Wedekind and Schnitzler: Social criticism and literary scandals in turn-of-the-century Munich and Vienna

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Wedekind and Schnitzler:
Social Criticism and Literary Scandals
in Turn-of-the-Century Munich and Vienna

By
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Abstract

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Selected works of the turn-of-the-century authors, Frank Wedekind and Arthur Schnitzler, provide the focus for this study. The two German-speaking writers often created scandals in their fin-de-siécle audiences, and this thesis examines the socially critical and provocative nature of their works and probes the differences and similarities between the authors, their works, and the reception of those works.

The questions this study is attempting to answer and a statement of purpose are included in Chapter I, as well as an outline of the organization of the thesis and the focus of each chapter.

Chapter II briefly describes the cultural, social, and political settings in which Vedekind and Schnitzler lived and worked. Wedekind adopted Munich, the capital of Bavaria, for his home, while Schnitzler was a native of Vienna, the capital of the Habsburg Empire. Both were inevitably influenced in their work by these cities, as well as by the broader national situation of Germany and Austria, respectively.

Not only were Vedekind and Schnitzler influenced by their respective cities and countries, but also by their family background and personal experiences. The highlights of their lives are briefly summarized in Chapter III, and an attempt is made to determine the implications these experiences and circumstances had on their work.

Chapter IV, the central portion of the thesis, is divided into the subsections—Politics and the Military; Sexuality; and Social Institutions and Questions—in which selected works of Wedekind and Schnitzler are discussed comparatively, and the authors' criticisms of mores, institutions, and traditions in conventional society are examined within the context of these thematic issues and of the provocative nature of the works. The main works analyzed are: Wedekind's political poetry, his dramas Lulu and Frühlings Erwachen; Schnitzler's novelette "Leutnant Gustl" and his dramas Reigen and Professor Bernhardi.

The authors shared many of the same thematic concerns, and both often elicited similar reactions from a scandalized public, yet their literary styles contrasted drastically. Their differing literary approaches, in view of the similar public response, are the focus of Chapter V.

Chapter VI presents a brief discussion of the reception of Wedekind and Schnitzler by some of their contemporaries, which further confirms their similarities and dissimilarities as literary figures, and the conclusion briefly comments on Schnitzler and Wedekind in today's established theater world.
I was introduced to the authors Frank Wedekind and Arthur Schnitzler in upper level German literature courses at the University of Montana. These two writers, who lived in the same era and criticized many of the same social and political institutions, intrigued me, especially since their literary styles, their personalities, and the manner of their social criticism differed so drastically. They interested me also because they are so closely connected to what have become my two "Lieblingsständte," Munich and Vienna, and I view these two authors as representative figures of these cities at the turn of the century—an exciting and volatile time, and a time which provides the background for the present cities.

I chose the outsider and Bürgerschreck Wedekind as the topic of a Senior Honors Thesis (1982-83) not only because I found the "pre-Expressionistic" nature of his works fascinating, but because he is so intimately associated with Munich, a city where I lived for many years and with which I am well acquainted. I had spent my time in Munich before my formal education in German began, which increased my eagerness to probe the city's history. Thus I used the opportunity of the research project to combine my interest in Munich with my newly discovered literary interest in Frank Wedekind, whom I have since come to perceive as an embodiment
of Munich's fin-de-siècle atmosphere.

Though I had not spent nearly as much time in Vienna, the city aroused my attention when I had visited on occasion while living in Munich. I observed (and heard about) basic differences in the Viennese and the "Münchner" mentalities, and decided that a comparative research study on Wedekind and Schnitzler, and on fin-de-siècle Munich and Vienna, would illuminate some of the present differences between the two cities. For the academic year 1984-85, I was awarded a Fulbright Fellowship to study in Vienna to conduct research on the topic Schnitzler-Wedekind, in order to determine the extent to which the cities shaped and are reflected in their respective works, and further, to establish the existing differences and similarities between the authors.

The extensive library facilities and archives in Vienna provided me with indispensable secondary literature and documentation for such a study. Also, living in Vienna and exploring Schnitzler's city—which though changed since his day, has retained some of its fin-de-siècle charm, mood, and atmosphere—furnished me with an excellent opportunity to acquire knowledge of the city impossible to obtain from books and libraries. I have extensively read the primary works of Wedekind and Schnitzler and vast amounts of secondary literature on the authors, on their works, and on the times, but I feel that my familiarity and association with both cities has been an inspirational as well as significant
resource for my research. My personal interest induced me to choose a thesis topic that would allow me to conduct research involving and revolving around both Munich and Vienna.
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I. Introduction

Scandals and public protest surrounded the literary careers of Frank Wedekind and Arthur Schnitzler. Governmental censorship and harassment by the press plagued them as they pursued sensational literary paths that shocked their self-righteous, hypocritical fin-de-siècle audiences. These two German-speaking authors looked beyond and beneath the conventions of their societies and attacked the established institutions upholding these faqades. Thus, skeptical reactions to their works by the authorities, the press, and the public were inevitable. My thesis is that the authors, their works, and their (often scandalous) reception, reflect some basic truths about and differences (along with similarities) between established society in turn-of-the-century Munich, Germany and Vienna, Austria. By examining the "scandalous" nature of their works, such distinctions come into a clearer focus. What were the characteristics of their works which made them scandalous? What were the intentions of the two authors as they wrote their works? My intent is to probe and discuss these questions within the context of their times and works. I also attempt to illustrate the influence that their respective cities had on them and their works.

Following this introduction, I have divided my study into five parts. In chapter II of the thesis, I
briefly describe the setting in which Wedekind and Schnitzler lived and worked. Bavaria had just recently given up its status as an independent monarchy and had been assimilated into the greater German Empire under Bismarck and Wilhelm I. Munich, Bavaria's capital, provided a relatively tolerant atmosphere and thus unique opportunities as a cultural center for artists. Wedekind adopted the expanding, forward-looking city as his home. In Vienna, which was the capital of the decaying Austro-Hungarian Empire, the situation was rather different. Like Munich, it was a cultural center that attracted many prominent artists and thinkers, but in contrast to Munich, it was obsessed with its past glory and splendor as a world power, while being confronted with the disintegration of the Empire which reflected that glory and splendor. Schnitzler was a native of this decadent Habsburg captial, and his life was clearly intertwined with the turn-of-the-century Viennese bourgeoisie.

In this same chapter, I also offer a short synopsis of the cultural activities which, along with the decisive presence and pressure of the censorship, helped shape thought, attitudes, and the arts in these cities. I also try to outline briefly the larger political and cultural situation prevailing in Germany and Austria, which then serves as background for the discussion of Wedekind and Schnitzler and their works. Thus national and local
circumstances set the stage for our two "scandalous" authors, and influenced their personalities and careers.

The works of Wedekind and Schnitzler contain autobiographical traits. Both were influenced by their respective cities and countries and by their family background and personal experiences. Chapter III briefly summarizes the highlights of their lives and attempts to determine the implications these experiences and circumstances had on their work.

Chapters II and III serve as the background for the next chapter, the central portion of the thesis, which is subdivided into three sections: Politics and the Military, Sexuality, and Social Institutions and Questions. I compare and contrast a few of the authors' works in an attempt to examine their criticisms of mores, institutions, and traditions in conventional society within the context of these thematic issues. Wedekind's political poetry and Schnitzler's "Leutnant Gustl," for example, portray political trends of the times and illustrate the extent to which militarism impinged on all of society. Sexuality, primal instincts, and morality are critically portrayed by the authors in Lulu and Reigen. The authors confronted their audiences with their social criticism, and this often resulted in outraged reactions from a shocked (but self-righteous) public.

The last subsection focuses on the authors' criticisms
of social institutions that uphold the restrictive conventions of society. Specifically, Schnitzler's Professor Bernhardi examines the Jewish Question and depicts how the religious establishment intertwines with Vienna's political machinery. Wedekind's Frühlings Erwachen demonstrates how established educational institutions support anachronistic traditions in a changing social world. Though these two dramas portray different social establishments, they both present representative institutions. The comparison of many of the works in chapter IV also includes a discussion of the outsider nature of both the authors and their characters.

Thematically, Wedekind and Schnitzler share many of the same concerns, but their literary styles contrast drastically. Still, both authors experienced similar waves of dissent from the public. In chapter V, my intent is to examine their different literary approaches, while keeping in mind that both were "scandalous" figures. I differentiate between their styles as the "loud" versus the "soft," and maintain that Wedekind purposely, loudly, and colorfully wished to shock his audience, in contrast to Schnitzler, who often did shock the public, but not with the same deliberate intentions.

The reception of Wedekind and Schnitzler offers insight into their roles in society, and is the focus of chapter VI. The reaction of the press and other writers
confirms the authors' similarities as well as dissimilarities, and indicates Wedekind's and Schnitzler's significance in the literary world.

A huge quantity of secondary literature, covering all aspects of their works, exists on both authors, particularly on Schnitzler, whose person and writing have been the subject of renewed interest in the past two decades. The themes, motifs, and characters (or types) in their works, as well as their literary styles, their places in literary history, and many other aspects have generated many studies. In my research I have come across studies here and there that mention similarities between them in passing, but do not work out the details of these similarities. I found only one comparative study on them by Horst Albert Glaser: "Arthur Schnitzler und Frank Wedekind--Der doppelköpfige Sexus." However, this study was not particularly relevant to my purpose, since it compared only one aspect shared by the two authors that was of concern in my thesis. By contrast, I explicitly attempt to examine and compare Wedekind and Schnitzler and the scandalous nature of their works within the context of their societies. And as far as I can tell, this is an unexplored area.

In summary, the turn-of-the-century establishment and populace that Wedekind zealously preached to, about, and against, and the fin-de-siècle society that Schnitzler dissected and analyzed 100 years ago, have much in common
with present "fin-de-siècle" society. The moralists Wedekind and Schnitzler have long since died, but societal deceit, hypocrisy, false morality, and other societal ills that they found fault with, have not. And although their works rarely provoke sensational scandals today, social criticism a la Wedekind and Schnitzler remain valid—and necessary.
II. Turn-of-the-Century Munich, Germany and Vienna, Austria

Blatant sexual overtones, disturbing scenes, insinuating sexual attraction, and physical contact shocked fin-de-siècle audiences in Vienna, Munich, and Berlin. The wholesome burghers in these audiences were not only appalled by the insinuations of sex witnessed in the theater or read about in the press, but also by the social criticism they found offensive in the works of such writers as Frank Wedekind and Arthur Schnitzler, two of the most shocking turn-of-the-century authors the German-speaking world produced. These literary artists in manners and literary styles so completely different from one another, sent waves of outrage vibrating through Wilhelmine Germany and Habsburg Austria. Frequent scandals resulted, especially in protest against the performing of their works.

Though "Big Brother" has been added to our vocabulary only in the past four decades, that concept and "his" presence are no novelty to the world. Poets, artists, theologians, philosophers, authors, and outsiders have often had to work under Big Brothers's unflinching gaze; they have struggled against social injustice, against traditionalism, against the regime's censorship, striving for change, for awareness, and for acceptance. So, too,
the moralists Wedekind and Schnitzler attacked the mores, institutions, and hollowed-out traditions of their turn-of-the-century societies. They employed their plays and prose, and Wedekind his poetry and cabaret performances as well, in their (often unsuccessful) attempts to avoid (more successful) governmental censorship as they incessantly challenged society's morality (or immorality). Malicious gossip, sensational headlines, hearings, reviews, reports, and even trials accompanied their literary careers and shaped their public image. Much of the public (i.e. society and government) was scandalized by these two critical authors, who felt compelled to expose society's ills and weaknesses. Hence Wedekind became well-known as "der Bürgerschreck." Despite his scandals, Schnitzler did not acquire such an illustrious title, though he could be called "der Bürgerschreck wider Willen," and herein lies an intriguing question: how did they rouse such similar outraged public response, when their literary approaches differed so greatly?

The differences, as well as similarities, between these two authors can be traced to the backgrounds that shaped them and their works. Their family lives, their personal experiences, and the cultural differences between their respective cities, Munich and Vienna, were decisive factors in their literary development. Social, political, and cultural conditions in these two cities and in Germany
and Austria as well, influenced their world view and also provided the context for many of their works. Therefore, a brief outline of this background will help understand Wedekind and Schnitzler as representative figures of and as commentators on their times.

**Munich: Capital of Defiant Bavaria**

Wedekind is intimately identified with Munich even though he was a "Zuagroasta" (Bavarian for non-native) to this city. The Bavarian capital was a cultural and artistic center that attracted Bohemian types, such as Wedekind, while at the same time Wedekind's artistry helped to create and maintain the cultural and creative atmosphere of the city.

Munich had long been a center for progressive ideas and the arts: surprisingly, because of its heavy Catholicism and the conservative face of Bavaria in general, but many factors combined to make it the exciting turn-of-the-century city that lured Wedekind into its midst. For example, the ruling Wittelsbach family had given their royal support to the arts and sciences over the previous decades, which helped to make Munich popular among artists. Ludwig I, Ludwig II, and Prinz Regent Luitpold encouraged scientists and artists from the rest of Germany to come to Munich, and then partially or totally financed
the projects of their favorites. As the fin-de-siècle era progressed, more radical trends began to dominate the arts than previously. In music, King Ludwig II was enthralled by Richard Wagner and readily supported his controversial operas, while the music-loving Munich public eagerly encouraged the musical genius of Richard Strauss. In painting, the early expressionist movement "Der Blaue Reiter" was formed. Attracted by the bohemian lifestyle prominent in artistic circles, writers flocked to the city as well, and literary journals such as "Simplicissimus" and "Die Jugend," and literary cabarets such as "Die Elf Scharfrichter," were established.

Another reason why these new and radical trends were able to flourish in Munich was the mentality of the Bavarians. They were (and still are) famous for their jovial approach to life, for their "Gemütlichkeit," an attitude towards life that contrasts greatly with the strait-laced reputation of their Prussian neighbors to the north. When, in 1871, Bismarck coerced Ludwig II and the Bavarian parliament into joining the German Empire under Wilhelm I's reign, the Bavarians reluctantly relinquished their status as a sovereign nation, but refused to yield completely to Prussian dominance. This reluctant attitude, which while acquiescing to joining the Reich, led to a partially "separatist" situation. Consequently a more relaxed, easygoing atmosphere flourished in Bavaria, and
Prussian law and order was not as stringently enforced there as in the rest of Wilhelmine Germany.

Bavaria, also in contrast to Prussia, was a strictly Catholic state. Despite their religion-related conservativism, Bavarians were intent on enjoying life and determined to maintain their "Gemütlichkeit" image. They accepted and tolerated young artists, and thus encouraged them to come to Munich. Martin Kessel describes this Munich, its charms as a village and city, teeming with the bustle of life and art:

München war insofern etwas Besonderes, als es dazu ausersehen schien, eine Kunststadt zu sein, eine Kunststadt, wie das Bürgertum sie begriff, und zwar das begüterte, teilweise aristokratisch vermischte Bürgertum, ja noch genauer gesagt: das von seiner eigenen Erbschaft lebende Bürgertum. München war um 1900 für das Bürgertum, was Paris vor der Großen Revolution für die Aristokratie war: ein Tummelplatz der Lebensfreude und des Genusses. Man lebte nicht nur, um zu leben, man lebte, um sich auszuleben, ohne dabei zu fragen, auf wessen Kosten man lebte. Die Kunst war in diesem Rahmen einmal eine edle Pose, aber andernteils war sie auch eine Art Jahrmarkt. Sie war eine Sache des Geschmacks, eine Sache der Schönheit, aber einer Schönheit, die losgelöst war von den existentiellen Notwendigkeiten des Lebens...Dabei hatte München immerhin einen Vorzug: es war keine Weltstadt, es war nicht nervös und betriebsam, es war städtisch und ländlich zugleich, aber auch weltverbunden, und der Aesthet vergab sich nichts, wenn er sich unters Volk mischen und auch einmal eine Weisswurst verzehren wollte.

Everyone who had a name in artistic circles or wanted to make one came, and the city became known as a mecca for young people. Wedekind, Thomas and Heinrich Mann, Max
Halbe, Wassily Kandinsky, Paul Klee, and later Brecht are examples of a few of those whom Munich attracted. It was said that students came to Munich to study life—the university was of minor concern.4

Thus Munich grew. Artists, students, and country folk flocked to Munich, and the city began to pop its seams. Despite such rapid growth, it maintained much of its small town atmosphere as it incorporated some of the surrounding villages and suburbs. Munich did not suffer as gravely from the growing pangs of the belated Industrial Revolution as other parts of Germany, where the rapid migration of country dwellers to overpopulated cities created serious problems, both physical and psychological. The new city dwellers, accustomed to country life and traditions and a certain amount of self-sufficiency, were suddenly faced with city-related problems, and most cities lacked adequate housing and services to accommodate their new populace, the newly born working class. In the face of this new life, traditional values, usually conservative and Christian, proved inadequate for most.5 Old values were knocked down and discarded, and the urgent question arose: what sort of value system, if any, could fill the ensuing void?

Industrialization also changed the class structure of German society. The chasm between noble land owners and peasant laborers, dominant until industrialization, was rapidly replaced by one between bourgeois employers and
working class employees. As both the bourgeois and proletarian classes rapidly grew and transformed society, unavoidable conflicts occurred between these two opposing interest groups. The bourgeoisie wanted to improve its (relatively) recently acquired higher standard of living (at the expense of the working class), and turned to the government and educational and religious institutions for support. Ironically, the Industrial Revolution initiated a rising standard of living, but in its aftermath, the bourgeoisie depended on a minimum of change and a continuation of traditional values to maintain its status quo. In an attempt to secure their own recently established norms and various advantages, members of the bourgeoisie became intent on limiting the freedom of thought and behavior at all class levels. They ignored legitimate complaints of the proletariat—or even independent thinkers of their own class—in order to push their own ideals and goals and maintain the acquired standards.

Kaiser Wilhelm II's personality played an important role in perpetuating the capitalistic and nationalistic ideals as well as the narrow-mindedness of the bourgeoisie. Although incapable and insufficiently interested, he insisted on making all decisions of state himself, dismissing Bismarck's expertise in political counseling. After several personal and political scandals, his
ineptness became blatantly obvious, and he increasingly withdrew from active political life, yet was reluctant to surrender any of his power. Wilhelm embodied the authority of Germany at the turn of the century, but his being a controversial and somewhat ridiculous figure undercut this authority, especially in such states as Bavaria, which tried to distance and distinguish itself from the rest of Germany by resisting the dominance of Prussia.

Symptomatic of repressive Wilhelmine Germany, the censors attempted to define, with forceful guidance, the cultural parameters of German life, including both what authors and other artists could produce and what the public could be exposed or have access to. The authorities tried to stifle criticism as well as creativity in this manner, but contrarily and ironically, as frequently happens in such instances, literature flourished, and Munich provided a perfect spawning grounds and haven for such literary and artistic activity. It was this fin-de-siècle Munich, the city which Kessel aptly defines as a "Zustand" (condition) as well as an "Idee," which Wedekind adopted as his permanent home in 1908.

Vienna: Capital of an Empire in Decline

Similarly, Vienna, which constitutes the counterpart to Munich in this discussion, has been described by William
Johnston as "more than the capital of the Habsburg Empire; it was a state of mind." Vienna, like Munich, was a cultural center that attracted and bred many artists, including Arthur Schnitzler, and the following will briefly summarize the situation that elicited Johnston's remark.

Arthur Schnitzler's ties to Vienna were more intimate than Wedekind's to Munich, though his relationship to his native city was more complicated, probably for that very reason; he was totally and completely Viennese, in contrast to Wedekind's chosen affiliation with Munich. Schnitzler's relationship to Vienna will be revealed throughout the course of this thesis, since most of his works are set in Vienna and its surrounding area, and all are derived from life as he experienced it there. Schnitzler was thoroughly absorbed and influenced by the fin-de-siècle atmosphere of Vienna, and in turn, he recorded, described, and brought that atmosphere to life in his works. Both thrived on each other. William H. Rey summarizes this claim as follows: "Man weiß es: Arthur Schnitzler ist ein Wiener Dichter. In fast allen seinen Werken lebt die Wiener Atmosphäre und Mentalität, und wie eine dunkle Melodie ist auch das österreichische Schicksal gegenwärtig." Rey's reference to a "dunkle Melodie" present in both the Austrian "Schicksal" and Schnitzler's works, hints at the decline of the Habsburg Empire, already irreversible at
the turn of the century. As capital, Vienna had been the hub of the vast Austro-Hungarian Empire, but by this time the Empire's death pains were evident in widespread symptoms, which Schnitzler foresaw, but which society as a whole did not recognize. In the midst of this decay, some people led creative, others extremely frivolous lives, and others were barely able to eke out an existence at all--but all contributed to making Vienna a main European cultural center. Also important was the large Jewish presence, which along with the mix of ethnic heritage from the old "Vielvölkerstaat," influenced the flavor of Vienna's atmosphere and helped to make the city unique. Old tradition, inherited from centuries of Habsburg rule, from militarism, and from the strict edicts of the Roman Catholic Church, began to clash with the new perspectives on life that were becoming visible in Vienna; the resulting conflicts created fertile ground for the arts and sciences.

Many Austrians, held fast to their image of Kaiser Franz Josef and the traditions that the monarch personified. Others rejected these same traditions, which to them symbolized stagnation. The rebels, who had grown up under and often mastered these old traditions, broke away. The literary movement "Jung-Wien," which "challenged the moralistic stance of nineteenth-century literature in favor of sociological truth and psychology"10 was formed. Such well-known writers as Hofmannsthal, Schnitzler, and Hermann
Bahr gathered at their "Künstlertreffpunkt," Café Griensteidl, to read and discuss each others' works and ideas. In art and architecture, a revolt against the "prevailing academic constraints in favor of an open, experimental attitude toward painting" began to spread in the mid-nineties. Led by Gustav Klimt in the visual arts, the rebels founded the "Secession" in a show of opposition against the established artists' association. Otto Wagner's ideas for functional simplicity in architecture still dominate many structures beyond the Ringstrasse today. To a lesser degree his disciple Alfred Loos, who was even more adamantly opposed to decoration, also left his mark on Vienna's fin-de-siecle architecture. Gustav Mahler and especially Arnold Schonberg, explored explosive new tones in music. In psychology Sigmund Freud was fighting for recognition of his oedipal, sexual, and dream theories. New trends and ideas also clashed with old ones on the political scene as anti-Semitism and German Nationalism grew and as Social Democrats lost influence. The time was obviously ripe, however, for the flourishing of creativity that distinguished the Habsburg capital as a prominent cultural center.

Like Prussia, Austria (Vienna especially) also began to suffer the pains of rapid industrial growth. Although Austria never achieved the technological successes of its northern neighbor, Vienna nevertheless faced acute
housing shortages and unemployment, as country dwellers flocked to the city to look for work and a new life. Once again the Industrial Revolution transformed the hierarchical structure of society, and compelled the bourgeoisie to cling to its status quo:

Da gegen Ende des Jahrhunderts das Bürgertum die Verlässlichkeit der Hierarchie als gefährdet erkennen musste (die verstärkte Industrialisierung hatte zu erheblichen Fluktuationen innerhalb der Bevölkerung geführt), konnte in der Realität auf die Unverletzbarkeit der moralischen Normen weniger als je zuvor verzichtet werden.15

Violent confrontations between classes and between ideologically differing groups erupted within the transforming society; the cumbersome structure of the Habsburg monarchy could not deal effectively with the conflicts that were evolving. Growing nationalism in the provinces, i.e. Bohemia, Slovakia, Hungary, etc., induced many "German-Austrians" and others to go to Vienna, and these streams of peoples from the Empire's periphery brought many ethnic diversities with them, compounding the social problems.

Unlike Munich, Vienna had long been an international metropolis. It enjoyed status and had been proudly magnificent. The Ringstrasse, with its splendor, decoration and exuberance, but also with its concealed deception (deceptive because it gave an illusion of power, which had in actuality, begun to weaken throughout the Empire) came to symbolize the lifestyle of the expansion years.16
Vienna's royalty and aristocracy had been powerful, the bourgeoisie rich, and life in the proper social class was luxurious. In his writing, Schnitzler focused mainly on the "haute bourgeoisie," which, as Carl Schorske points out, "can scarcely be distinguished from garden-variety Victorianism elsewhere in Europe."17 Further, however, he explains the uniqueness of the Austrian version:

Two basic social facts distinguish the Austrian from the French and English bourgeoisie: it did not succeed either in destroying or in fully fusing with the aristocracy; and because of its weakness, it remained both dependent upon and deeply loyal to the emperor as a remote but necessary father-protector. The failure to acquire a monopoly of power left the bourgeois always something of an outsider, seeking integration with the aristocracy. The numerous and prosperous Jewish element in Vienna, with its strong assimilationist thrust, only strengthened this trend.18

As it entered the fin-de-siècle era, Vienna also entered a melancholy phase of decay, and all of its creative activity was executed to the melody and rhythm of death rattles. The "Kaffeehaus" symbolically embodied this city of paradoxes: at first glance, the "Wiener Café" emitted the impression of a carefree, relaxed existence, but in reality some people frequented these charming public houses to escape cold or inadequate housing.19 Similarly, there were two sides to the wild, gay dancing and music of the times: superficially, it seemed gay and frivolous, but it can be seen as a Viennese attempt to escape from the reality of economic, political, and social crises into the
demonic. Indeed, this "Totentanz" theme is present in the works of many of the authors and artists of this time, demonstrating the interrelationship of the arts, the city, and the times.

Censorship was as prevalent in Habsburg Austria as in Wilhelmine Germany. In an effort to legislate morality, maintain authority, and exhibit power, this decaying monarchy strictly regulated what could be produced and published by artists. Societal transgressions, governmental faults, and religious hypocrisy could be covered up because their exposure was controlled by the censor. This tradition was especially defined under Metternich from 1813-48, as Nestroy's experiences with the censor illustrate and as his satirical works portray. Nevertheless, writers relentlessly disregarded these limitations, just as Nestroy had also defied them, and scandals were the frequent result.

An integral constituent of turn-of-the-century society, censorship provided the political powers with a means to regulate renegades. On the one hand, it was particularly useful as a show of power, yet on the other, it can be argued that it manifested a sense of insecurity. In the case of Wilhelmine Germany, this would seem especially accurate, since officially, no censorship of the press existed. Despite this apparent freedom, though, the press had to write with extreme caution:
Paragraph 95 des Reichsstrafgesetzbuches von 1871 setzte eine Freiheitsstrafe von mindestens zwei Monaten im Falle mündlicher oder schriftlicher Aussagen fest, die als beleidigend für den Kaiser verstanden werden könnten. Dieser Gummiparagraph wurde vom Reichsgericht so weit ausgedehnt, dass jede Kritik an dem Kaiser, seiner Person oder seinen Handlungen, zum Teil auch an denen seiner Regierung kriminalisiert wurde.22

A similar situation governed the theater scene. Although (again) no official censorship existed, a police order from 1851 set the ground rules for a "Theaterzensur" that stayed in effect until 1918: "Kaum ein Dramatiker der Jahrhundertwende, dessen Stücke politische oder soziale Fragen auch nur streiften, blieb von der Zensur unberührt,"23 claims Russell A. Berman. State regulation did not limit itself to the press and theater, but encompassed literature as well. State censorship restricted and influenced all writers, journalists, and actors, unofficial as it may have been in Wilhelmine Germany. This description of the nature and extent of censorship is applicable to both countries and demonstrates the conditions under which both Wedekind and Schnitzler had to work.

Many similarities (besides censorship) exist between Frank Wedekind's Munich and Arthur Schnitzler's Vienna: both cities engendered atmospheres conducive to creativity. Encouraged artists came to these cultural centers and in turn influenced those atmospheres. Both cities were
influenced by strong Catholic tradition; both were experiencing rapid growth; and both were confronted with the political and social conflicts brought on by changing times.

Yet, Munich and Vienna differed greatly: Munich had been an average size capital city in a small monarchy, and though growing, still kept its villagelike charm, while Vienna had been the splendid, magnificent capital of a vast empire that was losing its hold on its power.

Vienna was grappling with this decline, in addition to its increasing overpopulation. The old and new were forming the city's contours. Although Munich's artists dealt with many of the same thematic fin-de-siècle conflicts as Vienna's, a melancholy atmosphere, "[jene] dunkle Melodie," was not endemic to the city. Munich was not in the midst of a decline, but rather, was forward-looking as it expanded into the 20th century, and its artists reflected this mentality. Viennese artists, however, frequently were obsessed with the melancholy melodies symptomatic of their beloved city and reflected a reluctance to look ahead to the future.

"Endzeitstimmung" is a term frequently used when discussing the atmosphere of the fin-de-siècle era--logically so, as one century wanes and the next draws nigh. Throughout history, this has often generated creativity as well as decadence and general chaos. Change was inevi-
table, yet much of society was reluctant to accept it in the forms in which it presented itself. Many people clung to traditions; many pursued change; many said one thing and did another; most were confused. The times were volatile and were transforming too quickly for most people to accept and digest. Onto this unstable but fertile stage walked Wedekind and Schnitzler. They created scandals in their angry audiences and left outraged "Sittenwächter" in their wakes, with the difference that one did so intentionally, the other more innocently.
Notes to Chapter II


6. Kessel, 133.


10. Schorske, 212.

11. Schorske, 213.

12. For more detailed information on Gustav Klimt and the "Secession," see for example: Schorske, 208-278.


14. Sigmund Freud's work denotes the beginning of psychology and psychiatry as scientific disciplines, also reflective of the prevailing mentality in Vienna at the time.


17. Schorske, 6.


20. For more detailed description of Vienna's paradoxes and the theory that they were attempting to escape into the demonic, see: Janik and Toulmin, 34 ff.


22. Berman, 76.


Arthur Schnitzler (1863-1931) was the first of three children born to Johann Schnitzler and Louise Schnitzler, nee Markbreiter. The setting: Vienna, Austria. Louise, whose father was a medical doctor, came from an established Viennese family, while Johann came from humble working class origins in Hungary. Johann worked hard to escape his lowly heritage and became an established doctor in laryngology, a social rise not hindered by his fortunate marriage into the bourgeoisie. Proud of his accomplishments and concerned that his family maintain the social level he had achieved, he encouraged both sons, Arthur and Julius, to study medicine, which they did—Arthur reluctantly so. Besides his occupational interest in medicine, Johann Schnitzler was also an avid patron of the arts. In fact, he counted many famous singers and actors and actresses among his patients, because of his specialty. Thus Arthur grew up in the presence of artists, and even as a child, often went to the theater and concerts, developing a love for the arts early in life. Johann encouraged his young son to write stories, poems, and even short plays, which were read or performed for family and guests—and a passion for writing was awakened within Arthur. However, when the
father realized how serious the son was about a literary career, he put up adamant resistance and insisted that the son pursue medicine. Arthur complied, though he never stopped writing. After receiving his degree, he went to work at the clinic where his father was director. Though he was only half-heartedly a doctor, his medical training influenced his writing, not only thematically, as will be seen in Professor Bernhardi, but it also sharpened his observational skills. Also, working at the clinic presented Schnitzler with the perfect opportunity to pursue his instinctual interest in psychology. This interest is displayed so prominently in his works, as is demonstrated, for example, in the stream-of-consciousness technique in "Leutnant Gustl," that Freud was induced to call Schnitzler his "Doppelgänger."

Immediately after his father's death, Arthur terminated his relationship with the clinic and opened a private practice, which gave him more time to follow his literary interests. Gradually, his medical practice dwindled as he devoted more and more time to his artistic talents.

Although Arthur gave in to the career wishes of his domineering father, he refused to abandon his literary activities, as his father also desired, and even demanded. This created a problematic and tense relationship between father and son. Arthur almost exclusively lived according
to his own whims and fancies, but nevertheless could not ignore (or reject) his patriarchal upbringing and did try to accommodate his father's wishes to a certain degree, if only by being secretive about his promiscuous lifestyle. In his autobiography, Schnitzler extensively talks about his father, while rarely mentioning his mother. While he seemed fond of her, she apparently played a secondary role for him because she had totally succumbed to patriarchal authority. Musically though, she was influential, and they continued to play piano duets together until her death.

Schnitzler belonged to a generation of Jewish sons, whose fathers had recently joined the bourgeoisie and were intent on enjoying their newly acquired higher standard of living. So, Schnitzler had not grown up with material hardship and had been able to pursue a life of pleasure, more or less. Though Schnitzler's lifestyle was bourgeois, because he was a Jew, he was prohibited from totally assimilating into this class. His drama, Professor Bernhardi, reflects this outsider element of Schnitzler's life: Bernhardi was highly respected for his knowledge and judgment, until his Jewishness became an issue. This was a dilemma also frequently experienced by Bernhardi's author.

Schnitzler and his friends (much like many of Schnitzler's protagonists) congregated in cafés, discussed life and the arts, read newspapers and new works of literature; they played cards, dabbled in gambling, went to
the races, chased women, and had countless affairs. These years of adventure and relative freedom provided the content as well as context for his works and underscore the autobiographical quality of his writing. Though Schnitzler relished this life of freedom, it was not without conflict. Still, he clung to this way of life, even after many of his friends were married. At various times he became attached to different women, but could not imagine limiting himself to one and only one, forever. He was also extremely suspicious of each of them; jealousy and accusations of disloyalty caused many scenes between him and his lovers. These affairs were as passionate as his artistic temperament—and as emotionally violent and help explain his preoccupation with life's erotic element in his works. The Reigen characters, for example, illustrate the pressure of sexual and physical drives, which they try to relieve through superficial affairs, while at the same time demonstrating Schnitzler's skepticism about the possibility of fulfilling and honest relationships.

At the age of 41, Schnitzler reluctantly married Olga Gussmann, the mother of his son Heinrich. His decision to marry was accompanied by a resolution of fidelity, and he entered a stormy marriage full of scenes and violent verbal conflicts, though he enjoyed being a father. Finally, after eighteen years of strife, he and Olga were divorced, but their struggling relationship never ended.
Schnitzler's medical eye for details enabled him to capture the details and nuances of his (social and personal) environment, and for this reason fin-de-siècle is portrayed so realistically in his works. He was sensitive to his experiences and used his writing as a means of exploring his conflicts and life's dilemmas and for recording his observations of that which occurred around him.

Schnitzler's life was full of pleasure and pain. Constant jealousies and consequent heated quarrels, as well as tender but fleeting moments of love, composed the emotional life of this poet. In his younger years, literary success was intertwined with harassment from the press and public scandal. By his death in 1931, he was rejected by a new generation of writers who misunderstood his determination to write about fin-de-siècle Vienna. It was what he knew best.

**Wedekind: "Der Bürgerschreck"**

Franklin Benjamin Wedekind (1864-1918), three years younger than Schnitzler, was born in Hannover, Germany to Dr. Friedrich Wilhelm Wedekind and Emilie Wedekind, nee Kammerer, both naturalized American citizens. Like Johann Schnitzler, Friedrich Wedekind was also a medical doctor, and was also patriarchal (though Emilie Wedekind
was less submissive to her husband's rule than Louise Schnitzler), but otherwise they had little in common. Friedrich traveled quite extensively as a young man, even practicing medicine in Turkey for a while. After the failure of the 1848 revolution in Germany, he emigrated to America. His political concerns directed his life, as this move shows, and further, the political dimension of Frank's heritage becomes immediately visible. Emilie Kammerer left her native Switzerland as a young girl, first living and singing (opera) in South America before going to the United States, where she met and married Friedrich Wedekind (1862), though he was twice her age.

In 1864 they went to Germany for a visit, fully intending to return to the U.S.A. Shortly after their arrival, Franklin Benjamin was born, the second of six children. Skeptical about Germany and its politics, Friedrich refused to have Frank christened: Friedrich did not want Frank's name to be on any records of the German authorities. Frank never had a passport or papers from any country, and this lack of national identity epitomizes his outsider status in society, and anticipates his irreverent nature. It also underscores the aspect of political awareness present in his upbringing.

The Wedekinds never did return to their adopted American home, but disenchanted with the German government and its politics, neither did Friedrich want to remain in
Germany. In 1872 he moved his family to Lenzburg, a castle in Kanton Aargau, Switzerland, where Frank grew up—in an enchanting setting. In 1884 he started studying German and French literature at the University in Lausanne, but transferred to Munich for the next semester, where he intended to study law at the wish and insistence of his father. Rebellious in spirit, Frank instead spent most of his time and money in Munich going to the theater, experimenting with life in the city, and totally ignoring school. He did not want to study law, desiring instead to pursue literature. Like Schnitzler's, Wedekind's university studies were dictated by a strong-willed father. Unlike Schnitzler, however, Wedekind did not accede to his father's wishes, which led to a break in their relationship (1886). This difference in Wedekind's and Schnitzler's reactions to their fathers already stresses the contrasts inherent later in their literary styles and anticipates their contrasting approaches to social criticism: the rebel versus the gentle critic. After the break with his father, however, Frank was left with a heavy emotional and psychological burden and without any financial support. Emilie Wedekind sided with her son against her husband, supporting (emotionally) and encouraging his literary aspirations. She was a strong woman, who endeavored to think and act independently from the male family head. Again in contrast to Schnitzler, whose mother played a
minor role for him, Wedekind was greatly affected by his mother’s liberal attitude. Her influence can be detected throughout his works and is particularly apparent in Frühling Erwachen in the character of Frau Gabor, an understanding and tolerant mother. In fact, much of Frühling Erwachen is derived from adolescent experiences, as Wedekind himself relates: "Ich begann zu schreiben ohne irgendeinen Plan, mit der Absicht zu schreiben, was mir Vergnügen macht. Der Plan entstand nach der dritten Szenen und setzte sich aus persönlichen Erlebnissen oder Erlebnissen meiner Schulkameraden zusammen. Fast jede Szene entspricht einem wirklichen Vorgang." This emphasizes the autobiographical nature of all his works and shows that they did not appear from an artistic vacuum.

With no more financial backing from home, Wedekind went to work in advertising for Maggi Corporation, near Zurich, until he and his father reconciled their differences a year later. Thereafter Frank resumed his law studies in Zurich. In 1880 Friedrich Wedekind died, and Frank, acquiring a degree of financial freedom from his inheritance, quit the university. The following years found him in Berlin, Paris, London, and Munich, where he immersed himself wholly in the study of (night) life, especially in Paris. He roved and roamed, in true Wedekind spirit, which he had also inherited from his parents, but which set him totally apart from his counterpart.
Schnitzler, who was undeniably fastened somehow to Vienna. Wedekind collected experiences, visiting circus, ballet, cabaret, and variety show performances, and he cultivated relationships with the performers and composers behind them. All of this shaped his perspective on life and is reflected in his work. Lulu, with its grotesqueness, its obsession with the physical, and with its circus motifs, offers a good example of the bohemian nature of these experiences that influenced Wedekind. After his money (quickly) ran out, he returned to Germany, where he meagerly supported himself through his writing, his work with "Simplicissimus," and his cabaret performances, incorporating experiences and observations from his "Wanderjahre" into his work.

In 1906 he married the Austrian actress, Tilly Newes, with whom he often performed in many of his dramas. Like the Schnitzlers, they also endured a stormy marriage. Both Tilly and Frank had strong personalities, which caused them often to be on the verge of separation. Tilly's attempted suicide in late 1917 strengthened their bond one last time, until Frank's death in the spring of 1918.

Wedekind never achieved the great degree of success to which he had aspired, but which the irreverent aspects of his works help to explain. Being readily performed in established theater houses was important to him, but it seldom happened. Nonetheless he remained popular among
certain colleagues and certain literary circles up until his death, in contrast to Schnitzler, whose popularity declined during his lifetime. Wedekind's influence on 20th century literature, for example on Expressionistic drama and on Brecht's epic theater, cannot be denied. He anticipates the future, whereas Schnitzler's more traditional style indicates a nostalgia for the past.
Notes to Chapter III


4. Seehaus, 57.
IV. Assaulting Established Society

Politics and the Military

Both Wedekind and Schnitzler were essentially apolitical individuals and writers, yet they were distressed by the double standards they observed in society and aimed much of their criticism at these discrepancies. Thus, literary historians and critics generally classify them as moralists or social critics rather than political agitators. However, neither completely ignored the realm of politics in his works. This would have been impossible for these social critics, since politics directly influenced the societies they were living in and writing about and necessarily affected their own lives.

While Wedekind wrote for the satirical journal "Simplicissimus," he published a series of political poems in the (same) periodical. The government authorities used the most famous of these (or, maybe it became famous because they used it) as significant evidence in their indictment against Wedekind. "Im Heiligen Land" satirizes Kaiser Wilhelm II's trip to the orient. This trip was viewed by many as an indication of a new phase in the industrial colonial expansion of German imperialism, a direction which contrasted sharply to socialist-republican thought, which espoused the ideals of brotherhood and
disarmament and ridiculed the kind of nationalism that this expansionist policy reflected.3 Undoubtedly, Wedekind shared such ideals with his more politically-minded friends and colleagues, inspite of his essentially nonpolitical nature. Wedekind's biographer, Arthur Kutscher writes:

Er hatte nur schwache politische Anlagen. Man darf ihn höchstens als Stimmungspolitiker bezeichnen...Weinhöppel, der ihn wohl am besten kannte, sagte damals, niemand könne im Ernst behaupten, dass Wedekind ein Sozialist, Nihilist, Anarchist noch auch ein persönlicher Feind oder Widersacher des Deutschen Kaisers war. Seine Einstellung sei überhaupt nicht eigentlich politisch, sondern vielmehr moralisch.4

So, the question remains, why did he write his "politische Gedichte" if his political convictions were so non-committal? It has been speculated that he was encouraged and prodded to do so by his publisher, Albert Langen.5 Other reasons may have been that he needed the extra finances, or that he enjoyed the comedy of writing such satires under the pseudonym of Hieronymus Jobs. The sensation these poems produced (and which spurred sales) must have been another source of motivation: "Eine ausgezeichnete Reklame: Zensurverbote, Vertriebsverbote auf den Berliner Bahnhöfen erhielten schon die ersten zwei "Simpl"-Nummern mit Jobsens Gedichten."6 Writing under a pseudonym allowed Wedekind to be particularly ironical and sharp-tongued, the specific feature of the poems which aroused such agitated reactions as those in Berlin.

Wedekind was also in this regard not out of step with a
more widespread movement of critical thinking and writing, as Manfred Hahn emphasizes:


It was not difficult for government authorities soon to discover that Hieronymus Job was really Wedekind, since it was a well-known secret to the public,8 but before they could arrest him,9 he fled to Switzerland (Oct. 30, 1898) and then Paris. In June of 1899, he turned himself over to the police in Leipzig where he was charged with "Majestätsbeleidigung." The "apolitical” Wedekind spent six months in prison for his satirical political activity. Whether or not Wedekind can be classified as a "political" or "apolitical" figure and writer, seems irrelevant at this point—he was a moralist and as such, his convictions inevitably spilled over into the realm of politics; his works are laced with moral issues that cannot always be separated from the prevailing political concerns. Liberal in spirit, thought, and action, morally sensitive and having experienced a politically liberal upbringing at home, it is unlikely that Wedekind would not have been
influenced by current political events. In a "bürgerlich" society, his "Antibürgerlichkeit" was in fact a political stance.

Although he did not consider himself an enemy of Wilhelm II per se, he disapproved of Wilhelm's policies, his (personal) motives, and his excesses. Wilhelm symbolized a way of life Wedekind could not condone, and the Emperor therefore became a vulnerable target for the moralist's sharpshooting pen, as Günter Seehaus stresses:

...die Person des Kaisers war ihm im Grunde so gleichgültig wie dessen Marine-Probleme. Die Allerhöchste Person geriet ihm anlässlich ihrer morgenländischen Reise eher zufällig (wenn nicht gar auf Anregung der Redaktion) ins Visier--als Symbol einer Lebensform, als Exponent einer Gesellschaft, die Wedekind für fragwürdig hielt...10

Thus Wedekind poignantly ridicules Wilhelm's trip to Palastine:

...Willkommen, Fürst, in meines Landes Grenzen, Willkommen mit dem holden Ehgemahl, Mit Geistlichkeit, Lakaien, Exzellenzen Und Polizeibeamten ohne Zahl. (9-12)

...Ist denn deine Herrschaft auch so weise, Dass du dein Land getrost verlassen kannst? Nicht jeder Herrscher wagt sich auf die Reise Ins alte Kanaan. Du aber fandest, Du seist zu Hause momentan entbehrlich; Der Augenblick ist völlig ungefährlich. Und wer sein Land so klug wie du regiert, Weiss immer schon im voraus, was passiert. (17-24)

...Der Menschheit Durst nach Taten lässt sich stillen, Doch nach Bewunderung ist ihr Durst enorm. Der du ihr beide Durste zu erfüllen

40
Vermagst, sei's in der Tropenuniform,
Sei es in Seemannstracht, im Purpurkleide,
Im Rokoko-Kostüm aus starrer Seide,
Sei es im Jagdrock oder Sportgewand,
Willkommen, teurer Fürst, im Heil'gen Land! (41-48) 11

In this poem, "Im heiligen Land," Wedekind attacks
Wilhelm's pomposity and his wastefulness; he satirizes the
Kaiser's obsession with his personal appearance; he
criticizes the Emperor's political irresponsibility and
ironically portrays his (apparent) self-confidence with
his reign. Wilhelm and his ineptitude were too enticing
for the "Bürgerschreck" to ignore.

Wedekind did not support any specific political
parties or policies. He was skeptical of them, seeing
everywhere "'Prügelei und politisches Geschrei, / Aber
keinerlei Politik dabei.'"12 This attitude toward politics
prevailed in German intellectual circles until after 1945.
Traditionally, intellectuals felt that they were "above"
getting involved with the "Prügelei" and "Geschrei" or the
"ordinary" aspects of party politics, and Wedekind's
"Unparteilichkeit" reflects this traditional apolitical
mentality. Still, his moralistic instincts led him to the
edge of political activity. Hahn examines Wedekind's
contradictory behavior:

Die starken Widersprüche in den politischen
Anschauungen Wedekinds wurzeln gerade darin, dass
dieser individualistische Moralist das
"Lebendige" als Maßstab setzt. So gelingt es ihm
wie keinem der bürgerlichen Lyriker dieser Jahre,
einen satirischen Zeitspiegel gegen die
militaristisch-bürgerliche "Krämer"-Herrschaft zu
Concrete political issues were not, however, situated at the center of Wedekind's poetry: first and foremost, he was an antibourgeois poet. At nightly cabaret performances, he would entertain spellbound audiences with original poems adapted to music, either familiar folk melodies or his own compositions. These lyrical songs, written mainly in ballad style, were full of social criticism—and were as shocking as his plays, although cabaret audiences were not as upset by the content of Wedekind's material as theater-goers. They expected his "antibürgerlich" criticism and even went to his performances because of it. The theater audience did not. These cabaret songs portrayed the individual (often a young person) confronted with the norms of a superficial or distant and materialistic society. A certain stark or cold quality, in the dissonance of the music as well as the plot and characters, emphasizes his stinging antibourgeois criticism. "Brigitte B." and "Ich habe meine Tante geschlachtet," two of his most famous ballads, typify his poetry. In "Brigitte B." for example, a young woman succumbs to the seduction of an "individual," who after forcing sex on her, robs her employers. The employers are "naturally" more concerned about the stolen
material goods than about the psychological implications of Brigitte's (forced) sexual experience. In an ironic twist, Brigitte ends up in jail—a proper punishment for those who are sexually enslaved. The poem's tone is matter-of-fact and as distant as society is from those like Brigitte. The victim, or delinquent, depending on the point of view, appears in the poem just as she would in a German newspaper report: no last name, just "Brigitte B." This and the fact that her seducer is referred to only as the "individual" stress the anonymity of these two human beings within their society and also serve to universalize the incident.

In "Ich habe meine Tante geschlachtet," Wedekind uses the traditional ballad form to present an extremely untraditional plot. The nephew doesn't just kill his aunt for her treasures, he coldly "slaughters" her. The sing-song ballad meter undercuts the shock of this horror story; the traditional poetic devices contrast sharply with the content to underline the nephew's shocking plea for Youth, youth within a society of old, weak aunts.

Wedekind's main concern was social criticism. He satirized the bourgeoisie with passion and though his political interests were usually more incidental than determined, his satirical "political" poetry produced sensational results, as well as increased profits for his publisher, Albert Langen. As apolitical as he is considered to be, his "politische Gedichte" provided some of the most
poignantly critical satires written on political events and policies in Wilhelmine Germany.

Like Wedekind, the moralist Arthur Schnitzler was also classified as an apolitical writer. Many of his works, however, contain political undertones and deal with issues prevalent in fin-de-siècle Austrian politics. One of his most brilliant short stories, "Leutnant Gustl,"15 provides excellent proof for this claim. As a forerunner to the Joycean literary mode, Schnitzler employs the stream-of-consciousness technique to allow Lt. Gustl to narrate the story himself—through his thoughts. The reader sees and hears the evening's misadventures from Gustl's extremely subjective perspective, but also is allowed a deeper glimpse into the political situation and societal structure that have shaped Gustl. Hartmut Scheible aptly assesses that, "drei Dutzend Seiten genügen, um ein erstaunlich vollständiges Bild der österreichischen Realität zu entwerfen." Further he notes, "Schnitzler [hat] in der Titelfigur den bedeutsamen Sozialcharakter seiner Zeit ausgewählt: einen Leutnant der k. u. k. Armee."16 Schnitzler undoubtedly chose a lieutenant of the Austrian army for this work in order to portray the mentality of the military and its critical role in society. Gustl's inner ramblings gradually disclose this military mentality, as well as his temperament and his value system. Being in the army and being "worthy" of being an officer are Gustl's
only desires in life, are his preoccupation, even obsession. To uphold that honor, he willingly would die—by
his own hand if necessary, or in a duel.

After spending the evening at a concert, Gustl is preoccupied with his thoughts, mostly about women, and aggressively pushes his way through the coatroom. The master baker rebukes Gustl for his shoving and this (justified) insult is the incident that shoves Gustl over the edge and into a melancholy abyss. Gustl overreacts. Furious because his honor as a military representative of the Kaiser has been violated, he convinces himself that he must commit suicide:

_...Ehre verloren, alles verloren!...Ich hab' ja nichts anderes zu tun, als meinen Revolver zu laden und...Gustl, Gustl, mir scheint, du glaubst noch immer nicht recht dran? Komm nur zur Besinnung...es gibt nichts anderes...wenn du auch dein Gehirn zumarterst, es gibt nichts anderes!...Jetzt heisst's nur mehr, im letzten Moment sich anständig benehmen, ein Mann sein, ein Offizier sein... (LG 92)_

In the empty, superficial world that Gustl perceives as reality, he has no alternative but to "save his honor" by killing himself. Gustl has become an extension of the military institution and as such, symbolizes its aggressive tendencies and its anachronistic views. As Scheible remarks, "Gustls psychische Disposition entspricht [...] der Grundtendenz des imperialistischen Staates: der gewaltsamen Realisierung des Expansionsdrang." 17 The military answer is Gustl's answer: aggression. Schnitzler
deftly combines social criticism with psychology to reveal the aggressive impulses which he sees at the core of Austrian society. He does not make a directly negative statement about the military or war, but Gustl's wandering thoughts reveal Schnitzler's criticism: "... ist eh' nicht schad' um mich...Und was hab' ich denn vom ganzen Leben gehabt?--Etwas hätt' ich gern noch mitgemacht: einen Krieg--aber da hätt' ich lang' warten können...Und alles übrige kenn' ich..." (LG 100)

Filled with self-pity and facing death, Gustl somehow senses the emptiness of his life. His life has been meaningless, and thus defending the honor of his rank becomes the essence of his existence. Even at his young age, he is bored with life ("alles Übrige kenn' ich..."); the sexual instincts he has pursued are inherently aggressive because they are intertwined with his military ideals, and he is characteristically insensitive towards his sexual partners. Therefore, only the battlefield could offer the climax of life for him, the officer, further confirming the aggressive tendencies of the society Schnitzler is so subtly criticizing.

Through Gustl's consciousness, the author deals with the fundamentals of Austrian society, thought, and tradition. For the many Gustls in society, the military hierarchy provides stability, security and what meaning life has. It is the institution around which Austrian
society revolves, and also upon which it depends to uphold its present political and imperialistic form. Gustl identifies with this institution. In fact, his personality becomes inseparable from his image of the military: his expectations (of himself) become identical to those of the institution (of him). Inevitably, he is as superficial as it, and therefore can find no real essence in life. Rey confirms: "Im Strom von Gustls Wahrnehmungen, Gedanken und Erinnerungen stellt sich nicht nur die Fadenscheinigkeit seines Ehrbegriffs und die Hohlheit der militärischen Konvention heraus, sondern auch das ganze Elend seines durch Angst, Einsamkeit, Genussucht und Dummheit bestimmten Existenz."18

Subtly, but harshly, Schnitzler is criticizing the military for what it represents: with its uniforms, regulations, and parades, i.e. with its superficiality, the military epitomizes society’s façades. It is representative of all the sterile institutions of society and also symbolizes the aggressive power necessary to maintain an authoritarian government.

This soft-spoken attack, however, did not remain unnoticed by the upper echelon of the military, especially since Schnitzler himself was a reserve officer in the "k.u.k." army. Immediately after publication of "Leutnant Gustl," Schnitzler was ordered to appear before an angry military court, but he repeatedly refused to comply with
the summons, "da er einem militärischen Gericht keinerlei Urteil über seine literarischen Werke zugesteht." Not only did the military take note of this work, though, so did the press. It also noted his refusal to appear before the military court—and a scandal was born. The social democratic newspapers and the "Neue Freie Presse" were sympathetic toward Schnitzler and voiced their support, while others (the "Reichswehr" for instance), who were anti-Semitic and conservative, harshly ridiculed his behavior. "Leutnant Gustl" created an ongoing public controversy until the military finally decided to demote Schnitzler. Wagner summarizes the scandal:

"Leutnant Gustl" is not an isolated work in Schnitzler's repertoire in its critical examination of the role of the military in Austrian society. The drama Freiwild, for example, depicts just how thoroughly the military mentality pervaded society and the psychological power it held over civilians and soldiers alike. In a small resort town close to Vienna, a naive but talented young actress, Anna Riedl, is trying to improve her acting skills and get "discovered." The town is teeming with soldiers, who enjoy the light summer theater, mainly
because they think that the actresses are there to please them. "Love 'em and leave 'em" is the prevailing attitude, and expected by all—except Anna. When Oberleutnant Karinski decides he wants Anna, he is insulted by her refusal to accommodate him, and in disbelief, keeps trying to win her affections. To no avail. In anger he insults her name within the hearing of Paul Rönning, her would-be lover, who slaps Karinski, to the horror of all present. A duel is unavoidable for the honor of the army is at stake. In many of his works, as in Freiwild, the duel provides a crucial vehicle for Schnitzler's criticism of the military because it epitomizes an empty and meaningless (as well as illegal) tradition. It is supposed to represent a face-saving device, but is instead another façade, a deadly game that is out of touch with 20th century reality. This drama again vividly represents the degree to which the Austrian military permeated all aspects of life and how closely sexuality is identified with its power. The civilian Rönning finds out that resistance to the (military) guidelines of the state could be deadly.

Such criticism of the military left Schnitzler vulnerable as a target for military retaliation, and political scandals became unavoidable. Schnitzler and Wedekind were both reproved for their attacks on the state and on military policy, but since neither dangerously threatened his respective government, the reprimands were
more or less routine. Wedekind served a jail sentence (albeit not extremely uncomfortable) and Schnitzler did not suffer severely from his demotion in the "k.u.k. Armee!" Still, the fact that they were reprimanded and censored exemplifies their governments' inability to allow or accept any form of criticism.

Sexuality

Lulu

Wedekind constantly clashed with the state over his works and relentlessly fought for recognition from the public. Though he was a popular cabaret performer and certain segments of society appreciated his satirical writing in "Simpl," his dramas (and prose works) created a serious dilemma for much of the public. A skeptical audience confronted the outsider and "Bürgerschreck" Wedekind when he presented his shocking sense of morality in what amounted to a radical "pre-Expressionistic" form. The "sensitive" public did not want to be confronted with his provocation or with his blunt portrayal of sexuality. As an outsider who had also experienced life within established society, Wedekind had acquired a keen sense of morality, and with his offensive dramas he attempted to shock a complacent society into looking past conventional
façades, as he had done.

Most infamous of all his figures and the lead character of *Erdgeist* and *Die Büchse der Pandora*, it was Lulu who most offended the public's sense of morality with her open sexuality. Lulu does indeed embody the primitive sexual drives and primal instincts in (wo)man, and the audience found this profane and scandalous. In the prologue to *Erdgeist*, Wedekind introduces Lulu as a snake. The animal trainer invites and entices the audience into his menagerie to stay and watch his show. Nowhere else can such exotic animals be seen: enter Lulu. The serpent symbol, reminiscent of the temptress in the Garden of Eden, underscores her animalistic as well as her female qualities and embodies the "power" of woman. Her primitiveness in turn stresses her innocence, as do her "Kinderaugen," which remain a leitmotif throughout both plays. Yet, the serpent also traditionally represents a wily, deceitful creature, the creature responsible for original sin, and thus underscores Lulu's responsibility for so many deaths throughout the tragedy. As the serpent symbolizes, Lulu is both guilty and innocent. She is paradoxical, as are her relationships to the other characters.

Lulu's relationship to Dr. Schön typifies this paradox. Rescued from the gutter by Schön, she remains a social outsider throughout; she never belongs to established society despite her marriage to Schön, a pillar
in the community. Yet Schö̈n, unable to resist Lulu, succumbs to her wily snare. Lulu claims he is the only man she ever loved; nevertheless, after cheating on him, she shoots him. Lulu's character fluctuates throughout the plays. Her behavior is seemingly contradictory, but she consistently lives for and listens to her instincts. This adds to the ambiguity of her person. In contrast, the bourgeois "Weltmann," Dr. Schö̈n, cunning because of his intellect rather than his instincts, holds onto his power only as long as he can believe in himself and his personal power--thereafter he is engulfed and destroyed by Lulu.

Lulu has no regard for the external social code. She lives according to her primitive, human-animal code, rather than bourgeois morality. Her paradoxical character depicts and emphasizes Wedekind's ideal of antibourgeois morality, although he does not present Lulu as the solution to society's shortcomings. Her purpose is to provoke, and her decline and ultimate demise are accusations against a complacent, hypocritical bourgeois society. Lulu is not only the victim of her own drives (as was Dr. Schö̈n ultimately), but also of such a hypocritical society.

Every man has a different name for Lulu. She is Nelli, Eva, Mignon and Lulu, and she becomes for each of them, that which they wish to see in her, in (generic) woman. But, it doesn't matter, as her conversation with Schigolch reveals:
Lulu: Dass du mich Lulu nennst.
Schigolch: Lulu, nicht? Habe ich dich jemals anders genannt?
Lulu: Ich heisse seit Menschengedanken nicht mehr Lulu.

Schigolch: Als bliebe das Prinzip nicht immer das gleiche!  
(Erd lll)

Lulu symbolizes woman for the men around her, as her
"namelessness" displays, and which the ambiguous, aloof
nature of her character allows to happen. Men do not treat
her as an individual, rather as a summary of woman because
she is so physical, so desirable. She is an exaggeration
of certain "female" characteristics and as such becomes a
caricature. Sexuality is her life and her life is her
drives. Yet, despite her many men, she is not by nature a
prostitute. When Casti Piani tries to blackmail her into
"voluntarily" joining a bordello in Egypt, she declares
that she cannot sell the only thing that was ever hers.
Later in London, however, she has no recourse but to become
a streetwalker in order to support herself and her small
entourage. In the role of a prostitute she loses her
intrinsic power to control her life and her sexuality,
implied in her remark: "Gibt es etwas Traurigeres auf
dieser Welt als ein Freudenmädchen!"(BP 214). She
fails---fatally, because as Schigolch perceived, "Lulu
versteht die Sache nicht. Die kann von der Liebe nicht
leben, weil ihr Leben die Liebe ist"(BP 224). Hans
Kaufmann explains: "Liebe ist ihr Verwirklichung ihrer
Vedekind blends contradictions within his characters and plays to present his Weltanschauung to the audience. Robert Burns, for instance, perceives the importance of recognizing,

...that Vedekind's conception of the relationship of the individual to society is an extremely dialectical one and that therefore his plays invariably centre on the interaction of conflicting values. Consequently, many of Vedekind's characters tend to be no more than abstractions, the mere bearers of polarized ideas.26

Hence, Vedekind's characters are often caricatures in their portrayals of conflicting values, and as such, become abstractions. Indeed, Lulu is an abstraction. She is not human. Nevertheless, her ambiguous traits--passive but active; innocent yet guilty; unable to love 27 and living only for love; unemotional but passionate--portray precisely Vedekind's perception of an individual's interaction with society, and of life's ambiguities. As a character and "bearer of ideas," Lulu is full of vital, life-giving forces that conflict with a narrow-minded bourgeois society that smothers her instincts and thus is partially to blame for her demise. She is full of
contradictions and ambiguities that simply do not fit into
the scheme of conventional society. These outsider
qualities prohibit her from adapting to a regulated
society, but also, they reveal the superficiality of that
society. In the end, Lulu's vital forces become destructive
when she is forced to the extreme of becoming a prostitute.
In an attempt to survive, she acts contrarily to her nature
and surrenders to society's hypocrisy.

Wedekind wanted the public to be outraged by Lulu.
She, as so many other of his characters, is supposed to
shock the narrow-minded, who so smugly live within their
"traditional" morality. Lulu does not represent Wedekind's
vision of a new morality, but in her radical contrast to
society, she is his projectile against the complacency,
mediocrity, and limitations of bourgeois morality. She
personifies his call for awareness and change.

Expectedly, Wedekind's "Lulu-Tragödie" was plagued by
censorship harassment from the start. The authorities
claimed that the drama violated the social code of conduct,
but Wedekind insistently refused to surrender to them, and
appeared repeatedly in court to defend himself and his
works. One court would acquit him and the next accuse him
again. He also endured continuous police surveillance.
Erdgeist created fewer problems than Die Büchse der Pandora,
and it was finally produced with him as part of the cast
(Dr. Schön), and he was even able to go on tour with it in
1898. Yet often the actors in Erdgeist misunderstood Wedekind and his purpose as much as the authorities or public, according to Kutscher:


At least Erdgeist could be performed, if misunderstood by its performers. With Büchse der Pandora, the playwright experienced even less luck: "öffentlichen Aufführungen der Büchse der Pandora hat sich die Zensur trotz verzweifelter Gegenwehr des Dichters widersetzt, solange er lebte."29

Wedekind had frequent clashes with the censor. The staging of many of his best plays was prohibited, and even readings of them were forbidden, but "Wedekind hat Zusammenstösse mit der Zensur keineswegs vermieden; seine Zugeständnisse, Erklärungen und Bearbeitungen waren nur ein Katz-und Mausspiel. Er suchte völlige Auseinandersetzung."30 Kutscher reports that Wedekind came up against the censor early in his literary career and claims that "die Zensur/ keinen Künstler von Rang...so geschadet hat wie ihm."31 The "Bürgerschreck" even dramatized this harassment in his one act drama, Die Zensur, wherein he discusses the problems
that he experienced with censorship and vividly depicts the artist's despair. For Wedekind, censorship epitomized an unbearable disregard of man's intellectual and artistic powers, and as an artist, he demanded unconditional freedom for these. Die Zensur was another battle in the ongoing Wedekind-Censor war, and was censored, as expected.

Reigen

Schnitzler, like Wedekind, was harrassed by censorship. In many of his works examining sexuality, morality, and their roles in society, Schnitzler also frequently overstepped the limits of the Habsburg censor. His vision of reality in his city and culture during the "belle époque" of the Austrian monarchy and that of the authorities often did not agree. In the midst of the Empire's decline, Schnitzler not only observed, but actively participated in upper class bourgeois life. His works, filled with autobiographical experiences, reproduce the atmosphere in which he lived and worked. The melancholy atmosphere of impending death intertwined with false gaiety, both in his works and in reality. Alfred Fritsche describes the characteristic elements of Schnitzler's works, which are hard to distinguish from a description of fin-de-siècle Vienna:

Müdigkeit, Resignation und Lebensüberdruss, Über-
Schnitzler's works, as did those of many of his contemporaries, Hofmannsthal, for instance, possess the mood of a sickly, rotting "Spätzeit" and capture the loneliness, the emptiness, and disillusionment of searching individuals within such a society. Claudio Magris confirms that this era in the Habsburg monarchy provides the scenery for the alienation and inner strife Schnitzler depicts in his works:

Reigen,35 probably Schnitzler's most "scandalous" drama, recreates the destructive rhythm of (sexual) drives that Magris speaks of, and depicts most vividly the futile efforts of individuals to overcome resignation and loneliness through sexuality and the physical.

Schnitzler wrote the scenes of Reigen in 1896-7 and
had 200 copies privately printed in 1900. Finally in 1903 he released the drama for publication, and as he had feared, public reaction was ugly. Only after the end of World War I and a liberalization of the censor could Reigen finally be performed, first in Berlin in 1920 and then in Vienna in 1921. But even then public protest disturbed the performances, and the anti-Semitic tendencies of these protests were obvious. In Berlin, the performance was almost cancelled at the last minute.

...doch die Direktorin, die Schauspielerin Gertrud Eysoldt, scheute die angedrohte Strafe nicht. Sie verlas die Einstweilige Verfügung vor dem Vorhang und sagte, sie gehe lieber ins Gefängnis, als dass sie die Sache der Kunst im Stich lasse. Die Einstweilige Verfügung wurde schliesslich aufgehoben, mit der mutigen Begründung, die Berliner Aufführung sei eine sittliche Tat. Nachdem deutschvölkische Kreise einen Theaterskandal inszeniert hatten, kamen alle an der Aufführung Beteiligten doch noch auf die Anklagebank. Im berühmten "Reigen"-Prozess wurden sie dann allesamt freigesprochen. Dennoch hielt Schnitzler den "Reigen" von der Bühne zurück.

This episode reveals an important difference between Schnitzler and Wedekind: Schnitzler preferred voluntarily to withdraw Reigen from the stage, rather than to fight the authorities incessantly for permission to perform, as Wedekind would have done. Schnitzler's approach to his writing was much softer; his works often incited public protest, and sometimes violent demonstration, but not because he intentionally wished to shock. By contrast, Wedekind was harsher and more aggressive in his criticism.
He was less accommodating and so were his intentions—he wished to withhold nothing from the public, whereas Schnitzler preferred not to create any ripples (if possible to avoid doing so without compromising his principles), though he often did.

Why was the public so outraged with Reigen? Schnitzler had written this series of brief dramatic sex scenes a quarter of a century before they were performed, and still the public was not ready for them. In the ten scenes of Reigen, ten characters from different social classes variously attempt to fill similar voids in their lives with rotating sexual partners. Hensel summarizes the implications of this partner swapping:


The carousel of sexuality is often compared with the baroque "Totentanz," which some critics claim as the origin for Schnitzler's concept.39 The partners reach out for human warmth and compassion, but are left with only an empty sexual experience: "...die Liebe /wird/ etwas
The characters are compelled to repeat and repeat their love making in an attempt to fill their empty lives, but also because they are unwilling to "commit" themselves. Thus, love inevitably remains an unattainable ideal. In Reigen sexuality serves Schnitzler as a device to emphasize this illusive nature of love as well as to reveal the façades that uphold a superficial society.

Within this dishonest society, the prostitute is the most honest of the ten characters. She does not hide her purpose or her instincts as the others try to do. They claim to love each other, but each enters the sexual affair full of lies, full of hypocrisies, and illusions. The soldier draws the prostitute into the Reigen cycle by acquainting her with the brutal conventions integral to a bourgeois society that depends on soldiers, i.e. the military, for survival. This aggressiveness prevails throughout Reigen, and is represented in the effort of each "Liebespaar" to fulfill its sexual drives, while it at the same time tries to ignore society's traditional moral standards. After these sexual urges have been relieved, the reality of conventional standards returns for all except the prostitute.

In the last scene, the cycle completes itself when the "Graf" ends up with the prostitute. As he stares at her while she sleeps, he ponders, "Wenn man nicht wüsst, was
Betrachtet sie lang. Ich hab viel kennt, die haben nicht einmal im Schlafen so tugendhaft ausg'sehn ... (Rei 128). She fascinates him; he says she reminds him of someone... and in parting he kisses her hand. "Wie einer Prinzessin," he says and continues, "wenn man nur das Kopferl sieht, wie jetzt... beim Aufwachen sieht doch eine jede unschuldig aus... meiner Seel, alles mögliche könnt man sich einbilden, wenns nicht so nach Petroleum stinken möcht... (Rei 129). The prostitute is herself—the petroleum light prohibits any illusions of what she is, and after chatting with her, the "Graf" appreciates this: "... Ich weiss doch, dass es solchen Frauenzimmern nur aufs Geld ankommt... was sag ich—solchen... es ist schön... dass sie sich wenigstens nicht verstellt, das sollte einen eher freuen..." (Rei 131). She has nothing to hide; she is cheating on no one, and the cycle ends momentarily with the "Graf" who recognizes her innocence and honesty.

Ironically, since sex is the prostitute's life, this is the only scene that has no explicit sexual encounter—only innuendos of what happened "bei der Nacht." Still, the prostitute is automatically an outsider to bourgeois society because she openly violates its rules. The others become outsiders when they secretly violate the strict conventions that they adhere to in order to pursue their sexual instincts. Except for the "Dirne" they are all actually hypocritical prostitutes. On the one hand, they try
to rejoin society after THE act: the soldier can't wait to return to the dance; the young man runs to the local pub; the young wife declares she can never be in the same social company with the young man again, but then agrees to meet him "morgen beim Kotillon" (Rei 89). Yet, on the other hand, they cannot rejoin society, and remain outsiders, if only in their own eyes: the young wife wants to pretend to be her husband's lover; the husband can't resist having an affair with a "süsses Mädel" after moralizing to his wife about that kind of woman; the poet and actress chide each other, "wem bist du in diesem Moment untreu?" (Rei 116).

According to bourgeois standards, their actions violate the rules, and are (potentially) scandalous. When they get caught up in the Reigen cycle, they become outsiders, at least psychologically. Schnitzler's portrayal of sex as an instinctual force propelling the actions of his characters thus unveils many of society's fundamental problems: hypocrisy, double standards, lying, and dishonesty as well as the spreading, prevailing decay.

The functioning of bourgeois society is not solely directed by traditional moral standards, military conventions, or government regulations. A certain economic principle is also at work shaping the dimensions of all of these aspects of society, which the themes of love and sex in Schnitzler's and Wedekind's works begin to disclose.

For example, the Reigen characters change sexual partners,
in an unending social progression that is reminiscent of the free love that Wedekind advocates in his works. Horst Albert Glaser clarifies:

> Was der "freie Liebesmarkt" meinen könnte, den Wedekinds Marquis Casti Piani als Gegenutopie zur bürgerlichen Ehe preist, bildet nachgerade den Idealtypus für den "Reigen". Er wird hier allerdings nicht mit Prostitution in einem Bordell verwechselt, wie ihn Wedekind, bürgerlich auch hierin, sich vorstellt.41

According to Glaser, the moralist Wedekind bases his theory of the love market on supply and demand, whereas the medical doctor Schnitzler bases his on physical needs.42 Indeed, Piani zealously argues for institutionalization of "free" love, with supply readily on hand for the demand, for those pursuing sexual satisfaction. The same exchange of partners takes place in both instances, but Schnitzler's characters establish their bordello outside the walls of an institution: "Das Bordell ist gratis und überall."43

One can recognize clearly then, the antibourgeois morality that Wedekind presents throughout his works. For the church and state, institutionalized love is an unacceptable way of dealing with sexual drives, so for them, prostitutes and "Freudenmädchen" represent immorality and have no place in a bourgeois, Christian society (at least openly). Interestingly, Piani later commits suicide in Tod und Teufel, after defending and justifying his reasons for operating a bordello. In a paradoxical turn of events, he convinces his prudish adversary, Fräulein...
Elfreide Machus, of the purity of his convictions, while simultaneously convincing himself of the dual nature of his hopeless situation. The above discussion also points out the bourgeois morality that Schnitzler portrays throughout his works. Schnitzler depicts in realistic terms the society he knew so well, as he perceived it. This too resulted in "unacceptable" literature, since the audience did not want to confront publicly something it could not admit privately, even when that something was an undeniable feature of their society.

Another comparable trait of Lulu and Reigen is the characters' lack of identity. As discussed above, each man in Lulu's life has a different name for her; she becomes the "generic woman" as they project an identity onto her. Similarly, the characters in Reigen are nameless: "die Dirne, der Soldat, das Stubenmädchen, der junge Herr, die junge Frau, der Gatte, das süße Mädel, der Dichter, die Schauspielerin, der Graf." These characters also assume certain projected identities, and as sexual partners, they become players in an erotic game, lured on by the gamble, but stripped of their individuality. As Lulu becomes a "bearer of ideas," they become types that represent ideas and social classes, and together they depict the carousel of sexual intrigue that drives the bourgeois society in its whirling cycle.

The Reigen characters look for some kind of meaning in
life as they follow their sexual instincts in desperate playfulness. Lulu also diligently pursues her primitive drives, however, she is unconcerned with the "meaning" of life, as her conversation with Schwarz over the corpse of her first dead husband, Goll, confirms. She can only answer, "ich weiss es nicht" to the existential questions that Schwarz confronts her with: "Kannst du die Wahrheit sagen?... Glaubst du an einem Schöpfer?...Kannst du bei etwas schwören?...Woran glaubst du denn?...Hast du denn keine Seele?...Hast du schon einmal geliebt--?..." (Erd 106). These questions would be at least superficially important to the nameless in Reigen, but are not to Lulu, not even in the presence of death.

Social Institutions and Questions

Both of the authors can be considered outsiders. Wedekind's unconventional lifestyle and shocking dramas were unacceptable to the bourgeoisie. Undaunted, however, he fought for recognition from the (bourgeois) public, while taking critical punches at it. A socially critical stance was only partially the reason why Schnitzler was an "Aussenseiter." Schnitzler lived within the realm of bourgeois society and (usually) enjoyed a comfortable lifestyle. He even achieved much success as a dramatist, his plays often being performed in Vienna's Burgtheater. Yet,
his career was tainted—he was Jewish.

Much of the public outrage and protest against Schnitzler's *Reigen* came from the anti-Semitic factions of Vienna. They staged organized protests outside--and inside--the theater, and instigated demonstrations against the play, tracing (what they viewed as) his immorality to his Jewish roots. The right-wing and clerical newspapers denounced many Jewish writers and authors and their works, for example, Stefan Zweig and Gustav Mahler as well as Schnitzler. They objected to Schnitzler's religion just as much (or more) as to the sexual promiscuity in his works. Excuses were often invented to agitate the public against the Jews, as anti-Semitic tendencies grew. Some Jews had risen on the social scale, (Johann Schnitzler, Arthur's father, for instance) and as they progressively assimilated themselves into bourgeois Austrian society, right-wing German nationalists and Christian anti-Semites began to act against what they perceived as a Jewish threat. These tendencies climaxed when Karl Lueger, an avid anti-Semite, was elected mayor of Vienna. The Kaiser at first refused to ratify Lueger's election, but after the increasing pressure of mass politics, he reluctantly relented and "the era of classical liberal ascendancy in Austria reached its formal close."44

With such spreading anti-Jewish sentiments, Arthur Schnitzler could never fully assimilate into the bourgeois
society of which he, ironically, was such an integral member. Hensel writes that, "Schnitzler sagte einmal von sich: 'Als Wiener bin ich daheim; als Jude bin ich das Gefühl des Fremdseins niemals losgeworden.'"45 Many Jews of this younger, bourgeois generation also faced the dilemma of breaking away from Judaism. They thus became isolated and estranged from the old and did not belong to the new. Kafka wrote to Max Brod about this conflict:

\[ \text{Er spricht} \text{ von 'dem Verhältnis der jungen Juden zu ihrem Judentum' and von 'der schrecklichen inneren Lage dieser Generation' und meint: ‘Weg vom Judentum, meist mit unklarer Zustimmung der Väter (dieser Unklarheit war das Empörrende), wollten die meisten,... sie wollten es, aber mit den Hinterbeinchen klebten sie noch am Judentum des Vaters und mit den Vorderbeinchen fanden sie keinen neuen Boden. Die Verzweiflung darüber war ihre Inspiration.'} \]

The inner conflict Kafka speaks of often acted as an inspirational catalyst for young Jewish authors. The process of coming to terms with their Jewishness in a bourgeois Christian world, while at the same time resisting the repression of this society, stimulated creativity. Many prominent Jewish writers emerged around the turn of the century. Such significant figures as Karl Kraus, Kafka, Hermann Bahr, Stefan Zweig, and Schnitzler are incredibly important to the Austrian literature of this period.

Most Gentiles rejected the Jewish attempt to assimilate. Thus, the protest against Schnitzler was as
much against his Jewishness, which certain factions blamed for fin-de-siècle immorality, as against his art. Jews became the scapegoats for the ills of the decaying monarchy and for societal ailments resulting from industrialization, capitalism, and imperialism. There were also other scapegoats—liberals, socialists, ethnic minorities, for example—but none so widely persecuted as the Jews, as horrifying later events confirmed.

Schnitzler's drama Professor Bernhardi 47 examines anti-Semitism and presents "den Wiener Antisemitismus der Schönener- und Lueger-Epoche um die Jahrhundertwende als einen selbstverständlichen Teil des Alltags."48 This play remained unperformed in Vienna until after the "abolishment" of the censor in 1918. The world premiere, originally planned for Vienna in 1912, was transferred to Berlin (in that year), where it became an enormous success. Berlin audiences apparently did not feel threatened by a situation that they judged as being relevant to Vienna only.

In this drama, the head doctor of a private clinic prevents a Catholic priest from giving a dying girl her last rights, because he morally feels the girl has the right to die in euphoria. She does not realize that she is on her deathbed, and has hope of convalescence. Bernhardi believes the priest's presence would upset her unnecessarily. When the nurse tells her that the Father is coming,
the patient does indeed die in agony, with all her illusions cruelly shattered. The debate of moral conviction (priest versus doctor) is complicated further because Professor Bernhardi is a Jew. The religions and the social ideological differences of the two men become a political battleground for all of Vienna. Bernhardi is an apolitical figure, whose only concerns are for his clinic and the well-being of his patients. But his actions are twisted (by both sides) for the purposes of opposing political opportunists. The doctor emotionally, almost instinctively, reacts to the priest's intentions, believing it his right and duty, naively unaware of the consequences these actions will have outside of the clinic. As Scheible observes:

Ausgerechnet Hochroitzpointner ist es, dessen Worte schon zu Beginn des Stucks auf die falsche Trennung von Privatem und Öffentlichem verweisen: "Ja, Schwester, da draussen in der Welt kommen allerlei Sachen vor." Schon hier wird die Klinik als besonderer Bereich hingestellt, der mit der übrigen Welt nur wenig gemein habe: genau das aber ist Bernhardis verhängnisvoller Irrtum.49

Politics take over and Bernhardi's moral intentions, as well as the best interests of the patient, are long forgotten in the intrigues that consequently follow. Even within the clinic, external anti-Semitic sentiments prevail, and though Bernhardi can be credited largely with the clinic's success, he is coerced into resigning as director, replaced by the staunchly anti-Semitic vice-director, Dr. Ebenwald. After Bernhardi serves his prison
sentence for violating Catholic doctrine, he is championed by the liberal press and liberal factions as a hero. But he remains apolitical; he does not want to fight or create ripples, and sees himself not as a hero, but rather as a victim—a pawn in a greater political chess game. The doctor defends his personal beliefs, and not those of a larger group, when confronted by the priest. He remains faithful to his personal convictions throughout, refusing to make political compromises to save himself. He also refuses to use his situation in the fight against anti-Semitism and against the Catholic Church. However, "Hofrat" Winkler shrewdly remarks that others will use him and the situation:

Bernhardi: Ich verzichte auf die wohltätigen Folgen. Ich will meine Ruhe haben!
Hofrat: Es ist nicht anzunehmen, Herr Professor, dass der weitere Verlauf der Angelegenheit von Ihnen allein abhängen dürfte. Die wird jetzt ihrem Weg gehen, auch ohne Sie.
Bernhardi: Es wird ihr nichts anderes übrigbleiben.

... Bernhardi: ...Für mich ist diese Angelegenheit erledigt. (P.B. 249)
Bernhardi: ...Vor dem, was sich jetzt zu entwickeln scheint, ergreife ich die Flucht.
Hofrat: Ich fürchte nur, da werden Sie länger ausbleiben müssen, als Ihren zahlreichen Patienten angenehm sein dürfte. Denn jetzt fängt die Geschichte erst an, Herr Professor, und sie kann lang dauern! (P.B. 251)

Bernhardi wants to retreat; his actions were impulsive and private, and although he will not recant his beliefs, he is
also not willing to take them into the political arena. Yet, others will manipulate his "heroism" and turn him into a martyr—the individual will is subsumed by a social whole, as Rieder stresses:

Er (Schnitzler) demonstriert ... die Ohnmacht des Einzelnen inmitten einer von oben gelenkten und durch die schwachen, verlogenen Nullen der Mehrheit geförderte antisemitische Hetze, der der Held von Schnitzlers Stück als einzigerfühlender Mensch inmitten von Marionetten auch weiterhin die Stirn bieten wird...50

Schnitzler addresses more than the Jewish Question with this drama. He scrutinizes Vienna's political machinery, the ethics of the Catholic Church, and the hypocrisy and intrigues of Viennese society. They are all interrelated and symptomatic of the existing cultural decadence. In Professor Bernhardi the "Zeitkritiker" Schnitzler unmistakably reveals the political constraints placed upon individuals in a morally hypocritical society. And, as in "Leutnant Gustl," the apolitical author does make a critical political statement.

Wedekind's works do not specifically examine the controversy of anti-Semitism, probably because he was not a Jew and thus not affected by the implications of being Jewish, and also because anti-Semitism was not as marked in Munich as in Vienna at this time. Still, Wedekind like Schnitzler, was concerned with portraying and attacking hypocritical conventional institutions, although Wedekind's criticism is not always aimed at exactly the same
Institutions as Schnitzler's. Wedekind's Frühlings Erwachen does not, for instance, parallel Schnitzler's Professor Bernhardi in most ways; however, Wedekind's drama attacks representative institutions of society which regulate and limit the scope of life within society, just as Professor Bernhardi is concerned with such representative institutions. One of Wedekind's most successful dramas, Frühlings Erwachen, serves as an excellent example of his vigorous assault on the German educational system that helps form social and political policies. In this drama, educational and religious authorities work together to maintain the status quo, and to insure that the youth in their sphere of influence conform to the establishment's regimented rules. This work depicts what happens when youth tries to break out of this stifling mold--Wedekind has subtitled it: "Eine Kindertragödie."

The author explores the adolescents' physical and emotional problems with puberty within a repressive society. He portrays how shortsighted adults, as members of this society, confound the confusion that these children are trying to come to terms with. For example, Wendla Bergmann's mother refuses to explain the facts of life to her when Wendla rejects the stork story, and gives Wendla little defense for facing the world: "Um ein Kind zu bekommen--muss man den Mann--mit dem man verheiratet ist..."
lieben--lieben sag' ich dir--wie man nur einen Mann lieben kann!...(F.E. 33). So, Wendla has no conception of what happened between her and Melchior Gabor out in the woods. Incredulous, when her mother tells her she is pregnant, Wendla does not understand: "Ich bin ja noch nicht verheiratet..."(F.E. 60), while her distraught mother laments, "...ich habe an dir nichts anders getan, als meine liebe gute Mutter an mir getan hat"(F.E. 60).

Moritz Stiefel presents another example of classic adult misunderstanding. He is constantly afraid of his not being promoted to the next class and of how his parents would then react. Yet, he is distracted by this obsession to perform well, as well as by puberty's urges. Finally, unable to cope with parental and school pressures and the guilt of his adolescent sexual arousal, he commits suicide. Before his death, Moritz had gone to his good friend, Melchior Gabor, for advice and counsel in everything. In contrast to Moritz, Melchior has received a liberal, open upbringing; his mother is tolerant and trusts Melchior's sensibility. She represents a minority of adults who have faith in their children and understand their problems. In the end though, she is powerless when confronted by the establishment (and her husband) who, unwilling to examine the question of responsibility and negligence, simply blame Melchior for Moritz' and Wendla's fates. Representative of the suppressive nature of this society, the adults in the
drama do not try to understand what has happened, and at
the cemetery, next to Moritz' grave, his father
"appropriately" disowns his son: "Der Junge war nicht von
mir!—Der Junge war nicht von mir! Der Junge hat mir von
ekleinauf nicht gefallen!" (F.E. 49). Further, the pastor at
the funeral condemns Moritz' mortal sin, and the teachers
comfort the embittered father by telling him, that Moritz
would not have been promoted anyway. None of the adults
seem to care about the implications of the boy's death.
Why did he kill himself? Still, they need a scapegoat, and
Melchior finds himself in a correctional institution.
Conventional society thus forces Melchior into the role of
an outsider. As long as he conforms to society's
hypocritical sense of morality, his teachers (as
representatives of that conventional society) respect him.
He is the best student, intelligent and personable. But
when Melchior follows his own conscience and free spirit,
he conflicts with their Weltanschauung.

The adults are products of the repressive education
they received from the previous generation (as Frau
Bergmann unknowingly admits). They are not insightful
enough to accept and encourage change in society and in the
upcoming generation. Thus, they lock up Melchior--
sacrificially. Realizing the inherent dangers in such
imprisonment, Melchior escapes. Once again free, he
encounters a "headless" Moritz, who almost entices Melchior
into joining him among the dead. Suddenly a mysterious masked gentleman appears, ridicules Moritz, and offers Melchior the alternative of life. Melchior chooses life—a sensual life certainly contrary to that of the established bourgeoisie, which has rejected him, ignored the problems of puberty, and suppressed the reality of sexuality. But as Walter Sokel observes, "beneath the tragedy inflicted by the false and falsifying values of society we encounter faith in the truth, purity and absolute joy of sensuous experience."52

After the "vermummte Herr" temptingly offers to open up life for him—"Ich erschliesse dir die Welt" (F.E. 67)—Melchior ceases to regret the fate of Wendla and Moritz, for this stranger appeals to his adventurous and independent spirit, and points him ahead, into the future. Although the masked gentleman gives no details of his intentions, he clearly implies that a self-determining life, free of the institutional conventions Melchior has known and been subjected to until now, is what he has in mind for Melchior. He also calls on Melchior (as Wedekind calls on the audience) to examine life—its purpose, its possibilities. Melchior now will have the opportunity to develop his positive human qualities and values. This development undoubtedly conflicts with the realities of the society from which he has just been rejected (and just escaped), as Seehaus confirms:
Die Gesellschaft, als deren Agent der Vermummte Herr den Jüngling Melchior zu erneuter Auseinandersetzung mit dem Leben veranlasst, ist eine andere als die, welche in den vorangehenden Szenen die Kinder-Naturen zu deformieren begann. Hier ist das Ziel nicht mehr das gefügige, angepasste Objekt gesellschaftlicher Konvention, sondern der autarke Mensch, der sich die Möglichkeit freier Option offenhält. Der Vermummte Herr, dem Melchior folgt, steht für den Entwurf einer Gesellschaft, in der sich die selbstbewusste Natur Melchiors undeformiert verwirklichen darf.53

On the one hand, the tragedy portrays Wedekind’s perception of current social and educational ills. On the other, it calls not only for a review of, but also radical change in bourgeois ethics. He wants to awaken (shock!) the complacent public to society’s imposed restrictions and sexual repression—just as sexual instincts awaken within the play’s adolescent characters. Contrarily, while Schnitzler’s Professor Bernhardi critiques the socio-political establishment it is not a call for action. Schnitzler also describes and criticizes society’s imposed restrictions, but he stops short of Wedekind’s didacticism and can still call Professor Bernhardi a comedy, as opposed to Wedekind’s “Kindertragödie.”

With these two dramas, Schnitzler and Wedekind present critical portrayals of different institutions, but institutions that represent the restrictive and intolerant nature of the established authorities that control society: Schnitzler criticizes the religious and legal establishment as opposed to Wedekind’s attack on the educational system.
The autobiographical traits present in both instances emphasize that the authors' works are derived from personal contact with those regulatory authorities. These autobiographical traits also stress the critical intent of both authors. An important difference in their writing, however, is their literary approach. Wedekind was harsher and "louder." Schnitzler was milder and "softer," as the next chapter will discuss.
1. For general information on Wedekind, see for example: Arthur Kutscher, Wedekind. Leben und Werk (München, 1964); Günter Seehaus, Frank Wedekind (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt Verlag, 1974); or Sol Gittleman, Frank Wedekind (New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., 1969). For comments on Wedekind's political poetry, see for example: Manfred Hahn, foreward, Ich hab meine Tante geschlachtet, by Frank Wedekind (München und Wien: Insel Verlag, 1982)

2. Taken from the "Anmerkungen" to Wedekind Ich hab meine Tante geschlachtet, 295.


5. See for example: Seehaus, 84 and Kutscher, 147.

6. Sales of the Simpl containing Heironymus Jobs' political poetry were banned at all of Berlin's transportation stations by the city government because of their satirical nature and critical content. See Hahn, 29.


8. Seehaus, 82.


10. Seehaus, 84.


14. Brecht describes one of Wedekind's performances: "A few
weeks ago at the "Bonbonnière" he sang his songs to guitar accompaniment in a brittle voice, slightly monotonous and quite untrained. No singer ever gave me such a shock, such a thrill. It was the man's intense aliveness, the energy which allowed him to defy sniggering ridicule and proclaim his brazen hymn to humanity, that also gave him this personal magic. He seemed indestructible." Quoted in Modern Drama, 10 (1967-68), 403.


17. Scheible, 81.


21. Wagner, 128.

22. Arthur Schnitzler, "Freiwild," Das dramatische Werk Bd. 2. (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Verlag, 1968) 7-68. The world premiere of Freiwild was in Berlin in 1896.

23. For comments on Wedekind's jail experience see Seehaus, for example, who notes: "Freunden schreibt er [Wedekind] schon aus der Leipziger Untersuchungshaft von dem deutlichen Eindruck, dass man 'alles aufwendet, um mir, soweit es die Hausordnung zulässt, meine Situation zu erleichtern. Und dann habe ich eigentlich genau genommen, ohne im Gefängnis zu sein, schon schlimmeres durchgemacht und deswegen auch nicht gejammert.' Von der Festung Königstein, wo er vom 21. September 1899 bis zur Begnadigung im Februar 1900 einsitzt, weiss er weiter Annehmlichkeiten zu melden." Seehaus, 85.

24. All quotes for Erdgeist and Die Büchse der Pandora are taken from Frank Wedekind, Frühlings Erwachen und andere Dramen (München: Langen Müller, 1977) 85-230.


27. I claim that Lulu is unable to love because she never "loved" anyone but Dr. Schön, and once she finally "triumphed" and forced him to give up all others but her, she began to ignore him. The challenge seems to be, at least partially, if not largely the basis of her attraction and love for him.

28. Kutscher, 137.


31. Kutscher, 270.

32. Kutscher, 279.

33. Alfred Fritsche, Dekadenz im Werk Arthur Schnitzlers (Bern: Herbert Lang, Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1974), 46.


35. All quotes for Reigen are taken from Arthur Schnitzler, Reigen und andere Dramen Das dramatische Werk, Bd. 2 (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Verlag, 1978), 69-132.

36. Seehaus, 70.


40. Rieder, 54.

81

42. Glaser, 159.


47. All quotes for Professor Bernhardi are taken from Arthur Schnitzler, Professor Bernhardi und andere Dramen Das dramatische Werk Bd 6 (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Verlag, 1984) 127-253.


49. Scheible, 105-6.

50. Rieder, 85.

51. All quotes for Frühlings Erwachen are taken from Frank Wedekind, Frühlings Erwachen und andere Dramen (München: Langen Müller Verlag, 1977) 9-70.


53. Seehaus, p. 57.
V. The Loud versus the Soft

Wedekind

Neither Wedekind nor Schnitzler can (or should) be assigned to the mainstream of the leading literary movements prevalent around the turn of the century. Such movements are by definition restricting, though they offer guidelines for observing and interpreting trends and tendencies in the artistic works of an era. But both authors were products of their times, and thus their works contain elements characteristic of such movements. These "typical" elements help to understand the authors' works and status in the literary world, though one must go beyond the guidelines of Naturalism, Impressionism, Expressionism, and other -isms to analyze fully the nature and purpose of their works.

When Wedekind began writing, the Naturalist movement was in full bloom and its most prominent proponent was Gerhart Hauptmann, whom Wedekind met while in Zurich. The two men developed an antipathy for each other, and Wedekind soon rejected Hauptmann as well as Naturalism. He felt that the Naturalists' perspective was narrow, their literature too political, too simplified and lacking in imagination.1 He also rejected "Neo-Romanticists [and] Symbolists with their aristocratic snobbery."2 Wedekind
preferred to follow his own instincts (as did the characters in his works) and combine shocking subject matter with anti-realistic dramatic techniques to convey his grotesque perception of reality. In rejection of old and anticipation of radical new 20th century techniques, he often inserted a comical or ridiculous situation into a tragic plot, as Kaufmann has observed: "Die Mischung von Tragischem und Komischem, das Groteske, das Grausige und zugleich Lächerliche sind aber gerade charakteristisch für.../viele/ Stücke Wedekinds." The author's instinct for tragicomedies particularly stresses the grotesque quality inherent in his works, as well as the "modern" quality of his writing.

His characters, for example, often seem like caricatures because details of plot or characterization are exaggerated or missing altogether. None of them seem realistic because he was not concerned with "small" details. The bohemian Wedekind used many nontraditional literary vehicles in his works. The circus, for instance, was a place full of outsiders, yet it was fascinating to the bourgeois. Thus Wedekind enthusiastically employed circus motifs, which combined his own fascination with both the bourgeois and outsiders and also allowed him a new range of freedom in his works, as Böckmann asserts: "Das Drama scheint sich der Mittel des Varietés oder des Zirkus zu bemächtigen, um eine neue Spielfreiheit zu gewinnen und
durch den Spannungsgehalt der Bilderfolgen zu wirken." The author's preoccupation with the physical, with the body, and his choice of characters confirms his incorporation of the circus into his works. Rodrigo in Büchse der Pandora exemplifies this as he proudly struts his physical prowess. He is strong and acrobatic, and plans to become famous by exploiting Lulu's physical attractiveness and sex appeal in an acrobatic act.

Perhaps the unfinished novelette Mine-Haha best reveals Wedekind's theory of the physical. In a private, secluded complex, young children's physical agility is developed and trained; they are educated and rewarded according to their physical capabilities. No emphasis is placed on the education of the mind, the implication being that mental health is the result of a healthy body. The narrator, who is now older, but had grown up on this children's "farm," recalls how little noise, how little conversation there was. The atmosphere was serious and even competitive, with little warmth between the young girls; but they were highly skilled dancers with beautiful bodies. This treatise on the physical, when applied to much of Wedekind's work, offers insight into his worldview. Hans Kaufmann reinforces the importance of the physical in Wedekind's works: "In Dramen, Erzählungen und Traktaten predigt er das Bekenntnis zur Körperlichen Schönheit und Triebhaftigkeit; physisches Training,
Artistik, Tanz sollen den Menschen vervollkommnen und von den sozialen Krankheiten heilen." 5

Mine-Haha portrays an unlikely character situation, once again confirming Wedekind's anti-Naturalistic stance. However, the most famous of his pre-Expressionist (and being so, anti-Naturalistic) scenes is the graveyard in Frühlings Erwachen, where the dead Moritz stands holding his head in his hands while talking to Melchior. This scene establishes Wedekind as a forerunner to the 20th century Expressionist movement, in succession from Grabbe and Büchner. 6 Kutscher verifies that characters like Moritz "behalten etwas Geistig-Schattenhaftes, Groteskes, aber sie sind von der fantastischen Lebendigkeit der Lenzischen, Grabbeschen, Büchnerschen Menschen." 7

Wedekind's characters speak as unrealistically as they are portrayed. As Hill claims:

...outside of the theater one hardly ever hears a dialogue like Wedekind's. It is a queer mixture of old cliches, newspaper style, legal idioms, preaching editorials, violent outbursts, strong invectiveness, purple phrases, mediocre verses, tasteless images, genuine poetry and, occasionally, normal everyday speech. There has never been anything like it in the history of modern German drama. 8

The figures constantly talk past each other, explaining and listening to themselves, but rarely the partner. Thus "the dialogue becomes a concentration of simultaneous monologues," 9 which were difficult for the audience to comprehend. Consequently, Wedekind's dramas were not
popular at the time he wrote them because a shocked public misunderstood him and his purpose. Wedekind was ahead of his times, so could the public be expected to understand him? Or did it matter? Claude Hill maintains that Wedekind,

\[\ldots\text{was too often bent on shocking his public at any price, and allowed himself many lapses into distastefulness and grotesque exaggeration} \text{ (but)} \\]
\[\text{the fact remains that he--and he almost alone--saw through the inadequacy of traditional realistic psychology at a time when Europe's stages were filled with weak pseudo-intellectuals.} \text{"10}\]

Wedekind wanted to shock, and when seen in isolation, that in itself becomes a questionable motive; however, beyond the sensationalism of his work lies a zealous accusation of restrictive traditional values as well as his vision of change.

One of Wedekind's revolutionary techniques was to act in his own dramas. Although not a trained actor--a mere dilettant--he understood the roles he had written better than anyone else could, as was evident when the success or failure of the staging of Frühlings Erwachen depended on whether he acted in it nor not. More than the success of the drama, however, Wedekind wanted to draw attention to himself and his works by acting in them. As actor, Wedekind never assumed the role completely, but by distancing himself from the character, showed that it was a role. This distancing technique anticipates the later
Brechtian epic theater, where "alienation" effects dominate and interrupt stage action. Wedekind's "alienating" acting illuminates (for the audience) a world vision beyond the confines and setting of the theater. He did not want to entertain, but rather to preach. Mennemeier confirms that in his performances, Wedekind "/engagierte/ sich offenkundig für etwas...was ihm wichtiger war als die Rollen und das Spiel." And what was it that was more important? Life—low life and animal instincts; life outside of bourgeois or aristocratic, literary or artistic circles. And Wedekind found the Naturalists' methods of examining and portraying life (even "low life") "realistically" inadequate, so he explored innovative methods of his own. Time, place, and stage settings were often unclear, and it is the ambiguity or "Mehrdeutigkeit" of Wedekind's works that keep them timeless. He examined and criticized social aspects of his era, but in a revolutionary manner, atypical for his literary contemporaries, in anticipation of expressionist posterity.

Schnitzler

In direct contrast to Wedekind, yet similar to the Naturalists, Schnitzler's works are packed with realistic details. They reflect specific time, place, and stage settings: almost always his own fin-de-siècle Vienna.
Vienna was the center of Schnitzler's world. Born there, he left only for vacations or premieres of his plays in other cities. He died there. Vienna was the life blood of his work. Contrarily, the bohemian Wedekind followed his restless soul many places before establishing permanent residence in Munich. Wedekind chose Munich. Schnitzler had no choice: he and Vienna were interdependent.

Thus Schnitzler recorded in his works the details of Viennese life, as he experienced it. Differing from the anti-realistic speech and action of Wedekind's characters, the dramatic scenes are so realistic that the dialogues could be taken from actual conversations and the action from live situations. At the same time, however, these realistic details assume a blurry or "verschwommene" quality as they reproduce on stage the illusions present in reality. The Impressionistic aspects of Schnitzler's works are thus seen in the deceptive nature of these realistic details, which reproduce a picture of reality, including the illusory quality of life that is an intrinsic characteristic of society. Schnitzler portrays a world full of gilded masks and pretty forms, and the blending of illusion and reality allows the audience to catch a glimpse of the decay hiding behind the façades. The Naturalistic and Impressionistic aspects of his works are juxtaposed to underscore the deceitful nature of the society he is presenting.
Schnitzler's exactness in description applies also to his characters, many of whom become character studies of "types" that constituted his own social world. Schnitzler's style can perhaps be classified on one level as "Historical Naturalism" because the details are fixed in time, place, and setting, or it can be described on another as "Psychological Naturalism." The doctor-author relates fascinating social intrigues and observations that offer a key to the psychological make-up of his typological characters and that begin to reveal the motivation behind their behavior and that of society. Schnitzler's analytical skills are best displayed in his prose, as the above discussion of "Leutnant Gustl" demonstrates.

A later short story, "Else," also illustrates the author's understanding of the workings of the human psyche—how the external becomes internalized and directly influences behavior. Else agrees to use her sexuality to stave off the family's pending financial disaster, caused by her father's monetary irresponsibility. Her disgust with the situation obsesses her and in a state of delirium she shows her naked self to a room full of hotel guests before falling into unconsciousness. No one understands her motives, except the reader, who has become an insider: Schnitzler once again employs the stream-of-consciousness narrative method brilliantly allowing Else to reveal the reactions of those around her, and this
becomes intertwined with her own thoughts, with her perceptions of herself.

Although the nature of prose allows a more direct approach to psychological study, Schnitzler’s dramas also delve into the perplexing mental processes. His fine eye is seen in all his writings, as his observations are recreated on the page:

Aber immer wieder strebt Schnitzler eine Abbildung der Wirklichkeit an, zu der die Vorliebe für den Vers oft seltsam kontrastiert. Das Äussere des Milieus ist ihm aber nur Anlass für die Entfaltung des inneren Menschen, seiner Seele, in deren Tiefen die letzten Fragen nach seinem Werden, Tun und Undergehen enden.13

In 1931 the critic Herbert Ihering described Schnitzler’s method as follows:

When Schnitzler appeared before the public with his first prose works, he confronted that age, his age, with the finest, most intellectual perception possible. In a masterful manner he portrayed the upper-class society of prewar Vienna with its skepticism, cleverness, and aimlessness; and in portraying this society, Schnitzler dissected it. Rarely has the method of portrayal corresponded so completely to the subject of the portrayal. In this feature lay the inimitable, the unrepeatable charm of Schnitzler’s works.14

In “dissecting” society, Schnitzler probes beneath the surface of the frivolous illusion of well-being into the melancholy reality of pending doom. Fritsche points out dominant elements of this doomed society: "Melancholie, Schwermut, Synästhesie der Impressionen, Überreife, Weltschmerz und Todesverfallenheit, hierin gründet im
Wesentlich die Stimmung der Spätzeit."15 And it is this "Spätzeitstimmung" that dominates the mood as well as the literary style of Schnitzler’s works. These works describe and analytically portray the era, but go no further, as Fritsche assesses: "Schnitzler spürte den herannahenden Untergang, doch fehlt jede Spur eines Eingreifens; es bleibt bei Deskription und nüchternen Analyse ohne Wertung und Stellungnahme."16 Schnitzler did not want to intervene and try to change society or arrest the coming ruin, which contrasts with Wedekind’s zealous desire to provoke societal changes.

In seemingly superficial dialogues, Schnitzler’s figures mention familiar street names, cafés, suburbs of Vienna; they talk about the weather, food, and work; they discuss their lives in trite phrases, half-truths and generalizations, but "das alles sind vom Dichter ganz bewusst verwandte Stilmittel, der uns durch diese anscheinend so untiefe und vordergründige Sprachlandschaft mit Hilfe des Mittels der Ironisierung auf die Fragwürdigkeit der Figur und ihrer Lebensauffassung aufmerksam machen will."17 Schnitzler deliberately presents his characters superficially, because they represent superficial individuals or types. Their trivial, broken phrases reveal the unspoken that lies behind the façade and hypocrisy of the spoken. Rieder comments further: "Hinter diesem scheinbar so an der Oberfläche bleibenden Sprach-
Schnitzler treats the age old literary motif of "Schein und Sein" by employing figures, themes, and conversations out of his own experience and milieu. He tries to get beyond the illusions of reality to the reality of illusion in his works, which Melchinger, for example, sees as pivotal to his work: "In der Absicht, den Glauben an die Wahrheit als Illusion zu entlarven, liegt die Wurzel der Schnitzlerischen Werks."\(^{19}\) Schnitzler exposes society's superficiality, life's lies and deceptions—the illusions of social reality.

His works are "soft," with "zarten Übergangen und Zwischentönen im Pastell, des Vagen und Dammrigen ohne scharfe Konturen, der der Vermischung der Grenzen zwischen Traum und Wirklichkeit, zwischen Schauspielerei und Ernst."\(^{20}\) They recreate a melancholy, but melodic atmosphere. The blending of moods, of illusion and reality are reminiscent of French Impressionist painting, where landscapes no longer have definite borders, where outlines flow together, where colors become confused. In Austria these Impressionistic traits also assumed a foreboding quality, and death is an undeniable presence, darkening the
landscapes. The paintings of the Viennese Impressionist artists, Klimt for example, while gaudy and full of gold and glitter are also somber and sinister. They embody a decadent and superficial mentality. The pompous Jugendstil architecture in Vienna also symbolizes the superficiality that marked the turn-of-the-century mentality. Schnitzler illustrates this falsity and deceit in his works, also with strokes that flow between gold, glitter, and doom. He describes what he has observed in graceful, pretty forms that are characteristically Impressionistic, but that also allow the numerous unpleasant or ominous elements of society to be seen or felt.

Wedekind's approach was harshly different. His works, by comparison, are "loud." They do not re-create an existing atmosphere, but rather portray a new vision. A cabaret style permeates his works; the same stark, cold quality of his cabaret performances is present in all of his writing and stressed by the musical dissonance, while exemplifying the stylistic gulf between him and Schnitzler.

Wedekind's bold, disjointed style anticipates an Expressionist painting. One can imagine an artist from Der Blaue Reiter movement illustrating his works or designing his stage sets. The sharp language, the bold content, the disjointed dialogues, and stark atmosphere correspond to the "unrecognizable" objects painted in bold colors and unrealistic, blocky strokes. The soft flowing, yet
recognizable lines of Impressionism have given way to loud, harsh strokes of Expressionism.

A final important contrast in the authors' works lies in their intent. On the one hand, Wedekind is didactic. He unveils what he considers to be the ills of society, and by means of this presentation, he strives to educate his audience, i.e. the public—even though he offers no specific suggestions or tangible solutions for healing societal woes. Nonetheless, his didacticism dominates and pervades his writing. Schnitzler, on the other hand, is not openly didactic. He relates and reveals, but does not instruct. His intention is to describe and portray the illusory truths of turn-of-the-century Habsburg Vienna, where on the eve of disaster, people had clutched onto frivolous disguises in a pagan-like effort to ward off the approaching doom. Schnitzler subtly penetrates these false representations of reality, but stops short of Wedekind's didacticism.

In summary, Wedekind was a bold writer whose style was full of "pre-Expressionistic" elements. He employed atypical characters and glorified these outsiders in an attempt to shake up the self-righteous bourgeoisie. His works blatantly portrayed sexual instincts and double standards, and contained severe judgments and attacks on societal institutions that maintained a status quo he did not agree with. This boldness and severity are also
characteristic of his didactic intention. He was forceful and wanted to shock, and because his works were so radical and contained such grotesque elements, he did shock and alienate his audience. These "loud" features of Wedekind's works reflect his personality, and further point to his background. The fact that he chose Munich as his home points to the city's unique position in Wilhelmine Germany. Munich was trying to resist total assimilation into the German Empire, and therefore provided a more relaxed atmosphere for Wedekind to develop his radically different writing and performing skills. Munich also symbolizes Wedekind's own personality--his strong resistance to the establishment. A forward-looking mentality marked this bustling, lively city, and reflects Wedekind's own vision, which included radical change. Consequently his critical and "loud" assaults on Germany's conventional traditions and institutions outraged a complacent bourgeois society.

Schnitzler's manner, style, and intentions were by contrast not nearly as extreme. His style, with its Impressionistic features, was melodic, "schön," and relatively mild, and often his depictions were familiar, so that his audiences identified with his works. His characters openly depicted secretive affairs and sex, in contrast to Wedekind's bold treatment of sexual drives. At the same time this familiarity also shocked them. They were offended by the mirror image of themselves that
Schnitzler presented, again contrasting with Wedekind, whose audiences were unable to identify with his works. Schnitzler portrayed and dissected his society with pastel, charming, if melancholy descriptions and though overt criticism usually was not his intention, his works almost always contained subtle criticism of society's hypocrisy and double standards. The charming, if somewhat disturbing quality of his works can be traced to his Viennese roots. The melancholy (and at times even nostalgic) quality characteristic in his works reflects the fin-de-siècle atmosphere of the decaying Habsburg Empire. The Viennese looked toward more glorious times, and Schnitzler's works portray this yearning as well. Though he criticized Vienna and his own bourgeois society, he did not seem willing to leave the past behind, the past that caused these societal faults. This past had also shaped him and his perspective on life, and preoccupied him as he continued to write about fin-de-siècle Vienna until his death. Perhaps Schnitzler was for this reason milder and "softer" in his criticism of society and was reluctant to call for a radical change in the society he knew so well.
Notes to Chapter V


8. Hill, 90.


17. Rieder, 27.

18. Rieder, 27.

19. Christa Melchinger, quoted from Fritsche, 201.

20. Fritsche, 46.


VI. Contemporary Reaction

**Schnitzler**

The reactions of the critics and fellow writers to Wedekind and Schnitzler offer another perspective on their significance. For example, the outspoken Viennese writer and critic, Karl Kraus, who waged verbal war with many of his contemporaries, also had strong opinions about these two authors—he enthusiastically supported Wedekind, but vehemently rejected Schnitzler.

Karl Kraus attended the Griensteidl Café gatherings for awhile, but this language purist soon turned his back on most of the writers associated with Jung-Wien. Specifically, he criticized Schnitzler for bringing the "Vorstadtmädel" into the Burgtheater, and objected to "lowering" the standards of this institution with such characters, when, as he claimed, the dramatist does not pursue an issue or problem further than merely representing them on the stage. Kraus wrote:

*Der am tiefsten in diese Seichtigkeit taucht und am vollsten in dieser Leere aufgeht, der Dichter, der das Vorstadtmädel burgtheaterfähig machte, hat sich in überlauter Umgebung eine ruhige Bescheidenheit des Größenwahns zu bewahren gewusst. Zu gutmütig, um einem Problem nahetreten zu können, hat er sich ein- für allemal eine kleine Welt von Lebemännern und Grisetten zurechtgezimmert, um nur zuweilen aus diesen Niederungen zu falscher Tragik emporzusteigen...*
Kraus' criticism of Schnitzler underscores the loud-soft contrast discussed in the previous chapter, especially since Kraus accepted and even promoted Wedekind's works. Others besides Kraus also criticized Schnitzler's lack of action. In 1905 the critic Rudolf Lothar commented:

Das heimliche und liebliche, die sanfte und schwermütige Passivität, die vertraumte Resignation, die die eigene Poesie der Wienerstadt ausmacht, fand in ihm ihren Dichter... Trotz und Auflehnung, Sturm und Drang sind dem echten Wiener Volkssänger fremd. Und so vermissen wir auch bei Schnitzler Bewegung und Kampf, Verschlingung und Entwirrung der Ereignisse, mit einem Wort: die Tat...2

At the same time, however, Lothar recognized Schnitzler's literary talent and ability: "Der Dramatiker Arthur Schnitzler ist vor allem Lyriker. Seine lyrische Kraft—Kraft der Empfindung, Tiefe des Gefühls—hebt ihn hoch über die Gruppe der Jung-Wiener..."3 Lothar's opinion emphasizes the duality present in Schnitzler's works and in the critical reactions toward it. He points out the author's lack of "Tat" as a weakness, while at the same time stressing Schnitzler's lyrical strengths as an author. Thomas Mann also commends Schnitzler's gift of writing. In 1912 he wrote: "Seine männliche Welt- und Menschkenntnis, der Reiz seiner Probleme, die anmutige Reinheit und Gehobenheit seines Stils, seine hohe und sichere Geschmackskultur, die ihn eigentlich sein Leben lang vor jedem Fehlgriff, jedem Misslingen geschützt hat..."4

Some accepted, others rejected Schnitzler, as is to be
expected. Though his works created various scandals, he
did become a regularly performed dramatist in pre-World War
I Vienna, as Urbach relates:


The press helped shape Schnitzler’s image, and despite many ugly reviews and press-initiated scandals, the public became accustomed to his dramas and integrated him into its world view.

After World War I his decline in popularity became apparent. Many critics and younger writers accused the Viennese author of sentimentality in his writings and of only being able to write about one thing: fin-de-siècle Vienna, which they thought belonged to the past. Thus in the 1920’s Schnitzler became as passé as the era he portrayed. A new generation wanted new material; it was anxious to be progressive and modern and shunned him as old-fashioned. But, perhaps they misunderstood him, as Rieder suggests: “Weder den Menschendarsteller, den genialen Seelenschilderer, noch den Kulturkritiker Schnitzler hat seine Zeit verstanden.”6 But the upcoming generation had different interests and a new style, which
Rey's question stresses: "Was konnte damals die junge expressionistische Generation mit dem 'Impressionisten' Schnitzler anfangen? Kritiker und Literarhistoriker gaben es ihm nur allzu deutlich zu verstehen, dass er veraltet sei, zur Welt von Gestern gehöre." Some still accepted him though, or at least some of his works. After finally being released from the censor, Reigen premiered in many cities in the early 1920’s and was a success as far as the critics were concerned, though it caused public demonstrations and created scandals. Alfred Kerr, for example, reviewed the Berlin premiere in 1920 in the "Berliner Tageblatt": "Hier ist ein reizendes Werk...Der Erfolg war gut." And in the "Berliner Börse-Courier," Herbert Ihering wrote of the same production: "Reigen ist eine der reizendsten Dichtungen Schnitzlers, weil seine Dialoge aus diesem erotischen Nervengefühl geboren sind. Das nur noch um einen Grad sublimiert zu werden braucht, um Klang und Ton zu werden..." He continued to praise Reigen, which he viewed as still being valid in 1920, especially compared to other Schnitzler dramas, such as Anatol, which he considered "veraltet."

In contrast, Bertolt Brecht was a writer of the next generation who totally dismissed Schnitzler as passé and outdated. Lutz-W. Wolff describes and comments on this disapproval of Schnitzler:

Da er sich mit dem Krieg oder Gegenwartsthemen

The end of the war also modified the face of Austrian society, and literary tastes changed accordingly. Schnitzler, however, never updated his subject matter, and though often criticized for his narrow perspective and allegedly limited imagination, he continued to write about what he knew best--about an era from which the new generation had descended.

**Wedekind**

In the pre-WWI era, the reaction of the critics and public to Wedekind's works prohibited him from attaining the "established" success he had aspired or that Schnitzler had reached. An indication of another big difference between them can be seen in Kraus' approval of Wedekind's style and content, though it is true that Kraus reacted skeptically toward most of his contemporaries, and not only Schnitzler. He also strongly criticized Expressionists who
used novel effects to make their point, but he did make exceptions, however, and noted that this criticism did not extend to such "outstanding expressionists" as the poet Trakl and playwright Wedekind. Kraus embraced Wedekind's works to such an extent that he arranged a closed performance of *Büchse der Pandora* at the Trianon-Theater in Vienna in 1905. This drama was closely observed by the censor and was produced only a very few times until after liberation from the censor in 1918. That December theater director Carl Heine staged a production in Berlin that ran for 360 performances, but one that was rejected by critics for being too "naturalistisch." Again in Berlin in 1926 *Erdgeist* and *Büchse der Pandora* were combined as *Lulu*.

Emil Faktor reviewed this production:

> Es war eine verdienstvolle Grossinszenierung zweier abendfüllender, stofflich verflochtener Werke, suggestiv in der Idee der Zusammenfassung, schwankend im Gesamteindruck. Das Schicksal des von Erich Engel dramaturgisch sinnvoll Überdachten Unternehmens, das Wedekindsche Pauschalstücke über ganze Akte zugunsten innerer vollständigkeit durchredigierte, gestaltet sich wechselvoll.

Alfred Kerr reviewed the same performance in the "Berliner Tageblatt" and assessed that: "In dieser, dieser Form wird Frank Wedekinds Doppeldrama künftig zu spielen sein. Nebeneinander gehören die zwei Teile. Für denselben Abend ... Der, oft schludernde, Wedekind ist heute: ein gewissenhafter Klassiker."

By this time Wedekind and his dramas were being
recognized for their importance in the development of new German theater. Brecht’s high regard of Wedekind not only underscores Wedekind’s importance in the world of drama, but also again stresses the stylistic contrast between Schnitzler and Wedekind, between the gentle critic and the rebel. Probably the most well-known anecdote about Frank Wedekind ist Brecht’s remark that Wedekind’s greatest piece of work was his personality.15 Brecht admired the older writer for his cabaret performances, for his interest in the “low-life,” for his experimental style. Indeed, Wedekind was one of the biggest influences on Brecht’s literary development, (as Spalter confirms in his book Brecht’s Tradition 16) and thus on 20th century literature.

The 1920’s were a time of experimentation in the theater and an innovative attitude prevailed, which meant that Wedekind’s dramas finally became a part of theater repertory, whereas Schnitzler, whose style was more conservative, was left behind.

Another author and contemporary of Schnitzler and Wedekind, Heinrich Mann, wrote about both authors in his autobiography. In Ein Zeitalter wird besichtigt (1947) 3, he, unlike Kraus or Brecht, remembers both positively. He writes about his friendship with Wedekind and about Wedekind’s personality, which is reflected in his works.

One would almost expect that Mann’s friendship with Wedekind would preclude approval for Schnitzler. However,
at the close of his remarks on Schnitzler and in an open
display of admiration, he writes, "Ich ehre Sie, lieber
Arthur Schnitzler."18 Mann remarks on Schnitzler's
preference for writing about what he was best acquainted
with: "...Schnitzler siegte gerade mit seiner Gabe, nicht
anderes zu gestalten als seine eigene Herzenssache. Von
den öffentlichen Dingen hielt er nichts, ihn berührten nur
die mehr als öffentlichen, die allgegenwärtigen: Liebe und
Tod."19 Mann discusses Schnitzler's preoccupation with love
and death—in connection with Vienna. He writes of the
lonely suffering of the aging author, whose art has been
publicly dismissed: "Sein Niedergang war ein auffallendes
Beispiel. Ihm hatte es nicht geholfen, dass er die
öffentlichen Dinge verachtete: sie wussten ihn zu treffen.
Sie fanden ihn wehrlos, ratlos, als einen Spielball des
Glücks. Das sollte verboten sein vor der Würde eines alten
Meisters."20

Mann knew, respected, and admired both authors, as
dissimilar as they were. His comments on them and their
works offer a somewhat removed perspective since he wrote
his autobiography some years after their deaths. Yet, his
reminiscing also lends insight into their different
personalities and literary styles and their significance in
turn-of-the-century literature and society.
Notes to Chapter VI


3. Lothar, 227f.


17. Heinrich Mann, *Ein Zeitalter wird besichtigt* (Berlin:
Aufbau Verlag, 1947).

18. Mann, 260.
20. Mann, 259.
Conclusion

The moralists and social critics, Frank Wedekind and Arthur Schnitzler, were acutely aware of the hypocrisy, pretense, standards, and façades existing in their respective societies. They confronted their audiences with portraits of society, as they perceived it, as an expression of their tests against the conventional institutions that supported preserved restrictive traditions. Though they approached these issues and social themes differently, they often idealized the fin-de-siècle public similarly with their texts, as this thesis has emphasized. Because Wedekind and Schnitzler are representative figures of their respective societies, the differences and similarities between them that have emerged in the course of this study underscore some of the differences between turn-of-the-century Germany and Austria, specifically as these are reflected in the cities of Berlin and Vienna, and also hint at intrinsic differences that exist today between those two cities and their cultures.

Both playwrights are a part of the repertoire of German-speaking theaters today. Their significance in the literary id has been confirmed throughout the years, and they continue to be major figures in German drama of the 20th century. For example, many Schnitzler dramas have been or being performed in the 1985-86 season, including works discussed or mentioned in this thesis: Reigen, Professor
Bernhardi, and Freiwild, and "Leutnant Gusti" and "Fraulein Else" have been adapted for the stage. Wedekind's Frühlings Erwachen and Lulu, among other Wedekind dramas, are also standard works scheduled for performance in 1985-86. (Theater heute Jahrbuch 1985) However, these works no longer arouse the scandalous reaction that they once did. They are now viewed in a different light, since modern society has been bombarded with "obsence" art in general and become accustomed to far more radical means of provocation. Yet, the socially critical nature of their works remains and, depending on the staging, they retain some of their provocative ability. However, the scandalous edges have been softened.

Although Wedekind and Schnitzler wrote many decades ago, the problems and issues they confronted at the turn of the century are similar to today's. The human condition, the social problems, and moral questions that prevailed then, exist now as well, if in somewhat evolved forms. Therefore, the works of these two authors retain their validity for modern audiences, not only as commentaries on and criticism of present or past social and moral conditions, but they also vivify the roots of modern society. Ironically, these two fin-de-siècle social critics, who so often clashed with the censor about their works, have become part of today's established theater repertoire.
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