autobiography *Last Waltz in Vienna*, covering three generations of Viennese Jews, has provided mere academic scholars with much understanding and guidance into the history of Jewish life in Vienna before the Holocaust. Despite having himself been forced to take flight from the city at the time of the Nazi takeover, and the subsequent transport of both his parents to the Auschwitz gas chambers, Clare miraculously retains a hope – ‘faith’ would be too strong a term – shared by many who often despair about the city’s future, that the miasmic legacies of antisemitisms past and present can be dispelled and that this still great and beautiful city will recover a measure of its ancient intellectual and artistic prominence, along with its traditional glamour and sophistication. To that end we dedicate this colloquium.

THE JEWS OF YOUNG HITLER'S VIENNA: HISTORICAL AND SOCIOLOGICAL ASPECTS

Ivar Oxal

No historical fact about Vienna is more trite, or more devastating in its imputed consequences, than the biographical datum that Adolf Hitler spent the most formative years of his youth in the Habsburg capital. His own version of that period of his life – arriving from his hometown of Linz when he was eighteen in 1907, and departing for Munich in 1913 – has formed the basis of innumerable interpretations of his behaviour as Führer. The most persistent query about the impact of his sojourn in Vienna has centred on whether the Nazi persecution, and eventual mass murder, of European Jewry had as its originating cause the violent antisemitism which the lonely and frustrated architectural student acquired at that time. This has certainly been a widely held conception of Hitler’s personal development, supported by his account of the Vienna years in *Mein Kampf*. Robert Wistrich has written a penetrating reconstruction of Hitler’s place within that conflictual political ethos, arguing that the architect of the Holocaust – for Hitler was, in his view, nothing less – can be clearly perceived to be acting out the Manichean attitudes and intentions of the young antisemite in Vienna:

Indeed the origins of Nazism would be incomprehensible without taking account of the youthful experiences of its founder in early twentieth-century Vienna, sickened as he was by the conglomeration of races which the capital showed me, repelled by the whole mixture of Czechs, Poles, Hungarians, Ruthenians, Serbs and Croats, and everywhere the eternal mushroom [*Spaltpilz*] of humanity – Jews and more Jews.⁷¹

Other historians, however, have questioned the importance of

cultural elite of *fin-de-siècle* Vienna was one shared to an almost exclusive degree by persons from a Jewish background. Whether or not there was a 'Jewish tradition' or a 'Jewish influence' — and I would suggest that there was — the virtual monopoly on certain key backgrounds, as described above, would have made the Jews a special case in the Viennese context, regardless. Quite what this all signified for the culture of Vienna is a question still to be answered. What I think can be said is that the evidence collected here suggests that there is a real question to answer: without some kind of attempt to understand the Jewish aspect of *fin-de-siècle* Vienna in all its complexity no comprehensive understanding of that culture as a whole is possible.

CULTURAL INNOVATION AND SOCIAL IDENTITY IN FIN-DE-SIÈCLE VIENNA

Michael Pollak

How can one explain the extraordinary flowering of creative life in the high culture of Vienna which is observed in so many domains in the *fin-de-siècle* period? And how is it that Jews played such a crucial role in this cultural renaissance? These are two questions to which I will attempt to formulate a tentative reply. Steven Beller's analysis in the preceding chapter has indicated the extent to which Jews came to occupy a strategic role within Vienna's *Bildungsbürgertum*, the educated elite, but I want to go beyond the sociological dimension, important though it is, to explore the relationship between historical developments on the level of the decline of entire polities and the social-psychological impact which this process had in restructuring the expectations and sense of social identity, and security, of entire social groups — and the implications of all this for their intellectual and artistic orientations.

Let us first briefly review the social changes which underpinned this transformation of Vienna from a cosy, secure and well ordered imperial capital, with a reputation for excellence in music and pleasant living, to the image of an abrasive and innovative centre of central European culture which the names of Kraus, Schoenberg, Kokoschka, Freud and Wittgenstein conjure up.

Here, in Vienna, were concentrated the dynamic consequences produced by the chaotic liberation of the forces of production which Liberalism, numbering the young emperor Franz Joseph among its acolytes, had brought to bear on the quieter, and still persistent, style of the Biedermeier ethos. Associated with this classical sea-change of modern history, there occurred a gradual, but progressive, relaxation of the restrictions on freedom of mobility, both geographical and social. It is perhaps not altogether surprising to note that the Jews,

formerly the most confined and excluded subjects of the Habsburg empire, would be among those who would take the greatest, and most enthusiastic, advantage of the opportunities which the Liberal era presaged.

This great historical migration within the Habsburg lands was not, of course, simply a matter of individual choice but had a collective character affecting tens of thousands of Jews in the hinterland, hoping for a better life in the great and beautiful capital city. The Jews arriving from different parts of the empire exhibit patterns of behaviour common to migrant ethnic minorities everywhere. They tend to settle in the same urban districts and seek out employment in the most open, rapidly-developing sectors. And, although their internal migration coincides with that of other groups, particularly the Czechs, a common regional origin does not, by virtue of their former social and cultural segregation in the provinces, lead to regional ties in Vienna, but rather to specifically ethnic ones. In the same way, differentiation, although not absolute, appears amongst the establishments of secondary education, some more than others, in the frequency with which they attract Jewish students. The rate of conversions and mixed marriages, although high in comparison with other European cities, remains low and in no way portends overall group disintegration.¹

The assimilation that accompanied this social mobility has been described as a 'rationalisation and secularisation of Jewish life which led to the substitution of secular Judaism for religious Judaism'.² The assimilationist tendency was conspicuous as one went up the social ladder, whilst the majority of the recent arrivals from Galicia remained attached to orthodox religious rites. In a country that knew no separation between church and state and in which certain religions enjoyed officially recognized status, religious creed was an important criterion of the social identity of each and every individual. The decreasing influence of an omnipresent Catholicism in public life and the secularization of minority religions favoured, but only for a very short period in Austria, the unity of the liberal bourgeoisie, with its common denominator the belief in the superiority of Germanic culture over the cultures of the other nationalities.

It is my thesis that the imminent disintegration of the empire and the rise of centrifugal tendencies drained this common denominator of its credibility; and that the questioning of the very existence of the multi-national state entailed, in turn, a reappraisal of the frames of

reference of cultural identity for each of the different social groups, forcing them to re-examine their traditions and origins, and the relationships established with all the other groups. At the end of the century it is not only the Jewish identity that is problematic but also the identity of non-Jews. This convergence of a feeling of crisis, both in the external world and within the individual and collective consciousness, took the most acute forms where the conflict between groups and these distinctive pressures were strongest – at the top of the social ladder. Let us attempt to reconstruct this relationship between the political crisis and its social and cultural consequences.

From its creation in 1804 the great dares of the Austrian empire can be read as signs presaging its decomposition. In spite of the victorious outcome of the Napoleonic wars the latter none the less brought to light the fragility of this multinational country and the increasing national aspirations. At the same time, the disappearance in 1806 of the Holy Roman Empire placed Austria in competition with Prussia for hegemony in Germany. The proclamation of a Hungarian constitution made the bourgeois revolution of 1848 a national revolution as well, endangering the unity of the empire. In 1866 the defeat at the hands of the Prussians at Sadowa and the founding of the Dualist regime firmly confirms the division of the empire between Austria and Hungary, and at the same time its loss of influence in Germany. Also, in spite of considerable economic growth during the second half of the nineteenth century, the external pressures and the internal centrifugal forces escalate right up to the eve of the First World War, one of the consequences of which is the final dissolution of the multinational empire.

In this context the situation of the rising Jewish bourgeoisie is very different in Hungary and Austria. In Hungary the co-existence within the nationalist liberal regime (1867-1918) of the non-Jewish elites and the rising Jewish bourgeoisie with its assimilationist ideal³ was facilitated by a project for the unity of a national state that the disappearance of the dual monarchy did not deeply affect. In contrast, in Austria, the presentment of the decomposition of the empire was a contributory factor, as early as 1870, to the questioning of loyalty to the dynasty and favoured the emergence of a Pan-German nationalism, transforming the Germanic component from a cementing force capable of culturally building up our country ... into a force for internal decomposition.⁴

Following the model of the 1848 revolution, one again finds side

by side at the beginning of the 1870s Jews and non-Jews in the same national liberal student organizations (*Burschenschaften*) that oppose Pan-Germanism to national and dynastic loyalty. In these student associations opposed to Catholic and loyalist corporations can be found Victor Adler, Sigmund Freud, Gustav Mahler, then later Theodor Herzl, side by side with Engelbert Pernerstorfer and Hermann Bahr — all united in their admiration of the supposedly superior Germanic culture.⁵ At the beginning of the 1870s there can be seen rubbing shoulders the future founders and leaders of the Social Democracy, of Zionism, of Pan-German nationalism along with the cultural innovators of the end of the century. This pro-German enthusiasm of the 1870s is surprising for two reasons: its effervescent character and its short-lived existence.

In the middle of the 1880s, at the time when the liberal movement is breaking up, it becomes apparent in the intellectual and university world that Pan-German nationalism is also one of the mainstays of antisemitism. The festival of 1883 held to commemorate the death of Richard Wagner, and organized by the German students of Vienna, is transformed into a political demonstration which, with its pro-Prussian and antisemitic overtones, constitutes an outright challenge to the very existence of the multinational state.⁶ Propagated initially only by the Pan-German movement of Georg von Schönerer — which indeed scored some electoral victories without ever becoming a mass movement — antisemitism is quickly adopted for its own use by political Catholicism, then in the throes of a total mutation. The Christian Social movement had its origins in the alliance between the federalist reformers of neo-absolutism, who lost power in 1859, and the social-Catholic reformers grouped around Freiherr von Vogelsang. The Christian Social movement changes, as early as the end of the 1880s, into a popular party which can rely on a dense and decentralized network of communication and professional associations, and in Vienna, on the far-reaching charisma of its leader Karl Lueger.⁷ With the transformation of the Christian Social movement antisemitism gains access to a large public that the Pan-German party, limited to a bourgeois public, would never have been able to reach. Better equipped to formulate projects in line with the specifically Austrian and therefore Catholic traditions, the Christian Social movement can present its antisemitism against the background of a 'glorious' history in which Austria plays the role of principal defender of the Christian faith against all its enemies. Using in its propaganda all the manifestations of the upward mobility of the

Jewish bourgeoisie; using also as a pretext the Jewish origins of certain leaders of the rising Social Democrats, the Christian Social movement could rely on a very heterogeneous social base. Even before 1900 there occurred in Austria the formation of a political, antisemitism as the lowest common denominator of mutual interest for large sectors of society. This Christian Social antisemitism united a weakened aristocracy and large masses of the petty-bourgeoisie in a defensive struggle against 'Jewish big capital'. At the same time, this antisemitism was also used against the Marxist Social Democrats — presumably directed by 'Jewish leaders'.

As early as 1897 the voting power of the Christian Social movement forced the emperor to withdraw the veto which had prevented Karl Lueger from becoming mayor of Vienna. From then on, religious creed and cultural roots became unavoidable questions. These attributes are obviously part of each individual's legacy and make-up in all times and places, but they achieved an acute salience in the period under consideration. To be or not to be a Jew, as well as the religious, cultural and racial standards alleged to justify such a classification, became matters of such importance that there was little or no chance of evading classification. At this stage the individual's social identity became entangled in a complex process of individual and collective struggle directed at achieving advantageous social positioning, while at the same time arriving at a definition of oneself *vis-à-vis* the various traditions and groups which constituted Viennese society. Self-definition in its various forms on the part of a particular group, as well as group reactions to social labelling employed by others, coalesces to the point where historical analysis sometimes becomes problematic.

The end of liberalism and the growth of antisemitism were felt most poignantly by those whose status was directly threatened by the disintegration of the Habsburg state: the Jews, defined by the very official history of the monarchy published in 1883 as a 'people', but with no recognition of their qualities as a nation.⁸ If the empire were to disintegrate, the Jews, according to this definition, would be the only people within the monarchy unable to claim a territory for itself. Without this anxiety being openly voiced at the time, the end of the empire, prefigured by the collapse of liberalism, nevertheless threatened not only the social identity but the very physical integrity of the Jews.⁹

The extremely rapid shifts of ideological and political allegiances was even more evident in the Viennese press than at the level of

governmental politics where it was contained by electoral laws. The circulation of the important traditionally liberal and *Kaiserliche* newspapers in which the assimilationist Jewish bourgeoisie could recognize itself (*Presse*, *Neue Freie Presse*, *Freundenblatt*), stagnated at around 60,000 copies. The Pan-German press (*Deutsches Volksblatt*, *Osterrische Rundschau*) grew in strength up to 1900, its most successful year, when more than 50,000 copies were printed, then fell back to 35,000 around 1910. On the other hand, the organ of the Christian-Social movement, the *Reichspost*, increased rapidly from some 6,000 to 25,000 copies between 1900 and 1905, while the Social Democrats' *Arbeiter-Zeitung* doubled in the same period from 24,000 to 54,000 copies.¹⁰

In certain vital respects this complete reshuffle of the political and ideological terrain both foreshadowed and prepared the way for the emergence of the configuration that was to become characteristic of German-speaking Austria after the dissolution of the multinational state. Already we can discern a situation in which a bloc defining itself primarily in spiritual and religious terms confronts another defining itself in terms of social class. Moreover, this polarization placed the Jewish bourgeoisie, such an important component in Viennese high society, in the acute dilemma of being unable to continue along the established nineteenth-century assimilationist road by means of the secularization of Jewish lifestyles, without overt denial of creed nor rupture with their own community. The rise of the Christian Social movement decisively reinforced religion both as a criterion for determining the social status and identity of the individual and as a criterion limiting access to certain governing positions. Furthermore, to compound their exposed position, Social Democracy, on the other hand, demanded in effect that the Jewish bourgeoisie deny their class origins.

In the light of these developments, it is not surprising to discover that the reformulation of Jewish identity — an indissolubly intellectual as well as organizational process — was carried out at the same time as, and in reaction to, these profound transformations in the world of non-Jews. The result was an unprecedented proliferation of Jewish associative life at the end of the century, but also internal tensions between the advocates of the old assimilationist model on the one hand, versus the 'Jewish nationalists' and Zionists on the other.¹¹ The creation in 1880 of the *Österreichische-Israelitische Union*, an organization of defence against antisemitism, marked the conversion of the old liberals to support for a policy of Jewish self-

organization within the framework of the institutions of the empire. There was a very quick reaction to this tactical shift — whose aim was to maintain the essence of the former assimilationist model — from the Zionists and 'nationalists' who demanded complete recognition of a Jewish nation on an equal footing with the other nationalities that made up the monarchy. At the same time groups of orthodox Jews succeeded in making themselves more influential in organizing the religious life of the rising number of Jews from the east. Thus, as among Catholics, in the Jewish group also, at the end of the century, religion was again gaining ground as a primary criterion of identity.

In reply to the attack by antisemitism and to the dangers inherent in the dissolution of the multinational state, the reorganization of Jewish life and the projects aimed at redefinition of the collective identity followed the same pattern as the political evolution in the non-Jewish sphere: a renewed emphasis on the religious dimension on the one hand and a nationalist retreat on the other. Although they remained in a minority in the successive elections for control of the *Israelitische Kulturgemeinde*, the nationalists and Zionists from 1902 managed to gain between 25 and 45 per cent of the votes cast, with electoral participation nonetheless rarely going beyond 30 per cent of those registered to vote (see Table 7.1 in Walter Weitzmann's discussion of this point in chapter 7 below). Under the stress of perpetual tensions, multinational Austria seemed to proceed from a state of harmony to one of anxiety, even in the eyes of the Jews, this so-called *Staatsvolk* par excellence. In a confused and strained political and intellectual climate there developed a search for identity and authenticity, a retreat into oneself and one's origins as a sort of ultimate place of refuge.

This polarization of social life based on the criterion of religious creed recalls, in addition to the limits of assimilation, the limits of all secularization in a society not accompanied by the institution of a clear separation between church and state and the secularization of public life. It is from this angle that one could perhaps put forward certain hypotheses about the rapid increase in conversions during the period. These occurred not so much to the advantage of the Catholic church in its position as state religion, conversion to which might be expected to have given optimal importance to the specific advantages that denial of a Jewish identity procures in an antisemitic society. In fact, conversions were fairly equally shared between Catholicism, Protestantism, and the non-denominational, *konfessionslos*, category.¹² Not only did this last category procure few advantages

for those converted but may even have led to social isolation in a society where organizations based on religion provided an important part of the educational, health and social services. In certain cases the conversion to Protestantism could indicate a particularly ostentatious assimilation not so much to a sociological majority but to the ideal of German culture full of future promise rather than to an Austria in its death throes. But Protestant conversion could also, as could the conversion to a non-denominational status, betray the choice of a 'lesser evil', of a 'smaller obstacle' or of a refusal to be classified; a refusal, that is, to give religion a paramount function in the definition of the social identity of each and every individual.

The individual's refusal to grant to religion the power it exercised socially is also evident in the perfectly opportunistic choice of religion in relation to the stage reached in the Jewish apostate's professional career. Thus the rate of reconversions to the Jewish religion is particularly high amongst those who, following intellectual careers or employed in administration, found that antisemitic barriers prevented their advancement despite conversion. As progress in a career is limited in time the average time-lapse between conversion and a return to Judaism was, in a number of cases cited by Rozenblit, hardly more than two to five years at the end of the century.¹³

If one can delineate the political reorientation of the period, the emerging of new tensions, and, correlatively, the elaboration of new definitions of Jewish and non-Jewish collective identities as a process started off by the acceleration of the centrifugal forces of the empire, and of the foreboding over its decomposition, one can also observe individual refusals to conform to these transformations. Recognizing this leads us to reformulate the question of the crucial role of Jews in the cultural renaissance of *fin-de-siècle* Vienna. The new political organizations and their collective identities come from an attempt at realignment whose objective is the affirmation and protection of the group. At the same time there can be found among the cultural innovators a high proportion of people from families who have followed the same spatial and social trajectory. These Jewish families coming from the provinces most clearly represent the model of social ascent that the multinational monarchy offered. The rise typically begins with small provincial trading at the beginning of the nineteenth century, progressively scaling the heights to important trade or banking activities in the capital, and in later generations to the liberal professions and intellectual careers with, as supreme

reward, admission into the 'second society' (*Zweite Gesellschaft*), a term which in Viennese society signifies the intermediary social stratum between the bourgeoisie and the lower aristocracy. Without wishing to adopt a purely reductionist approach to their intellectual projects, may we not pose the question of the latter's role in the process of attempting to redefine their social identity? Even by explicitly opposing this process, they refer to it, and by doing so they participate in the collective task of political transformation and redefinition of the group identities in Austria at the end of the nineteenth century.

Throughout the nineteenth century, the term 'assimilation' was synonymous with adherence to German culture. Some Jewish intellectuals who had often been the staunchest defenders of German culture and whose attitude was now rendered problematic by antisemitism, were faced at the end of the century with an intricate problem of identity. To the difficult problem of coping with a dual identity, both Austrian and German, was now added that of Jewish identity, and both intellectual and political projects bear the stamp of this difficulty. For want of a common perspective, a multitude of perspectives are put forward. The experience of a wounded, insecure, threatened and ambiguous identity gives rise to a multitude of projects intended to counteract the threat. The starting point of such projects lies in a multiplicity of the differing contemporary cultural heritages: liberalism, religion, Marxism, and the optimistic 'scientism' of the nineteenth century.

One can observe basically two modes according to which stabilization of identity was attempted. First, political involvement such as with Austro-Marxism or Zionism provided alternative attachments for the declining identification with Austrian nationality or loyalty to the monarchy. Second, aesthetic and psychological projects had the effect of stabilizing the self by displacing altogether the criteria of identity from the social and particular group level, putting in their place a primary concern with the inner self and a critical awareness of the self.

Breaking with the nationalists of Georg von Schönerer on the question of antisemitism, a certain number of the intellectuals of Jewish origin, the most committed politically, were inevitably drawn into identifying with the budding Social Democracy in which they often held positions of responsibility at the side of the founder of the party, Victor Adler. The latter was a forerunner of that type of

former intellectual turned political leader which is so widespread in the history of Austrian socialism. The Austro-Marxist tradition is, in reality, the result of this organic link between two movements: that of the working class, and that of identity-seeking intellectuals produced by the – often Jewish – upper classes. Therein too lies the reason why the Austrian Social Democracy always posed as the heir to certain liberal intellectual values. It evolved as a tradition which enabled intellectuals of Jewish origin to preserve unimpaired certain elements of the heritage encompassing both the former liberalism and impetus towards assimilation.

Diametrically opposed to a perspective which would integrate the project of Jewish emancipation into a revolutionary transformation of society – and which thereby would project the solution of the problem of being a Jew into the future – Zionism reversed the logic of the antisemitic stigma. Rather than react to the attacks defensively by minimizing the distinctiveness of Jewishness by denying it, or by denouncing it as prejudice, Zionism endowed it with positive value, encouraging a pride that allowed positive identification with a heritage and a socially-despised group, while also providing a basis for group defence by means of collective mobilization. Likewise, Zionism sparked off a complete revolution within Judaism, a complete reappraisal of the criteria of Jewish identity. As Herzl stated: 'In my view, the Jewish question is neither a social question nor a religious question . . . I see it rather as a national question which, if it is to receive a solution, must be examined in terms of politics.'¹⁴

Yet another response was perhaps the sublimation of the problem in scientific terms. It enabled some Jews to get over an experience of truncated identity while safeguarding the liberal heritage. That is the road chosen by Sigmund Freud. His personal experience as the son of a modest Jewish Moravian family who rose to a professorship at the university of Vienna is, I would venture, at the root of, and is reflected in, the procedures of psychoanalytical interpretation. This personal trajectory is also the subject of *The Interpretation of Dreams*.¹⁵

In the cases of Austro-Marxism and Zionism, the intellectual project went hand in hand with organizational undertakings which provided a multitude of individuals with a stabilization of their sense of identity, either by providing them with careers in a genuinely alternative society – which is what the Social Democratic party had become – or by a Zionist promise of a 'radiant prospect of honour,

freedom and happiness . . . to our bold spirited youth to which all careers are already closed'.¹⁶ Even in the field of psychoanalysis the intellectual project received the support of organizational work intended to provide the doctrine with continuity and institutional permanence. The difficulties and resistance encountered by psychoanalysis, and by Freud personally, at the time, were in truth also due to his Jewish origin, an origin shared by the majority of his early disciples.¹⁷ To counter the hostility met in an academic and social context strongly marked by antisemitism, it was necessary to 'stick together' and to be able to rely on the unflinching cohesion of the group. Consequently, the first Viennese society of psychoanalysis, founded in 1908, functioned organizationally like a sect.

Beyond the organizational work that accompanied their intellectual projects, the founders of political Zionism, Theodor Herzl, of the Austrian Social Democracy, Victor Adler, and the psychoanalytical movement, Sigmund Freud, have a common biographical preoccupation which is perceptible in their style of argument and their rhetoric. All three succeeded in converting their personal destinies into political resources and into justifications for mobilization. The political writings and speeches of Theodor Herzl indelibly recall his experience as a writer and intellectual rejected because of his Jewish origins. Presenting his own case as a model for identification and an exemplary cause for others, Herzl offered himself as a spokesman and managed to solve his own personal problem of identity through collective action. The mobilization to which he gave initial impetus was then able to grow beyond his wildest expectations because, over and beyond a political programme, it offered millions of people a means to solve a common identity problem by retrieving their pride politically.

Victor Adler, who became a convert to Protestantism so that his children should not have to suffer the consequences of non-denominational, *konfessionslos*, status at school,¹⁸ often referred in his speeches to relations between intellectuals and the working class. Not only did he offer Jewish intellectuals a chance (without explicitly stating it in these terms) to integrate hopes of assimilation into a revolutionary project, but, citing cultural work as one of the primary tasks of the movement, and by offering himself as an example, Adler also defined a positive role for the Jewish intelligentsia and institutionalized within the party a degree of autonomy for cultural activities rare in the political praxis of working-class organizations. One of the books that played a key role in the constitution of

psychoanalysis, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, has an autobiographical nature which is utterly alien to academic tradition. The analysis it provides of Freud's relationship with his father, with politics and with the world of German-speaking academics must have evoked similar experiences in the minds of a good many of his disciples. By re-establishing his own sense of identity, Freud, too, offers himself as a model for identification. By imitating him or by following unconventionally in his footsteps his disciples were able to cope with their own identity problem. The new truth, the scientific cause to be defended, provided this circle of analysts with a sense of their own future, with a mission, in a word, with a sense of identity during an unsettled period.

Zionism, Austro-Marxism or psychoanalysis are not, of course, as previously noted, phenomena which can be reduced to the stabilization of a Jewish identity, or more particularly that of intellectuals, yet it is an aspect which is essential to the understanding of the reception they received, even though their following ranged well beyond a strictly Jewish public. It could even be advanced that Austro-Marxism and psychoanalysis, both of which were working towards a secularization of the world, could provide a rallying point for both Jews and non-Jews who rebelled against the prevailing tendency to assign social identities on the basis of religious affiliation.

In another field central to cultural renewal, that of literature, we find intellectual effort directed far less toward sweeping social reorganization. Rather, the latter is restricted to redefinition of the role of the writer and to a progressive dissociation between the literary techniques of the orthodox artist on the one hand, and the writer-cum-journalist on the other. This work of redefinition of the artist's identity can be found not only in private correspondence but also in the published works of the writers who belonged to the *Jung-Wien* group. Here again, the intellectual project, principally the quest for aesthetic purity, was, as it were, determined on a higher level by the problem of national identity; by the link between the literary project and cultural traditions.¹⁹

The families of the writers of *Jung-Wien* belonged to the most loyalist strata of Viennese high society. Profoundly affected by the financial crisis of 1873, by the conflicts of nationality and by the nascent working-class movement which attracted certain of their sons, these 'good families' tried their utmost to perpetuate their social position. Far from rebelling, their writer-sons sought a new

meaning to their lives at a moment when all political pursuits appeared to be in vain.

This disillusionment with politics assumed forms which were inseparable from the greater or lesser degrees of Jewishness of the various members of the group. Tenuous or almost non-existent in the families of Schnitzler and of Kraus, religious traditions left their stamp on the youth of a writer like Richard Beer-Hofmann. The assimilation of the forebears of Hofmannsthal, elevated to the ranks of the aristocracy as early as the end of the eighteenth century, was fortified by marriages outside the Jewish community. The mother of Leopold Andrian, herself the daughter of the composer Meyerbeer, was of Jewish origin. Only a few of the older writers of the *Jung-Wien* group personally shared the Germanic enthusiasm of the 1870s. It seems highly significant that the two most conspicuous exceptions, Hermann Bahr, one of the few non-Jews in the group, and Théodor Herzl, both felt excluded, or at the very least rejected, from good Viennese society because of their provincial origins. At the end of the 1870s, committed as he was to Germanic ideals, the German-speaking, Hungarian-born Herzl was able to voice a feeling of cultural superiority with regard to Hungary where his family had always opposed assimilation via magyarization, and to challenge the *Kaisertreu* Jewish upper classes of Vienna from whose ranks he remained excluded. Later, under the impact of the growing antisemitic movement, Herzl, the marginal character of Viennese high society, was to elaborate his Zionist project.

Hermann Bahr's own political commitment, likewise, cannot be dissociated from his personal fortunes — those of a provincial who blamed all the social obstacles he encountered in Vienna on the exclusiveness of a Viennese high society which should be destroyed along with Austria by union with the German Reich. After his relegation from the university of Vienna in 1883, and his long exile in the provinces — in Graz, Cernowitz, then in Berlin — Hermann Bahr was able to reconcile himself with his homeland and to re-establish relations which secured him an undisputed position as cultural and literary go-between. In 1895, well after his escapades as a nationalist and antisemitic student, he married a young Jewish actress, in spite of his family's opposition to such a '*mésalliance*'. As early as 1892 he was the first to emphasize the patriotic feelings expressed in the *Jung-Wien* literature.²⁰

But on what basis could anyone, particularly artists, aspire to be Austrian patriots in 1890? The answer, I think, lies in recognizing

that the creation of a specifically Austrian cultural identity arose from the process of attempting to resolve the contradictions of a wounded identity in the realm of literature and the arts.

The paradoxical convergence of a patriotic revival and aestheticism is largely due precisely to the impossibility of founding an Austrian sense of national identity on historical arguments. Making of aesthetic excellence a criterion of Austrian patriotism answered the needs of artists who, torn as they were between conflicting criteria of German, Austrian or Jewish orientations, could thus dissolve the problem of dual identity posed by the role of the artist and the political fact of belonging to a national entity.

But aestheticism hardly managed to hide the anxiety and the difficulties of living without a secure national and cultural identity. Thus almost all the conflicts which broke out within the inner circle of the 'true artists' which emerged from the *Jung-Wien* arose from diverging interpretations of national identity. Hofmannsthal's position of authority, and his growing success on the German market, enabled him to refuse any national label and to refer to artistic purity as the sole support for an artist's legitimate identity. Even before the war this stance enabled Hofmannsthal to avoid having to opt for an Austrian patriotism which was explicitly opposed to the German tradition and which would undoubtedly have reduced his chances on the German market. A conflict between Hofmannsthal and Leopold Andrian, another member of the group and Hofmannsthal's close friend, on the subject of the collaboration with the literary review, *Pan*, published in Germany, anticipated the latter's voluntary retirement from a literary career. Andrian had insisted on withholding collaboration on a special issue on Vienna which would have placed the latter among the lesser ranking centres of German literature.²¹ From 1900 onwards Andrian chose to turn to more useful pursuits than literature: he opted for the diplomatic service.

When, in 1908, Arthur Schnitzler made antisemitism a theme of his novel *Der Weg ins Freie*, Hugo von Hofmannsthal expressed his dismay to him and informed Beer-Hofmann of his disappointment on reading a work so lacking in aesthetics. In fact he reacted as if the articulation of the theme in itself were an infringement of the sanctity of the artist's *raison d'être*. Because Schnitzler's attitude challenged his own political conception of a specifically Austrian identity,²² Andrian professed himself to be shocked by the book, 'the most personal of my creations' according to Schnitzler.²³ This difference of views led to an estrangement. As from 1910 the two friends of

long standing hardly saw each other any more and their regular exchange of correspondence came to an end.

The difficulties which came to light over the same period between Beer-Hofmann and Hofmannsthal arose from a problem of a similar nature. Beer-Hofmann, who retained and practised the religion of his forefathers, from 1900 adopted Jewish mythology as a source of inspiration. After his play *Jakobs Traum* had been performed, Hofmannsthal voiced very clearly one of the factors which entailed a loosening of their ties after 1910: 'It is a matter of chauvinism and national pride. To echo what a solitary Pharisee might say, I see only as the root of all evils.'²⁴ The 'Austrian myth'²⁵ created in this literature remained a key factor of Austrian cultural awareness as distinct from German identity, and one to which the different Austrian political families²⁶ progressively adhered to.

After this cursory review of creative projects in three such different fields as politics, psychoanalysis and the literature of *Jung-Wien*, we can return to the two questions put at the start of this paper. As Steven Beller has shown, it is hardly surprising that, quantitatively speaking, Jews should have played a paramount role in Viennese intellectual life at the end of the century. This was a result of very specific means of access to new status available to Jews under the monarchy throughout the second half of the nineteenth century. For a very short period, the prevailing liberalism in politics had minimized the importance of religion among the current criteria of social identity in Austrian and Viennese society. But by the end of the century this criterion, though subject to alterations, was restored to its dominant role. The redefinition of the political scene was achieved through reformulating collective identities on the basis of national, class, but also religious criteria. The renewal of the activity of voluntary associations and the politicization of Catholic thought are evidence of this, as is the evolution that can be seen in the Jewish group.

The process of redefinition can most clearly be observed in the intellectual and artistic spheres. Lack of prospects for the future left the way open for a multitude of projects which all had in common the proposing of collective or individual means of providing stability for a much-jeopardized sense of identity. It was perhaps the highly concentrated, simultaneous, nature of the structural changes — the coincidence of a crisis of political survival with a crisis in the most intimate feelings about the self — which created an aura of acute

insecurity within the intellectual circles of the Viennese upper class and entailed a breach with the patterns and beliefs of the past. Paradoxically, it was precisely 'modernity' which characterized many of the attempts to restore a climate of security.

Within the Viennese context, projects as diverse as Austro-Marxism, psychoanalysis, Zionism, but also a form of aesthetic patriotism, were produced within relatively confined milieux of intellectuals, many of whom were acquainted with one another, consorted with one another, and who often entertained lasting bonds of friendship. But within these small milieux the internalization of constraints could lead to the rejection of any sort of allegiances, to social isolation and to that psychological self-rejection so often mentioned in literature concerning the period. The cultural innovations we have briefly surveyed were a response to an existential need to redefine, and to establish new relationships between diverging traditions. In the construction of these intellectual projects there is another feature which is characteristic of Viennese culture: this lies in the fact that the redefinition of identities and of group connections follows a logic of combining elements previously held separate in traditions which seldom offered any common meeting ground.²⁷ Simultaneously, some Viennese Jewish intellectuals revolutionized and politicized Jewish thought, while others in the cultural field were able — in their intellectual and artistic creations — to retrieve the role of intermediary between separate national and cultural traditions, which had long been that of the Jewish upper class in economic life.²⁸ Little wonder, then, that the effects of this cultural renaissance ranged well beyond the limits of the Jewish community of Vienna and that it is commonly considered to be one of the mainstays of modern culture.

VIENNESE CULTURE AND THE JEWISH SELF-HATRED HYPOTHESIS: A CRITIQUE

Allan Janik

As colleagues have already indicated in the preceding pages, the question of the extent and nature of Jewish participation in the creative cultural movements of Vienna at the turn of the century suggests a highly variegated, complex process requiring further basic research into the Viennese social structure and its cultural dynamics. In the present essay I hope to make a contribution to the preliminary tasks of methodological critique and conceptual clarification by challenging the tendency to frame interpretations of the intellectual contributions made by men of Jewish background (however remote and attenuated) as the expression of some sort of underlying, Jewish-related, neurotic complaint. Among the explanatory mechanisms so employed is the notion that a neurotic condition of varying severity labelled *Jewish self-hatred* was a pervasive stimulus in the work of some important artists and intellectuals of the period. The main objective of the following discussion will be to challenge the validity of this concept even when applied to the thinker who nearly everyone has taken to represent the very archetype of the self-hating Viennese Jewish intellectual: Otto Weininger.

The Jewish self-hatred model should not, in my opinion, be viewed as an isolated, radical quirk in the conceptual approach taken by many writers to Vienna at the turn of the century. Whether or not employed by a particular analyst, it clearly is a member of that family of images and vocabularies which have been marshalled to explain the worrisome, even repellent, anti-liberal and anti-modernist currents of the Viennese *fin de siècle*. On this reading, the failure of liberalism, the withdrawal into aestheticism, subjectivism, the analysis of dreams rather than harsh external realities, represent — along with such notions as Jewish self-hatred — not only a form of