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EGON SCHIELE'S SELF-PORTRAITS: A PSYCHOANALYTIC STUDY IN THE  
CREATION OF A SELF

*City University of New York*

PH.D. 1987

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EGON SCHIELE'S SELF-PORTRAITS:  
A PSYCHOANALYTIC STUDY IN THE CREATION OF A SELF

by

DANIELLE KNAFO

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty  
in Psychology in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy,  
The City University of New York.

1987

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This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in Psychology in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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## Abstract

EGON SCHIELE'S SELF-PORTRAITS:  
A PSYCHOANALYTIC STUDY IN THE CREATION OF A SELF  
by  
Danielle Knafo

Advisor: Professor Steven Ellman

Egon Schiele (1890-1918) was an Austrian artist who produced hundreds of self-portraits throughout his lifetime, a number of which strike the onlooker as unusual and even grotesque. This dissertation explores the psychological meaning of Schiele's self-portraits. The method employed consists of a theoretical analysis of the self-portraits from the viewpoint of both form and content, integrating contributions from art criticism and psychoanalytic theory. Schiele's self-portraits are considered in conjunction with his correspondence, journals, poetry, sketchbooks and other biographical data on his life. They are also viewed from an historical and cultural perspective. The fact that Schiele lived in fin-de-siècle Vienna--the time and place that witnessed the birth of psychoanalysis--is not surprising, for his stark and compelling exploration into the depths of his self, primarily through repeated, brutal confrontations with

his sexuality, parallel the growing concerns of psychology at that time. As an Austrian Expressionist artist, Schiele's art also delineated the sentiments of alienation and insecurity felt by many in the superficially contented atmosphere of pre-War Europe.

In reconstructing Schiele's childhood, two formative events crucial for their effects on his life and art arise: the failed mirroring experience with his mother on the one hand, and the family deaths, including those of four siblings and, most importantly, that of his father by syphilis, on the other. Both of these circumstances had a profound influence on Schiele's body image and subsequent self-representation. Despite the continuous nature of his self-obsession, Schiele's depictions of himself varied in important ways, both psychologically and typologically. In fact, his self-portraits can be considered as reflecting changes in his psychic organization, particularly regarding the development of his sense of self. Therefore, Schiele's self-studies are divided into four phases, each of which is thought to represent an important shift in the way he came to deal with the two formative events in his life and how his coping strategies found expression in his art. The function of self-portraiture is examined, especially in its therapeutic role as mirror and the part it plays in self-consolidation and identity maintenance.

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What we do depends on what we are;  
but it is necessary to add also that  
we are, to a certain extent, what we  
do, and that we are creating ourselves  
continually....For a conscious being  
to exist is to change, to change is to  
mature, to mature is to go on creating  
oneself endlessly.

--Henri Bergson



In your glass  
I'll honestly  
discover to  
yourself  
that of yourself  
which you yet  
knew not of.

--Shakespeare  
Julius Caesar,  
III.

Egon Schiele  
before his  
mirror, 1910.

## Chapter 1

## Introduction

To sit for one's portrait is like  
being present at one's own creation.  
--Alexander Smith, 1863

The experience of birth is surely the most painful and frightening of all and Schiele's self-portraits illustrate this. The cries of anguish and discomfort manifested in the endless grimaces and contortions of his self-portraits reveal the pain which accompanies the birth process--giving birth to one's art, giving birth to one's self.

Drawing a self-portrait is both an artistic and a psychological act. It is not merely a sub-type of portrait drawing; its nature is inherently unique. The artist, by making himself the subject of his art, necessarily treats himself as both self and other. In painting his mirror image, the artist needs to step outside himself, so to speak, in order to expose himself to others. In exposing himself, however, the artist's defenses and his desire to give universal meaning to his self-image may lead him to conceal and disguise what he sees. Fluctuating between self and other, intimacy and alienation, exposure and concealment, the artist inevitably makes a statement about the manner in which he views himself and the world in which he lives. Thus, for an artist, the self-portrait can be a

vital means of self-revelation and self-comprehension while for a psychologist, the self-portrait opens a novel and direct avenue into the artist's psyche and its relationship to the creative process.

The purpose of this paper is to explore the psychological meaning of Egon Schiele's self-portraits. Schiele (1890-1918) was an Austrian artist who drew many self-portraits in turn-of-the-century Vienna, a number of which strike the onlooker as unusual and even grotesque. Indeed, the self-portrait was the major theme of Schiele's art throughout his life. The accumulation of so many self-portraits (probably the most any artist produced since Rembrandt) provides an important means for investigating the artist's changing visions of himself and his world. For instance, Schiele's self-studies often dig for real feelings by revealing the truth behind a mask. Sometimes this requires destroying the mask; at others it results in trying on new masks. Occasionally, it even necessitates facing the all-embracing emptiness, the horror vacui, which one encounters when confronting the sometimes nightmarish world of the psyche and the alienation that permeated the time in which he lived.

In contemplating an artist like Schiele whose preoccupation with self-portraiture bordered on obsession, one wonders about the intense self-conscious, narcissistic

and exhibitionistic aspects to his personality. What kind of person is so self-obsessed? On the other hand, the large number of self-portraits he produced, often cruel and merciless in their honesty, leads one to question the source of his courage for such truthful confession. From where does his psychic stamina derive? Indeed, Schiele's numerous self-portraits prompted art critic Max Ermer to comment in Die Zeit in 1925: "His portraits were analyses like those of Freud's disciples for whom he will himself become an object for study..." Whether his special affinity for self-portraits is conceived of as an interpretation of art or as a profound study in self-knowledge--both physical and emotional--is of little importance since, either way, it helps to highlight the relationship between pathology, creativity, development of the self and the image of man in fin-de-siècle Vienna. Such important yet little discussed interactions warrant further investigation which are pursued in this study.

#### Fin-de-Siècle Vienna

When studying the relationship which exists between politics and culture, fin-de-siècle Vienna is especially enlightening since its political and social scene appears to have exercised a critical role in defining the peculiar character of its cultural innovations. It is rather

amazing that while Vienna witnessed the political disintegration of the longstanding rule of the Habsburg Empire, it also gave birth to psychoanalysis, the beginnings of twelve-tone music, 'modern' architecture, legal and logical positivism and nonrepresentational (Expressionist) art. A culture that prided itself in its profound commitment to its past was now producing intellectuals who deliberately created changes resulting in a-historical systems aimed at severing ties not only with their tradition, but with all tradition. So adamant a rejection of tradition, however, only exemplifies the intensity of the relationship between history and culture in fin-de-siècle Vienna. As Carl Schorske, the eminent historian, put it, "the growth of a new higher culture seemed to take place in Austria as in a hothouse, with political crisis providing the heat" (1961, p. xxvii).

Clearly, the collapse of Austrian hierarchical society and the defeat of liberal culture had far-reaching repercussions for the individual. The impact of these political and social changes is portrayed by Georg Trakl, a poet of that time who wrote;

...big city  
 that harbors  
 cold and malevolent  
 a corrupt race  
 while the pale grandchild  
 prepares for a dark future  
 (Johnston, 1980, 285).

Trakl's description of the Austrian fin-de-siècle aptly characterizes the sense of alienation and pessimism experienced by many during this time of transition (Trakl committed suicide at the age of twenty-seven). A Vienna which came to be associated with Strauss waltzes, bustling café life and sensuous hedonism was now striving to conceal its growing poverty and corruption under an increasingly rigid façade of formality and splendor. For perceptive souls who scratched the surface, however, a cultural chaos of tremendous proportions began emerging. Thus, the waltz, symbol of gay Vienna, was transformed into what Schorske calls "a frantic danse macabre" and Karl Kraus, the fierce Viennese polemicist, began referring to Vienna as the experimental station for world collapses. Vienna in this era was also called the "Hydroencephalic City" and the "Modern Babylon" to express what to many felt like living on the edge of destruction.<sup>1</sup>

The growing distinction between Vienna's ornate façade of stability and its political deliquescence encouraged artists to react in two different ways. The older generation, represented by Hofmannsthal in literature, Otto Wagner in architecture and Klimt in art--abandoned historical styles enforced by the existing regime to create an ornate aesthetic style of their own. Replete with symbols and allegories, their creations served as a retreat from the harsh political realities of the time. The

younger generation of artists--like Schnitzler in literature, Adolf Loos in architecture, Wittgenstein in philosophy, Schoenberg in music, Kokoschka and Schiele in art--tried to show that art would no longer be employed as a decorative refuge for an unsavory reality. By using more immediate visual and musical techniques, they unmasked the façades of their predecessors to disclose underlying truths. In doing this, they not only scratched the surface; they often attacked it. These artists' attempts to express undisguised truths naturally disturbed the social majority who continued to clutch in desperation to the increasingly precarious shelter of the Viennese bourgeoisie and everything it represented. This strong negative social reaction, however, merely reinforced the sense of isolation and alienation in them which, in turn, led them to explore newer psychological and artistic depths. No longer serving as a collective pacifier for a society about to collapse, the new generation of artists revolted against the historic and artistic tradition of their forefathers. It is significant that while this was taking place, Freud was busy developing a theory which emphasized the importance of the son's oedipal struggle against his father. Also, just as some of Freud's discoveries grew from his own self-analysis at that time (i.e., his 1900 Interpretation of Dreams), so did the new art of Vienna see itself as a vehicle for self-expression and self-exploration. The individual, the subjective, the

psychological not only became the focus of the artist's work, but also, the tools by which he achieved that focus. Having previously destroyed the boundaries which divided appearance from reality, the new generation was now dissolving the boundaries which existed between art and psychology.

#### Austrian Expressionism: A New Kind of Portrait

The advent of Expressionism in the Austrian art scene during the pre-war period brought with it an increased emphasis on the importance of portraiture. Expressionist portraits differed dramatically from those of Klimt, known for their static presentation of figures surrounded by decorative environments. In fact, Expressionist portraits could be termed psychological portraits since their primary interest lies in the depiction of man's inner experience. Expressionist artists did not deem it necessary to render a realistic portrayal of an individual. Such details as two legs or five fingers were unimportant when compared with a gesture or a look which were considered better able to convey a person's unique and dynamic character. Thus, whereas Klimt's portraits emphasize the external setting of his figures, the figures of Kokoschka, Gerstl, Schoenberg and Schiele are presented in a vacuum, leaving the human body the sole vehicle for communication and expression.

By removing the oppressive external environment from their portraits, the Expressionist artists ironically impelled their sitters (and viewers) to confront the terror of their inner world, disclosing a painful aloneness which represented the hidden side of bourgeois life in Vienna. Common to Klimt and the Expressionist artists, therefore, is the terror of reality--either suffocating one from the outside (Klimt) or tormenting him from the inside (Kokoschka/Schiele).

### Self-Portraits

Having unmasked society, Viennese Expressionist artists next turned their talents to the unmasking of the self. As art's major objective became the depiction of man's true face, it increasingly displayed a primacy of content over form (as did Freud's interpretations of art). Arnold Schoenberg (1874-1951), primarily known for the emancipation of musical dissonance and thus considered a musical expressionist, worked in more than one art media. He produced a series of paintings which, like his contemporaneous musical compositions, succeeded in recording his innermost experiences. A number of these paintings happened to be self-portraits. While the first of these self-portraits aimed at achieving a realistic likeness of the artist, his later ones lost all physical

identification with the artist. This latter group of self-portraits were primarily frontal images of Schoenberg's face with a definite focus on the eyes (e.g., Plate 1). Schoenberg liquified the boundaries of these faces to such a degree that only the eyes stood out from a sea of paint. Not surprisingly, he gave the titles 'Gaze' and 'Vision' to many of these self-portraits. Commenting on the fact that art need not aim at achieving a true physical likeness, he wrote,

We want to see what the work of art has to give and not its external stimulus...the exactness of rendering the action is as irrelevant to its artistic values as the resemblance to the model is for a portrait. A hundred years later no one will be able to check the likeness, but the artistic effect will always remain. This effect will...[have] a higher degree of reality (Freitag, 1978, p. 167).

Schoenberg was not the only fin-de-siècle Viennese artist who painted expressionistic self-portraits. In fact, his painting career began only after he met Richard Gerstl, one of Vienna's most talented artists, who also drew self-portraits (e.g., Plate 2), many of them nude. After a doomed affair with Arnold Schoenberg's wife, the twenty-five year old Gerstl committed a double suicide: he burned the majority of his paintings before hanging himself in front of the mirror he used for his self-portraits.<sup>2</sup> Since Expressionist artists used their art to record their most intimate feelings, Alessandra Comini claims that the

nude self-portrait "was arrived at instinctively" by them (1972, p. 413). Furthermore, the combination of the narcissistic exhibitionism of these artists and the sexual preoccupation of the time contributed to this new art form.

The oeuvre of Egon Schiele (1890-1918) consists largely of a series of self-portraits, revealing the limits to which this art of the self could be taken. Schiele's vision of himself, nude or clothed, young or old, as man or woman, and even dead or alive provides the major thematic element in his art. Taken chronologically, these works afford a fascinating and unique autobiographical "portrait" of an individual artist as well as an image of man as he lived and reacted to a time of decay and transition: fin-de-siècle Vienna.

#### Self-Portrait Studies

Literature on self-portraiture has been written primarily from an historical rather than a literary or psychological point of view. Self-portrait literature consists largely of various collections of artists' self-portraits with little or no commentary (see Goldscheider, 1937; Masciotta, 1955; Longstreet, 1973). More recent collections (Billeter, 1985; Bonafoux, 1985;

Kinneir, 1980; Lerner, 1965) have begun to include commentary but, while informative and interesting, they do little to advance one's psychological understanding of self-portraits. There are numerous exhibition catalogues that focus on artists' self-portraits, the best of which are those of the Metropolitan Museum (1972), the Haifa Museum of Modern Art (1973) and the National Academy of Design (1983).

The artist's most intimate and revealing expressions of himself and his creativity are represented in his self-portraits. The psychoanalytic investigation of self-portraits is therefore a natural enterprise for those wishing to understand the ways artists come to terms with themselves through their art. However, only very recently has psychoanalytic attention been directed to the subject of self-portraiture. In the first (1985) volume of Psychoanalytic Perspectives on Art, edited by Mary Mathews Gedo, several articles are devoted to this subject. Of particular interest are Michele Vishny's analysis of Paul Klee's self-portraits and Francis O'Connor's discussion of the psychological meaning of the frontal self-portrait. In general, psychoanalysts and psychoanalytically oriented art historians appear to be realizing the value of studying artists' self-portraits.

### The Psychological Significance of the Mirror

The mirror is a self-evident intermediary for the artist who draws self-portraits. In analyzing an artist's self-portraits, therefore, one necessarily deals with the relationship the artist has to his mirror--as confidant, truth-teller, distorter and so on. The artist's relationship to his mirror is considered to be of extreme importance since the major hypothesis of this study states that the relentlessness with which Schiele drew self-portraits represents his attempt to correct for a basic narcissistic deficiency resulting from an impaired early mirroring experience.

Classical psychoanalytic theory emphasizes the role of the oedipal conflict in adult psychopathology. More recent views have stressed the importance of the defective development of the self as the decisive factor in certain psychological disorders, among which the most prominent are the narcissistic and borderline characters. These self psychologists see events which take place in the pre-oedipal period as crucial for the development of the self. For this school, a basic occurrence in the evolution of the self is the initial mirroring experience for the infant during the pre-oedipal period. Jaques Lacan, a French psychoanalyst, was the first to delineate this episode, calling it the "mirror phase" (1949). He

contended that the infant, in confronting his reflected image between the age of six and eighteen months, accumulated the initial elements of an ego.

D.W. Winnicott has expanded and given more precise definition to Lacan's notion of the infant's initial discovery of self in the mirror. For Winnicott, the mother is the primordial mirror, and it is through the infant's interaction with the mother, especially in its feeding and nurturing experiences, that the inchoate definition of self first takes place. As Winnicott views it, the infant, by looking into the mother's eyes, experiences the first awakenings of identity. He emphasizes "the mother's role of giving back to the baby the baby's own self" in these early visual contacts (1971, p. 138).

Other psychoanalysts have since stressed the importance of the reciprocity between mother and child during early interactions. Spitz (1965), for example, considers the child's perception of his mother's face-Gestalt to be a psychic organizer and a forerunner of object relations. Mahler (1974) calls "the human face in motion" the child's first meaningful percept. She delineates a stage, the "mirror frame of reference", where the infant gradually alters his behavior as a reaction to the mother's selective responses to his behaviors and results in the child's individuality as a reflection of the mother's needs.

Heinz Kohut (1971, 1977), the leading self psychologist, has elaborated on the debilitating effects of a faulty mirroring experience between mother and child for the latter's development. If the child's original experiences of pleasurable activity and intimacy are not confirmed by a loving and accepting expression in the mother's eyes, the child's infantile grandiose feelings, necessary for the development of self-esteem, will result in a narcissistic personality disorder, one whose major disturbance involves a faulty sense of self.

The child who has received a defective upbringing, as reflected in the mirroring experience with the mother, in later life will relate to the mirror in a manner different from most people. For instance, Orbach, in his 1966 study, used a mirror whose distortion could be regulated and found that schizophrenics had great difficulty in creating an undistorted image of themselves. Numerous psychologists have further emphasized the special significance that the mirror has in the disturbed individual's search for self-acquisition and self-definition. Paula Elkisch (1957), in a study of psychotic and borderline patients, discovered that their obsessive gazing in the mirror served as a means by which they restored a lost sense of self. Alan Eisnitz (1961), in his account of mirror dreams, interpreted these dreams as protective devices against narcissistic injury. Distinguishing between loss of

oneself and loss of one's self-representation, Lichtenstein (1977) defines narcissism not as the love of oneself, but rather, as the love of one's mirror image from which primary identity emerges. Shengold (1974) connects the "metaphor of the mirror" with the narcissistic stage of development when the formation of identity and psychic structures take place.

Narcissism has been further connected with the mirror in object relations psychoanalytic thought. In the opinion of Stolorow (1975), the narcissistic patient's object choice is determined by his need for a mirror to maintain his self-esteem. More important, the psychoanalyst himself can be viewed as a mirror for the patient. Freud often compared his model of the mental apparatus to visual instruments like the camera and telescope whose primary function is that of mirroring. He was the first to compare the analyst to a mirror: "The physician should be impenetrable to the patient, and, like a mirror, reflect nothing but what is shown to him (1912)". Winnicott (1971) views the major task of the psychoanalyst not as that of offering interpretations, but rather, of serving as a mirror for reflecting back to the patient his own self. In Kohut's view (1971, 1977), mirroring is an important source of transference for the narcissistic patient. By acting as a confirming reflection of the patient's own grandiose infantile fantasies, the therapist validates the patient's

self-esteem and gradually, by means of a selective process, restrains them within more reasonable limits.

The same search for self that takes place in the mirroring reciprocity between mother and infant and between therapist and patient can also be undertaken by artists in the creation of their works. The structure of art, by establishing preordained limits within which the artist must work, provides a more concrete dimension to the mirroring experience. In particular, the self-portrait is an apt, almost self-evident, means by which the artist can act as a mirror to himself, reflecting his need for self-definition and simultaneously attempting to achieve it. Egon Schiele's use of self-portraiture as a mirroring search for self is exemplified in the special relationship he had to his mirror as well as in the hundreds of revelatory self-portraits which he drew.

#### Methodology

Egon Schiele's artwork--specifically his self-portraits--constitute the primary data of this inquiry. The aim was to focus on the artist's work and what one can learn from it rather than on the artist as patient and his pathology. This does not mean that Schiele's psychodynamics or even his pathology were

ignored. Rather, Schiele's art helped discern the workings of his mind and, conversely, what is known about his internal and external life was used to help interpret his artwork.

The primary data of art critics is also the artist's work which they analyze in terms of its iconography. The psychoanalyst adds to this approach by underlining the unconscious material, including conflicts, which often derive from the artist's childhood. The artist's defensive style and adaptive tools are also subject matter for the psychoanalyst's investigations. These psychodynamic aspects of the artist, as represented in his work enhance one's understanding not only of the meaning of the work, but also, of the determinants of its formal style. Schiele's art is therefore analyzed in terms of both content and form.

Clearly some speculation is inevitable in the writing of a psychoanalytic narrative. An attempt has been made to ground these speculations in an historicultural and iconographic background. Additional measures taken to safeguard speculations are found in the wide variety of sources employed as data for the present inquiry. These are:

- (1) Schiele's art work, in particular, his self-portraits

(drawings, etchings, oils) created throughout his artistic career.

- (2) Drawings or rough sketches from numerous sketchbooks which Schiele used. These sketches at times represent preparatory ideas for major oil paintings showing the development of his thinking. At other times, these sketches reflect Schiele's thoughts or feelings at a given time with no other apparent purpose. Liebert considers such "private musings" or "visual doodlings" as invaluable "analogues to the free associations of a patient" (1982, p. 445).

- (3) Letters written by Schiele to family members, friends and patrons.

Letters written by family members and contemporaries to Schiele.

- (4) Poetry written by Schiele.

- (5) A journal which Schiele kept during his 1912 imprisonment and entries from a 1916 war journal.

- (6) Characterizations of Schiele by his contemporaries.

- (7) Art criticism analyzing Schiele's iconography.

- (8) Historical and art historical literature dealing with fin-de-siècle Vienna and its art.

Although the author does not view an artist's work solely as projective phenomena, certain aspects of projection are regarded as inevitable in art, particularly in Schiele's art which, with its emphasis on self

portrayal, has a considerable autobiographical dimension. Therefore, some of the techniques employed in the analysis of projective drawings and psychological tests have been applied to the understanding of aspects of Schiele's artwork. His particular use of art's formal devices (e.g., line, space, contrast, color, outline, perspective, etc.) have been explored to show how they reveal the development (or regression) of facial and bodily characteristics which comprise his self-representations. These explorations were based on findings by Bellak (1975), Bender (1932), Goodenough (1928), Hammer (1958), Machover (1949) and Schafer (1948, 1954), all of whom, in addition to Piaget (1948), assume that an artist's productions reflect the internal emotional and cognitive organization of his personality.

It was the aim of this study to demonstrate how psychoanalysis can help make sense of Schiele's artistic imagery--specifically his self-portraits--and therefore serve as a natural counterpart to the discoveries of art historians. An attempt has been made to illustrate the intimate relationship which exists between Schiele's inner life and the unique character of his art. This includes the personal manner in which he depicted himself and his emotional states. The reconstruction of Schiele's development aims at assessing the influence of certain emergent depth-psychological patterns on the thematic

content and formal structure of his production in its entirety. The relationship of his childhood experiences to his later character makeup and artistic style was therefore examined as well as the therapeutic value creation of self-portraits had for Schiele.

### Overview

Many investigators have attempted to analyze the artist and his work and to arrive at an understanding of the creative process. Chapter two reviews writers whose theories were conceived within the framework of psychoanalysis. While this inquiry is by no means exhaustive, the major contributors to the psychoanalytic understanding of art will be reviewed, with particular emphasis on the visual arts. Presentation is organized according to chronological order of appearance, although some degree of overlap may ensue. The aim of this survey is to illuminate the progress and developments, as well as the many gaps and contradictions, which exist in psychoanalytic thinking on creativity. The tools available to the applied analyst and the chief issues and obstacles which he faces therefore become apparent. The analysis of Egon Schiele's art which follows continues the tradition of the theoretical perspective presented here.

Chapter three reconstructs Schiele's childhood and youth covering the years 1890-1907. In reconstructing Schiele's early life, two formative events crucial for their effects on his life and art arise: the failed mirroring experience with his mother on the one hand, and the family deaths, including those of his four siblings and, most importantly, that of his father by syphilis, on the other. Both of these circumstances had a profound influence on Schiele's body image and subsequent self-representation.

To facilitate the understanding of Schiele's self-studies, they have been divided into four phases, each of which is thought to represent an important shift in the way he came to deal with the two formative events in his life and how his coping strategies found expression in his art. Each phase represents a meaningful modification in artistic style and content which is shown to reflect a corresponding change in the artist's psychic organization at the time, particularly regarding the development of his self and object relations.

Chapter four describes the first phase of Schiele's self-portraits and includes the years 1907-1909. Profoundly effected by his father's death, Schiele searched for his lost father in his self and for his self in his art. He portrayed himself with his father-substitute and

mentor, Gustav Klimt, and in terms of his external artistic identity with the aid of props (e.g., palette), clothing (e.g., beret, cravat) and Klimtian decorations.

The years 1910-1911 mark Schiele's departure from Klimt's influence and the beginnings of the development of his own artistic style. Chapter five describes the manner in which Schiele's self-portraits demonstrate a dramatic shift from external to internal, psychological depictions of himself. In his struggle to establish a separate identity, he experienced a severe identity crisis manifested in his numerous self-studies which abounded in fragmentation and mutilation. Nude, isolated, tortured and often amputated split-off parts of himself appeared in double and triple self-portraits. Indeed, the self-portraits of this phase are those most unremitting in their horror and ugliness and, therefore, the most interesting from the psychological perspective of his use of art as a mirror.

Spanning the years 1912-1914, chapter six reveals the way Schiele emerged from his identity crisis. Objectifying himself in his self-portraits for the first time, Schiele depicted himself as monk, hermit or saint. Following a brief imprisonment, antisocial, paranoid and megalomaniac portrayals increased along with depersonalized, impenetrable and even blind versions of himself.

Chapter seven deals with the fourth and last phase in the development of Schiele's self-portraits which began with World War I (1914) and ended with his premature death in 1918. Gradually overcoming his social withdrawal, Schiele took on the roles of soldier and husband. Corresponding changes in his self-portraits include the introduction of background and the emergence of a more realistic self. No longer depersonalized, he began sharing his (artistic) space with another. Schiele's mirror, in which he once saw reflected a hateful, fragmented self, became, in the end, a benevolent and accepting interpreter of reality.

In chapter eight, the concluding chapter, Schiele's work is reviewed as well as the artistic and psychological implications which it holds. The function of self-portraiture is examined as is the psychoanalytic proposition that in certain ways creativity bears on the origins of narcissism.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Johnston, 1980, p. 12; p. 197.

<sup>2</sup> Comini, 1978, p. 18.

## Chapter 2

Psychoanalytic Perspectives on Art:  
A Critical Review of the LiteratureSigmund Freud

A major difficulty in attempting to understand Freud's approach to art involves the fact that he shied away from presenting a systematic analysis of the subject while his many writings reflect inconsistent and often contradictory opinions. One fact that emerges clearly from this confusion, however, is an interest in art so intense that it lasted throughout Freud's lifetime and prevented him from adhering to his own warning that "Before the problem of the creative artist analysis must, alas, lay down its arms" (1933).

Freud's attitude towards the artist is best characterized as acutely ambivalent. His statements range from adulation to defamation and probably reflect feelings he had about acknowledging his own genius--something he frequently and unreservedly took pains to deny.<sup>1</sup> For the most part, Freud spoke of artists with an enormous amount of respect and regard for their enigmatic genius which he idealized, envied and at times, even identified with. He believed that the artist possesses special qualities, such as "a certain flexibility in repression" which enables him to understand and portray human behavior (1917). Thus,

Freud claimed that the artist "has always been the precursor of science and scientific psychology" (1907). French playwright Henri-René Lenormand has said that in the mid-1920's, while pointing to his bookshelves containing Shakespeare and the Greek tragedies, Freud declared, "These are my masters" (Spector, 1972, p. 7).

Indeed, Freud's awe of the artist resulted in his repeatedly advocating a 'hands off' policy to psychoanalysis with regard to art:

We have to admit that...the nature of artistic achievement is inaccessible to us psychoanalytically.

Leonardo da Vinci, 1910

Where the artist gets his ability to create is no concern of psychology.

"Claims of Psychoanalysis to Scientific Interest", 1913

It [psychoanalysis] can do nothing toward elucidating the nature of the artistic gift, nor can it explain the means by which the artist works--artistic technique.

An Autobiographical Study, 1925

On the other hand, Freud also argued that "the creative writer cannot evade the psychiatrist nor the psychiatrist the creative writer" (1907) and that artists and their works are not beyond psychological comprehension "like any other form of human life" (1914). He went further in stating that this task could be accomplished only if one

were to employ psychoanalytic tools and even expressed impatience with those who did not accept this to be so (1923). This attitude of Freud's is best exemplified in his 1910 treatise on Leonardo where he went so far as to develop an entire analysis of this genius's personality, including his homosexuality, and his work, based primarily on a single childhood memory.<sup>2</sup>

Freud's application of psychoanalytic methods, which he derived from the study of neurotics, to the understanding of the artist and his works constitutes one of the major objections critics have to his views on art. These critics, led by Roger Fry (1924) and Clive Bell (1925), unlike Freud, maintain that art is an autonomous, self-contained entity which should not be reduced to or explained by other human emotions. What they find most offensive is the manner in which Freud sometimes portrays the artist as an infantile, overly conflicted person who, as a result of his inability to deal with reality, escapes into a fantasy world where he seeks (and finds) fulfillment for his unacceptable, primarily sexual, needs. According to Fry and Bell, this undue emphasis which Freud places on the pathological qualities of the artist results in his trivializing the artist by equating him with the neurotic and his product with a mere symptom or perversion. One of the many statements substantiating such a viewpoint can be found in a letter to Fliess (May 31, 1897) where Freud

states that "the mechanism of creative writing is the same as that of hysterical phantasies".<sup>3</sup> Similarly, in the opening to his paper on Dostoevsky (1928), he exclaims: "Four facets may be distinguished in the rich personality of Dostoevsky: the creative artist, the neurotic, the moralist and the sinner. How is one to find one's way in this bewildering complexity?" (p. 177). Unfortunately, Freud's theory is marred by its lack of complete clarification as to whether creativity can exist in the absence of pathology.

Even though he believed the artist to be "not far removed from neurosis", Freud nevertheless endeavored to differentiate the two on some accounts. In his Introductory Lectures (1911), he asserts that the artist succeeds in finding his way back to reality while the neurotic does not. According to Freud, this is accomplished by the artist's molding of his fantasies (i.e., the winning of "honour, power and the love of women") into truths which are appreciated by others as reflections of reality (the "artistic illusion"). Freud points out, however, that such a "roundabout path of making alterations in the external world" is possible only because others deal with similar conflicts and dissatisfactions with reality to a degree where they can unconsciously identify with and derive pleasure from such elements, and their escape from censorship, in works of art (p. 224).

The "roundabout path" to which Freud refers is of course that of sublimation--the transformation of instinctual energies into "higher ones of art or culture". In his Three Essays (1905b), he explains how sublimation functions as a cultural outlet for powerful sexual excitations, thereby resulting in "an increased psychical efficiency". "Here", he states, "we have the origins of artistic activity" (p. 238).

Freud's view of the artist's instinctual conflicts and their resolution through sublimation led him to analyze art as he would a dream--that is, by primarily deciphering the content to arrive at an understanding of the artist's unconscious motives. As a matter of fact, he disregarded the creative aspects of the manifest dream just as he left the formal aspects of art unattended to. Freud admitted to his one-sided approach when he confessed that "the subject-matter of works of art has a stronger attraction for me than their formal and technical qualities" (1914, p. 211). He added that he was "almost incapable of obtaining pleasure from music" which is of special interest in light of Susan Langer's (1942) description of music as the only art medium that is pure form; its content is expressed entirely and solely through its form. Freud's opinion was further demonstrated in a letter he wrote to Ernest Jones in 1914 after having spent an evening with an artist. Expressing the near contempt he held for this man's

appreciation of artistic form, he said,

Meaning is but little to these men; all they care for is line, shape, agreement of contours. They are given up to the Lustprinzip (Spector, 1972, p. 106).

Freud's emphasis on the content of art results in his failure to explain the difference between great art and mediocre or even bad art--all of which can be regarded as products of sublimation possessing equally analyzable subject matter. Artistic form, then, is merely a "wrapping for [the more important] unconscious content" (1905). The criticism that Freud deals only with what is aesthetically unimportant in art has been advanced quite often (Hesse, 1958; Koestler, 1949) and evidence in support of this view can be found, primarily in the Introductory Lectures. Nonetheless, this argument is an oversimplistic one which not only overlooks the complexity and variability of Freud's statements on art, but also, the fact that his views were substantially influenced by personal factors. Jack Spector, in his book The Aesthetics of Freud (1972), proposes to resolve the problem by assuming that Freud made an implicit distinction in his mind between genius, father-substitutes like Shakespeare and Goethe whom he idealized and strove to identify with, and the ordinary artist, whom he viewed as a semi-neurotic dominated by powerful inner needs. If this were true, however, one would expect Freud's treatment of artists' works to differ depending upon whether they belonged to a genius like

Leonardo or a lesser writer like Jensen (who wrote Gradiva, a novel which Freud's 1907 analysis made famous). Yet, this is not the case since Freud himself claimed that all artists need to be treated equally. In fact, in the introductory section of his 'pathographic' analysis of Leonardo, he emphatically asserts that "no one is so great as to be disgraced by being subject to the laws which govern both normal and pathological activity with equal cogency" (p. 63) and he even attacks the notion that it is useless "to study in him [the great man] things which could just as well be found in every Tom, Dick and Harry" (1910).

Ernest Jones' (1953) response to Freud's critics entails regarding most of Freud's writings on art as referring to literature, a field where his views are more intelligible than that of painting, for instance. There seems to be more truth to this position since Freud rarely wrote on painting and music and he admitted a preference for literature and sculpture (1914, p. 211). One reason for this bias may be related to the fact that in literature Freud found a form with which he was already familiar from his treatment with patients--namely, the use and manipulation of words.

Freud's apparent comfort with the medium of language is evident from his 1905 book on jokes where, for the first time, both content and formal technique are examined. By

extrapolation, some of these findings are applicable to his understanding of art as well. Essentially, Freud saw jokes as compromise formations between the unconscious and preconscious; primary process thoughts are adjusted to reality by molding them into secondary process format through the use of the formal aspects of sound such as rhyme, assonance and rhythm. This form is then presented in a social context and the joke-teller derives pleasure from three different sources: his expression of ordinarily inhibited drives, his engagement in the activity of playing with words and his exhibitionism before others.

Freud often compared jokes with dreams but not with art. This is rather unfortunate since, if he had, he might have realized the interrelatedness of aesthetic form and content more readily. It is also surprising that he did not do so because, according to his own statements, jokes resemble art more closely than they do dreams. According to Freud, the purpose of both jokes and art is the attainment of pleasure whereas that of dreams is the avoidance of displeasure. Also, both jokes and art need to be considered in a social context; the joke-teller and the artist perform for an audience. Contrarily, dreams are highly individualized, asocial phenomena. Finally, Freud regarded both jokes and art as "developed play".

In his 1908 paper on "The Relation of the Poet to

Daydreaming", Freud draws a direct comparison between creative writing and children's play. There, he says that "every child at play behaves like a creative writer, in that he creates a world of his own, or, rather, re-arranges the things of his world in a new way which pleases him" (pp. 143-44). Fantasies from which the artist derives his content are seen by Freud as compensatory formations for a dissatisfactory reality. In this paper, he deals once more with formal techniques, this time addressing those a writer employs. He explains the purpose of artistic technique as follows:

the essential ars poetica lies in the technique of overcoming the feeling of repulsion [at the writer's phantasies]...The writer softens the character of his egoistic day-dreams by altering and disguising it, and he bribes us by the purely formal--that is, aesthetic--yield of pleasure which he offers us in the presentation of his phantasies (p. 153).

Freud's description of the writer in the above passage makes him sound like a criminal type who uses his "innermost secrets" to deceive his audience through "bribes" and "disguises". It must be recalled, however, that these devices are considered to be unconscious. His equation here of the "formal" with the "aesthetic" is highly significant because it means he is acknowledging that the formal qualities, and not the subject matter, are what provide art with its aesthetic character. Thus, without the mask of form which serves to hide the artist's "repulsive" fantasies, one would be left not with art but

with a boring or chaotic daydream. Form is art and art is form. According to Freud, however, form must obey the "laws of beauty" because its purpose is to soften and disguise what is offensive in art while luring the spectator with a "perceptual bonus" (1913). In sum, while Freud consistently minimized the attention he paid to aesthetic form, it is clear that this was not due to the lack of importance which he attributed to it.

The viewpoint insisting that form be beautiful fails to explain how one can enjoy ugly or painful experiences which art at times portrays and evokes in the viewer. One needs to refer to Freud's later writings on play in order to find an answer to this problem. In Beyond the Pleasure Principle (1920), he explains that all types of experience are repeated in children's play as a way of gaining mastery over them:

It is clear that in their play children repeat everything that has made a great impression on them in real life, and that in doing so they abreact the strength of the impression and, as one might put it, make themselves master of the situation....It can also be observed that the unpleasurable nature of an experience does not unsuit it for play....The child passes over from the passivity of the experience to the activity of the game (pp. 16-17).

Freud continues by comparing the motives of "artistic play and artistic imitation" of adults with the play of children, the only difference being that adult's "play" is

directed at an audience. Similar to the child's play, however, art does

not spare the spectators (for instance, in tragedy) the most painful experiences and can yet be felt by them as highly enjoyable. This is convincing proof that, even under the dominance of the pleasure principle, there are ways and means enough of making what is in itself unpleasurable into a subject to be recollected and worked over in the mind (p. 17).

In light of his writings on jokes and play, which he both explicitly and implicitly compared to art, one is able to comprehend the extent to which Freud's views of the artist go beyond seeing him only as a person who is saved from neurosis by sublimation. Consequently, a more accurate and comprehensive understanding of his position on art becomes possible. In the earlier partial and highly controversial view, the artist's privately unacceptable, unconscious fantasies and built-up tensions are exhibitionistically released in disguised form onto an audience as a way of relieving internal pressure and obtaining pleasure. The art work is a mere safety valve that helps bind the artist's repressions.

In Freud's more mature views, the art work is no longer solely regarded as an expression of a dissatisfied artist's overly powerful impulses. The artist is seen more positively as someone who asserts and gains mastery over these impulses and who, by using formal techniques, enjoys

the act of doing so.<sup>4</sup> This sense of mastery applies not only to the artist's own experiences, but also, to the manner in which the artist is able to control his audience's reactions:

In the main we adopt an unvarying passive attitude towards real experience and are subject to the influence of our physical environment. But the story-teller has a peculiarly directive influence over us; by means of the moods he can put us into, he is able to guide the current of our emotions, to dam it up in one direction and make it flow in another. (Freud, 1919, p. 251).

In conclusion, it is evident that Freud's views on art are not as simplistic as they are often thought to be. Rather, his position changed over time and was influenced by his personal taste. In addition, some of his major insights pertaining to art are found in works whose principal subject is not art. By extrapolating important notions which Freud expressed in his writings on jokes and play, one is able to avoid the common mistake of basing his views on one or two statements taken in isolation. By regarding the entirety of his oeuvre, including the changes it reflects, one can appreciate instead some very sophisticated thinking on art which unfortunately was never brought together to form a more integrated and comprehensive approach. Incomplete and cursory as they were, Freud's views were to provide the foundation on which subsequent investigators in the psychology of art would base themselves.

C.G. Jung

Jung's concept of the collective unconscious visibly permeates his entire theory of creativity. His aim was to de-emphasize the role which individual, or sexual, factors play in creativity. For instance, he states that "the special significance of a true work of art resides in the fact that it has escaped the limitations of the personal and soared beyond the personal concerns of its creator" (1922, p. 309). The artist is considered a visionary spokesman and a guide for the future. This is because, according to Jung, the artist has easy access to the collective unconscious, the storehouse of the archetypes--primordial universal experiences. It is the artistic portrayal of these archetypes which the audience responds to. Although he distinguishes between introvert (psychological) artists who consciously master their material and extrovert (visionary) artists who are subordinate to their work, his interest clearly lies with the latter. The extrovert artist is described by Jung as a passive instrument of his work from which he remains autonomous. Thus, he declares, "It is not Goethe who creates Faust, but Faust which creates Goethe" (1952, p. 222).

Jung interprets the final product of the visionary artist in terms of its universal symbolism, parallel to

Freud's way of interpreting the personal symbols which he saw represented in dreams and works of art. Like Freud, Jung also tended to avoid the topic of artistic form except in his work on the mandala--a circular form which he believed represents the archetype of wholeness. The particular form which the mandala takes is crucial in Jung's mind since he interprets it as a compensation for the "disorder and confusion of the psychic state" in which it is created (1959, p. 4).

Jung's emphasis on the significance of regarding great art in terms of other than personal factors is extremely valuable and indisputable. It also represents a rejection of Freud's interpretation of art as intimately related to its creator's personal wishes and conflicts. While Jung clearly adds to Freud's intrapsychic understanding of creativity, his views tend to neglect the individual contributions of artistic products. For him, the great work of art transcends the artist's life experiences and personal factors as well as the historical period in which he lives. His description of the extrovert artist as totally and passively at the mercy of his work is perhaps relevant when applied to aspects of creativity but is an untenable characterization of the creative process in its entirety. Surely art works need to be considered as creations of individuals who are more than passive carriers of a universal tradition.

Otto Rank

Rank regards the function of art as providing the artist with ways to deal with his two basic and opposed fears: the fear of life and the fear of death. The fear of life relates to the fear of separation, experienced first as the primal anxiety of the birth trauma where the infant is separated from the womb, the mother, the wholeness of which it was formerly part. The individual's need to restore a lost unity with the mother is overcome by the artist through his work whose form, Rank claims, adopts the primal form of the maternal vessel. It is this form which Rank believes to have become the basic content of all art (1924). The drive to go backward to a symbiotic state of fusion with the mother (the life fear), however, leads to the fear of death because it is experienced as a loss of individuality, a loss of life itself. Therefore, the death fear is what impels the artist to immortalize himself in his work. The spectator, in turn, derives pleasure from his participation in the artist's "objectification of immortality" (1932).

Like Jung, Rank, drew attention to the collective element in art. Both considered the artwork an object in its own right rather than a repository for unsatisfied personal wishes and likened its spiritual value to that of religion from which they believed it stems. Unlike Jung,

Rank believed the artist to be greatly influenced by the cultural setting in which he finds himself. He asserts that "the artist [represents] only one, the individual factor, while we have to regard art as the collective expression of [his] contemporary ideology" (1932, p. 7). Furthermore, far from perceiving the artist as passive, Rank considered him to be a heroic and strong-willed individual who is more open to the world than most people.

Rank was developing his theory of will at approximately the same time he wrote about art. He discovered that the artist and the neurotic have strong will and strong impulse in common, differentiating him from the average type who has neither and from the criminal type whose impulse is strong but whose will is ineffective. Whereas Freud emphasizes the pathological aspects in the artist, Rank delineates the creative aspects which exist in the neurotic. Both artist and neurotic exercise their will in creatively reshaping themselves, the difference between them being that

The neurotic, in this voluntary remaking of his ego does not yet get beyond the destructive preliminary work and is therefore unable to detach the whole creative process from his own person and transfer it to an ideological abstraction. The productive artist also begins with that re-creation of himself which results in an ideologically constructed ego; this ego is then in a position to shift the creative will-power from his own person to ideological representations of that person and thus to render it objective (1932, p. 41).

Thus, the neurotic is a failed artist or, as Rank labels him, an artiste manqué. Rank ultimately views the 'productive artist' as representing the last of the individual and collective approaches to the problem of mortality and believes the forthcoming stage to be one in which the artist type will create his own life and become creator of the self.

That Rank was a pioneer in regards to his many discoveries on art will become clear shortly. That his writings are often overlooked is striking especially since he was the first among all the early psychoanalysts to concern himself with the problem of creativity. His first book, Der Künstler (1907), is what initially brought him to Freud's attention. In fact, Freud held the book in such high regard that he decided to include it as an appendage to his own Interpretation of Dreams. Rank's views anticipate later developments in the psychology of aesthetics. His erudite interpretations of innumerable art works and myths in terms of undoing birth and separation in order to return to the womb are in line with contemporary thinking on narcissism and object relations. His insistence on a literal interpretation of these works as actual memories or wishes for intra-uterine existence, however, is probably responsible for the disregard many writers show for his ideas. The womb fantasy, when understood in its broader sense as a wish for union with

the mother, however, is very valuable in explaining the process of containment which an artist achieves through his works. Rank's notion of self-creation through art is also one that is only now beginning to draw the attention it deserves.

### Ernst Kris

Unlike Jung and Rank, who make a point of rejecting Freud's views on art, Kris (1934, 1952, 1955) nowhere disagrees with any of Freud's writings. Rather, he proposes to elaborate and add onto Freud's statements. He accomplishes this by staying within the energetic-libidinal framework of Freudian theory while stressing the significance which developments in the school of ego psychology (led by Heinz Hartmann) add to the understanding of art. His primary concern lies in the dynamic role which the ego plays in the creative process.

In an attempt to clarify Freud's position on art, Kris (1952; 1955) proposes to restrict the use of the word 'sublimation' since he considers it ambiguous. He claims that confusion results from two separate definitions of sublimation which many, including Freud, have used interchangeably. Whereas the first definition refers to a process of substitution of a socially acceptable goal for

an unacceptable one, the second definition involves the transformation of the energy discharged. Kris states that sublimation should be reserved for the first definition. Since the energy is displaced and not transferred, it retains its original instinctual quality and therefore can also be labelled as either "sexualization" or "aggressivization" of energy. This does not hold true for the second definition, however, for which he prefers the term "neutralization". Kris notes that while all of the above processes may be involved in creative activity, only neutralized energy is associated with ego autonomy.

In the construction of his theory of creativity--which includes the notion of "regression in the service of the ego"--Kris relies on three separate findings:

- (1) Freud's theory of wit (1905) where he explains how a preconscious thought becomes "entrusted for a moment to unconscious elaboration";
- (2) Freud's (1917) statement that artists are endowed with a "flexibility (looseness, Lockerheit) of repression"; and
- (3) Ego psychology's emphasis on the adaptive functions of the ego.

The major focus of Kris's formulations on creativity deals with shifts in psychic levels (primary process vs. secondary process) and cathexes of ego functions

(inspiration vs. elaboration) which he believes occur during the creative act. The assumption here initially appears to be paradoxical for while the ego suspends its control by a temporary withdrawal of cathexis, it simultaneously controls and regulates the regression that is taking place. The control of ego functions, however, is one which alternates with regard to "the organizational functions of the ego, its capacity of self-regulation of regression and particularly to its capacity of control over the primary process" (1952, p. 28).

It is recalled that Jung (1952) distinguished between the 'introverted' and 'extroverted' attitudes which an artist assumes in relation to his work, the former involving a conscious shaping and mastering of the material for an intended effect and the latter concerning a passive, unconscious activation of the creative process. Kris also differentiates between two psychic levels involved in creativity; however, in his view both levels are experienced by each artist at different times. Consequently, he describes the creative process as composed of two phases, each of which involves a shift in psychic level and a corresponding shift in the cathexis of certain ego functions. During the first "inspirational" phase, the artist is passively receptive to id impulses or their derivatives. Kris describes this phase as having much in common with regressive processes in that id impulses and

drives, otherwise hidden and unavailable, emerge to communicate with the ego. During this phase, the artist experiences rapture and a feeling of being driven by external forces. The second "elaborational" phase, on the other hand, calls for the artist's active use of such ego functions as reality testing, formulation and communication. This phase resembles work or problem solving in that it entails concentration and purposeful organization. What was initially communicated to the passively receptive ego is now actively elaborated and communicated to others. According to Kris, then, the inspirational phase donates the content to an art work whereas the elaboration phase is responsible for the transformation of that content into communicable form, communication being the primary purpose of art.

During the creative process, a continual interplay between inspiration (regression) and elaboration (criticism) takes place and the degree to which an artist's work represents mainly one or the other of these constitutes the major difference between normal and psychotic art. For instance, if regression predominates, the symbols employed in the artwork are egocentric and take on private meaning; however, if there is too much control, the work of art will appear "cold, mechanical and uninspired" (1952, p. 254). While Kris sees art as having developed from magic ritual into a form of communication,

he believes psychotic art deteriorates from communication back to sorcery. Since the ego plays a minimal part in psychotic creations, the insane artist, like the dreamer, does not control his regression, but rather, becomes overwhelmed by it. And like the dream, the psychotic product only becomes intelligible with the aid of interpretation. In its attempt to transform the external world, Kris believes the art of psychotics serves a restitutive rather than a communicative function.

Since he emphasized the communicative function of art, Kris naturally thought it essential to explain the essence of the aesthetic response. Let us recall for a moment how Freud described the pleasure which a spectator derives from a work of art primarily in terms of his identification with expressions of unconscious wishes that succeeded in escaping censorship. For Kris, aesthetic pleasure is also achieved through identification but, he sees the spectator as identifying not only with the content depicted in the artwork, but also, with the artist and the creative act itself. The formal aspects of art become crucial for the spectator's enjoyment since he, under the guidance of the artist, "'imitates' the strokes and lines with which [the art work] was created". He becomes a "co-creator" and in his "re-creation" of the art work, the spectator experiences shifts in psychic levels--pleasurable in themselves--comparable to those the artist underwent during

the original creation.

Kris's theory of art has been widely criticized for the central position it attributes to the regressive function in creative activity (Arieti, 1976; Ehrenzweig, 1967; Gedo, 1983; Rose, 1980; Weissman, 1971). This is probably because regressive processes in adults usually imply pathological mental functioning and their connection with creativity is therefore reminiscent of Freud's controversial comparisons of the artist with the neurotic. If Kris did not intend to equate creativity with pathology, these arguments may appear secondary or merely semantic in nature. Nonetheless, his repeated accent on "regression in the service of the ego" is unfortunate because, as Weissman (1971) claims, it produces a "terminological disadvantage" which "detracts from an evaluation of the positive and strong developmental aspects of ego functioning in creative activity" (p. 402). Regression, however qualified, does not adequately describe an activity which is thought to result in a wider view of the world and a greater integration of self. Thus, the term "regression" is not only misleading but it also fails to do justice to Kris's own inestimable notions of the creative person's access to inner experiences and his use of the primary process. While some critics unfortunately disregard Kris's theory altogether, others simply substitute their own language for his. Thus, for example, Weissman proposes a desynthesizing

or "dissociative function of the ego" which he claims more accurately describes the ego's functioning during creative activity.

Phyllis Greenacre

Although Phyllis Greenacre never developed a full-fledged theory of creativity; she was nevertheless very interested in the subject and wrote extensively about it (1955; 1957; 1958b; 1958c; 1960). Beginning with a repudiation of Kris's use of the term "neutralization", she rejects many of the psychoanalytic formulations which preceded her own writings. She thinks neutralization does not describe creative energy since it wrongly implies "something rendered inert, or at least temporarily ineffective" (1957, p. 500). Although "sublimation" fares somewhat better with her, she believes it too fails to adequately describe what happens during the creative process. According to Greenacre, the amount of abreaction which takes place through creation is minimal, and consequently, sublimatory processes are thought to have greater import in a noncreative individual--for instance, the art spectator--than in the creative person himself.

While Greenacre is careful in saying that she cannot explain creativity which she believes to be inborn, her

greatest contribution to this topic concerns her insights regarding the artist's childhood. She claims that the child who is the potential artist begins life with a different set of tools than the less gifted child. These tools include "certain inborn qualities of greater sensory responsiveness, greater capacity to organize sensory impressions into related engrams with special sensitivity to rhythm and form" (1958b, p. 528). Early experiences are not only marked by heightened intensity, but also, by a widening of those experiences. The child's responsiveness extends beyond his primary object to include peripheral objects. The cathexis of peripheral objects is referred to by Greenacre as "the field of collective alternatives" and is characterized by the young artist's "love affair with the world". The art product, then, represents a "love gift" to the world. The child's "sense of fusion with the outer world in a state of mutual permeability" is sometimes experienced as an "oceanic feeling" which can lead to a less clearly delineated relationship with the environment. Problems with self and object definition as well as difficulties with identity consolidation are therefore to be expected in artists.

The artist child's increased sensitivity and perceptivity also result in the premature development of libidinal phases (e.g., oedipal) as well as their lack of complete resolution (1957). The boundaries between the

various psychosexual stages diminish and the artist's pleasure sources seem to shift in emphasis from one instinctual drive to another. Thus, increased ambivalence in artists derives not only from an unresolved oedipal complex, but also, from the heightened ambivalence carried over from the unresolved anal phase.

The tendency towards ambivalence is characterized by the child's splitting of images into good and bad parts which, according to Greenacre, is especially acute in the artist's self-representations. She compares the artist to the imposter (1958c) and explains how both are at least two people. As far as the artist is concerned, he has a personal self and an artistic self and the relationship between these separate selves varies and, in the worst case, can end up in complete dissociation. Greenacre, like Eissler (1961), views the artist child's special endowments as twofold in nature: while enabling him to respond more openly to his environment, they also carry the potential for interfering with his development. Therefore, she perceives artists as possessing a greater than average predisposition for bisexuality (1957, p. 501) and for "pregenital neurotic elements in [their] later lives...failure to make stable adult object relations, relative ease of dissociation, and even a seemingly high incidence of outcroppings of perverse tendencies" (1960, p. 578). The artist's object relations also tend to differ

from those of the less creative individual in that they become colored with symbolic representations whereas relations with inanimate objects tend to become anthropomorphised.

### Melanie Klein

Melanie Klein's writings emphasize the infant's aggressive impulses and destructive fantasies. She views the infant as innately envious of the mother's breast with its creativity and goodness. Consequently, the primary manifestation of the infant's aggression, according to Klein, is his fantasized attack on the mother, her breast or other part object with the aim of damaging or destroying her. The child projects and introjects his aggression and, as a result, fears persecution from both outside and inside. He retains the memory of the earlier situation where he was one with the good, whole mother and becomes depressed and guilty upon awareness that his own aggressive attacks were responsible for the loss of her. It is at this point that Klein postulates a reparative impulse which involves the infant's wishes and capacities for restoration of the good object. The reparative working through of the infant's depressive struggle, then, is considered the source of artistic creativity. As Hanna Segal (1964) writes:

The pain of mourning experienced in the depressive position, and the reparative drives developed to restore the loved internal and external objects, are the basis for creativity and sublimation (p. 75).

The artist is perceived by Kleinians as someone who, through his artistic activity, repeatedly re-creates the internal object he once destroyed. The restored internal object, however, must be externalized and given a life of its own. This is partly accomplished by the use of symbols which Segal claims also develop during the time the child is solving the depressive position. Symbol formation represents the child's attempt to decathect his instincts from the object thereby sparing her (the mother) from further aggression. This approach to the art work as a separate object is stressed by another Kleinian, Adrian Stokes, who asserts, "The work of art is esteemed for its otherness, as a self-sufficient object, no less than as an ego figure" (1972, p. 120).

Artistic form is of paramount importance to Kleinians. While the content of art may reveal its destructive origins, the form or composition serves to unite those elements which the mind has demolished. Form, therefore, is a direct representation of restitution. It is also that which evokes pleasure in the viewer who is assumed to unconsciously identify with the artist's depressive conflict and his emergence from it.

Kleinians have been accused by some of overemphasizing, and perhaps exaggerating, the significance of aggression and attack in their views while neglecting the more positive, benign aspects of early infantile experience. For example, the feeling which the child experiences at his mother's breast--sometimes described as "oceanic"--could probably equally account for the development of creativity (e.g., Greenacre, 1957; Stokes, 1972). Some critics consider Klein's theory of aesthetics overly reductionistic (Bychowski, 1951) or scientifically inaccurate (Gedo, 1983), and therefore ineffective. It is this author's opinion that the Kleinian theory, which rests on the aggression-guilt-reparation paradigm, is an insufficient explanation of an activity so complex as that of creativity. Nevertheless, the Kleinian notions that creativity derives from early experience; that art expresses both destructive and reparative processes; and that the art work can be understood as an object are considerable contributions to the psychology of aesthetics.

#### D.W. Winnicott

Like Klein, Winnicott also believes that creative experience derives from early childhood. He too emphasizes the importance of that phase of development which precedes

the separation of the self from the external world (originally consisting of the maternal object). Winnicott goes beyond trying to answer the usual questions of when, how, or why creativity originates and begins to pose the question of where cultural experience is located. To answer this question, Winnicott refers to the hypothetical area to which he gives visual form and labels "potential space". The potential space involves a paradoxical and intermediary realm of mental life existing (although it cannot exist) between the subjective dream world of the individual and the objective world of shared reality. According to Winnicott, the child who has received "good enough mothering", helping him to develop ample trust in his environment, begins to explore interactions between himself and the world, creating illusionary transformations of that world. At first, these transformations assume the form of fantasy and later that of cultural products. Like Freud, Winnicott compares creative activity to the play of children. He sees the potential or transitional space, where exploration and creation take place, as intimately related to the capacity for play, an activity which he conceives of as existing between fantasy and action. Winnicott describes potential space as

This intermediate area of experience, unchallenged in respect to its belonging to inner or external (shared) reality, constitutes the greater part of the infant's experience and throughout life is retained in the intense experiencing that belongs to the arts and to imaginative living, and to creative scientific work (1951, p. 242).

Some of the transformations which the child creates in his potential space are "transitional objects", objects like a child's comfort blanket which reflect symbolic syntheses between the baby and the mother or a part of her. According to Winnicott (1951), the transitional object represents the child's first use of symbolism and his first experience of play. Out of his loneliness resulting from the loss of his mother and her capacity to lend him a sense of mental and bodily integration, the child creates the transitional object with its notable powers of comfort and consolation.

Winnicott's formulations on transitional phenomena have been placed into a developmental perspective by recent authors (Hamilton, 1975; Modell, 1970; Rose, 1980; Weissman, 1971) who consider them the forerunners of man's artistic creations. In this sense, they have also been likened to Greenacre's "collective alternatives".

#### Marion Milner

Marion Milner, a psychoanalyst, approached the subject of creativity from an entirely different perspective than previously discussed writers. In her book, On Not Being Able to Paint (1957), she deals with her own, often frustrating, attempts as a nonartist to paint. Through her

journey toward artistic self-expression, Milner encounters numerous obstacles which she struggles to overcome. Her understanding of these obstacles, and the manner in which she learns to cope with them, are particularly useful in adding to our knowledge of the creative process.

Milner's personal search through painting first of all involves a realization that there are two types of experience:

One way had to do with a common sense world of objects separated by outline, keeping themselves to themselves and staying the same, the other had to do with a world of change, of continual development and process, one in which there was no sharp line between one state and the next, as there is no fixed boundary between twilight and darkness but only a gradual merging of the one into the other (p. 24).

Milner compares the latter way of feeling to "taking some dangerous plunge" into madness. Therefore, in order for her to be able to paint, she describes several fears which need to be overcome, one by one. For example, she tells about her initial resistance to "face the visual facts of space and distance" as well as those of outline. Only subsequent to her realization that this resistance involves confronting fears of losing her sense of being a separate person with separate boundaries is she able to employ these formal techniques of painting. In describing this dawning of awareness in regard to outline, she writes,

For I noticed that the effect needed in order to see the edges of objects as they really looked stirred a dim fear, a fear of what might happen if one let go one's mental hold on the outline which kept everything separate and in its place....Now also it was easier to understand what painters meant by the phrase 'freedom of line' because here surely was a reason for its opposite; that is, the emotional need to imprison objects rigidly within themselves....Thus the outline represented the world of fact, of separate touchable objects; to cling to it was surely to protect oneself against the other world, the world of imagination....and letting in imagination meant letting in madness (pp. 16-17).

Some of Milner's experiences with painting seem to come from her theoretical (object relations) orientation so that it could be argued that she discovers what she expects or looks for. While this may be the case, the graphic descriptions she offers of her own entry into what resembles Winnicott's potential space not only begin to address important issues concerning the psychological equivalents of artistic form (e.g., space, line, color, etc.), but also, allow us to better understand the psychic elements which artists may be continuously confronting in their work. Thus, creative activity can evoke intense fear and anxiety because of the way it compels the artist to face earlier developmental emotions, particularly those preceding the consolidation of self-organization.

Anton Ehrenzweig

In his attempt to devise a "psychological theory of depth perception", Anton Ehrenzweig approaches art from the combined viewpoints of psychoanalysis and gestalt psychology. On the one hand, his books (1953, 1967) are at times disconcerting due to his somewhat questionable usage of psychoanalytic concepts which he borrows from numerous theorists. On the other hand, his writings offer several new and important insights to the subject of aesthetics, a subject in which for Ehrenzweig perception is considered the key concept. Remarking on these two aspects of his work, John Gedo (1970, p. 234) has called Ehrenzweig's second book, The Hidden Order of Art, an "imperfect masterpiece". Only his contributions to the understanding of art and perception will be discussed here.

Ehrenzweig differentiates between two distinct modes of vision. The first mode consists of the conscious perception of gestalten or other surface details while the second mode constitutes the unconscious, global perception of objects without regard for the surface gestalt. It is with this latter form of perception that Ehrenzweig's primary concern lies. Far from considering such vision chaotic or destructive, he repeatedly emphasizes the advantages it entails. Unlike the type of perception that depends upon closed gestalt patterns, unconscious or

"undifferentiated" vision deals comfortably with open structures and blurred or fluid edges. He argues that only when employing this type of vision that the viewer can identify the object in all of its changing aspects.

Ehrenzweig also postulates a hypothesis regarding the developmental line of each of these two visual modes. He claims that until the child is eight years old, his vision is not differentiated due to his lack of differentiation from his environment. Furthermore, since sexual feelings are not yet repressed, the young child's vision is considered to be ruled by the libido. His is a direct perception of concrete objects which pays little attention to their abstract elements. "Thing perception" or, as Piaget calls it, "syncretistic" vision, changes drastically around the age of eight. Ehrenzweig attributes this change to the onset of latency. Since the child's libidinal attachment to the world weakens at this time, he believes that the child's perception detaches itself from concrete individual objects and instead becomes attached to generalized abstract patterns. In comparing the details of objects, the child is now able to establish their gestalt. While vision becomes more clearly defined, however, it pays the price of losing some of its flexibility and its quality of realness. According to Ehrenzweig, the split in one's orientation towards reality which these two modes of vision imply never achieves complete resolution. Ehrenzweig cites

research on vision as proof for his views. For instance, it has been found that congenitally blind persons who are later cured need first to "learn" how to see. This is because they cannot grasp the gestalten of objects but, like the child, only perceive undifferentiated color patches and libidinally cathected objects. Experiments on tachistoscopic subliminal perception also confirm Ehrenzweig's claim that content perception precedes form perception.

The coexistence of these two modes of perception is crucial for Ehrenzweig's conceptualizations of the artist. He maintains that the artist is like the child in that he possesses the capacity for a strong, undifferentiated perception. This notion is in contradistinction to views held by both gestalt and psychoanalytic writers. Ehrenzweig believes that artistic vision is flexible and that it even accomplishes what gestalt psychologists consider impossible: namely, the artist need not choose to focus on either the figure or the ground of a composition but may perceive both simultaneously. He claims that the principles of perception propounded by Gestalt psychologists (Koffka, 1935; Kohler, 1929; Wertheimer, 1945) apply only to surface perception.

Ehrenzweig also disagrees with Kris (1952) who conceives of the artist as controlling his regression to

earlier psychic levels. Once more, it is Ehrenzweig's contention that different levels are concurrently present and continuously available for the artist's use. He believes that the artist's ego not only controls regression to primary process thought, but that it also controls the work of the primary process itself. Indeed, like Milner (1958), Ehrenzweig insists that present conceptions of the unconscious and the primary process need to be expanded in light of such findings in art. His wish is to illustrate the constructive, and even superior, role of the unconscious undifferentiated matrix. Its wider more global focus, he believes, results in its inclusion of additional structures because of the disregard it has for how these structures may appear in time or space. Ehrenzweig explains the value of such vision for the artist, who is guided toward the completion of his art work by his ability to perceive its totality ahead of time. According to Ehrenzweig, perception is far from being an ego autonomous function since it is constantly penetrated by unconscious id structures.

The dual mode of perception is not only important for the artist but also effects the structure of artistic products as well as the viewer's appreciation of them. Art's surface quality, with its attractive gestalt forms, appeal to the spectator and give rise to his experience of aesthetic pleasure. The unconscious substructure or, as

Ehrenzweig prefers to call it, "the hidden order of art", is found in seemingly accidental and insignificant details. Like Freud, Ehrenzweig believes that the aim of art's superstructure is "to hide and to neutralize the dangerous symbolism hidden in the unaesthetic inarticulate structures below" (1953, p. 13). Nevertheless, Ehrenzweig does not view aesthetic reactions to art's superstructure as primary. A work of art which only possesses beautiful gestalten will not be experienced as real or contain the quality he labels "plasticity". The nature of plasticity derives from facets of the art work which do not necessarily enter consciousness. Thus, communication between the spectator and the art work takes place on a deeper unconscious level where the artist's conversation with the work of art was previously held. Unfortunately, the hidden fabric of art can never be fully appreciated since the very act of perceiving it automatically transforms it into something more integrated and clearly defined. It is interesting to note that Ehrenzweig's two structural levels of art bear close resemblance to Freud's two levels of dream content--the manifest vs. the latent meanings of the dream. An important difference, however, involves the fact that Ehrenzweig's conceptualizations refer primarily to the expression of unconscious derivatives in artistic form whereas those of Freud look for their expression in the dream content.

Ehrenzweig applies the above findings to the analysis of modern (abstract) art and uses this analysis to further support his theories of vision. He believes that modern art, for the first time in the history of art, has dispensed with art's surface gestalt or superstructure. Modern art's fragmentation, ambiguity, superimpositions and lack of salient eye-catching forms all serve to expose art's undifferentiated, gestalt-free vision of the unconscious. It is no longer easy for the spectator to focus on and identify specific stable gestalt patterns. Rather, modern art's scattered pieces in space and overlapping forms force the viewer to suspend his differentiated vision in order to perceive the work in its entirety. It is only by accomplishing this feat that one is able to appreciate the underlying unity that exists in modern art. Ehrenzweig admits that modern art, with its fragmented imagery, represents self-destructive attacks on the ego and therefore resembles schizophrenic art. He continues to point out that whereas schizophrenic art also reveals a fragmented surface quality, it lacks the deep-level redeeming organization which modern art possesses. Ehrenzweig believes, however, that modern art has become increasingly concerned with themes of death, destruction and a hatred for life--topics which are known to preoccupy those suffering from mental illness.

Finally, Ehrenzweig proposes the existence of three phases in the creative process. In the first phase, the artist begins by projecting parts of his personality which will ultimately make up the art work. However, until they are brought together, these fragments are experienced by the artist as alien and persecuting. During this phase, the artist understandably experiences intense anxiety. In the second phase, the art work acts like a womb by beginning to contain and integrate these fragments into a coherent whole. This whole eventually comprises the unconscious--or hidden--order of the art work. In the third and last phase, the art's substructure is fed back to the artist and re-introjected, thereby strengthening his ego. The strong ego can, in turn, strengthen the surface structure of the art work. Clearly, for Ehrenzweig the major ingredients of creativity consist in the constant exchanges among conscious and unconscious perception and structural levels of art.

Gilbert Rose

By combining and building upon various aspects of the theories of Ehrenzweig, Winnicott and Mahler, Rose (1980) creates his own theory of aesthetics which emphasizes the primacy of form. According to Rose, aesthetic form carries a meaning of its own and comprises what is "most creative

about creativity" (p. 8). He does not consider form to be a disguise or defense against the work of art's more important, hidden, content. Rather, he maintains that only upon exhausting the content of art does a "sophisticated viewer" turn to the finer appreciation of its form (p. 8).

Rose's thesis is that man's search for form derives from his biological need to reinforce his own boundaries of self and to establish a constant orientation towards a relatively fluid reality. Thus, he places creative imagination in relation to the development of a sense of self and assumes that both arise from the state of primary narcissism where undifferentiation between mother and infant exists. For Rose, the early sense of self, imaginative play and aesthetic form are all characterized by common features which they share: mobility in time, space and sense of self and the dynamic interplay between inside and outside.

Rose understands the creation of aesthetic form in terms similar to those employed by Winnicott when he describes the child's conception of the transitional object. He strongly believes that the "dialogue" between one's self and reality--the "transitional" or creative process--is an instrument of adaptation. The artist (and the viewer of art) moves from temporary fusion with the art product to reseparation and, ultimately, to a redefinition

of boundaries. These alternations between fusion and differentiation are parallel to early mother-child interactions such as those described by Margaret Mahler (1963; 1968; 1975) in her theory of infant development with its subphases of symbiosis, separation and individuation.

The completed work of art, Rose states, "aspires to an ideal of perfection" and, if successful, approximates the ego ideal. To the extent that it achieves this ideal, the art work resurrects the good parents, relieves guilt and replenishes self-esteem and secondary narcissism. In fact, Rose regards the art object as "an idealized representation of the working of one's mind" (p. 203). Like the mind, the art object includes the organizational principles of both id and ego which operate simultaneously with their respective frameworks of orientation for time, place and person:

In a certain sense, art is a working model of how the brain works, and perception and thought function like works of art. Painting is a visual model of how the brain works, dealing with separateness and unity of perception; music is an acoustic model, working with variations of sameness to reconcile time's change with its constancy; poetry mediates between physical feeling-impulses and discursive thought. All build tension, sustain and resolve it, in order to rebuild it--which is what the mind does....Tension mounts in the absence of familiar meaning, an emptiness or discrepancy in space, a gap in time or ordinary logic, an irregularity in the expected pattern. Tension stimulates thought and a searching to bridge the gap, to restore the pattern. A reunification in space, a resumption of the beat, a recurrence of the pattern of sense and expectation, all overcome separation. Tension

falls, discrimination among feelings and thoughts is loosened, control relaxed, and pleasure and repose are experienced. The circle of separation and return continues unbroken (pp. 200-201).

The objectification of the dual aspects of perception and thought in art explains the ambiguity of aesthetic form and also provides a context in which the individual--both artist and viewer--can repeatedly test and correct his orientation to reality. All in all, Rose's theory is a very idealistic one which maintains that through aesthetic experience, one's self-esteem is replenished and one's adaptation to reality is enhanced. It does not therefore adequately explain artists like Van Gogh who do not find resolution for emotional problems or enhancement of confidence through their art.

### Conclusion

The essence of the theoretical contributions discussed above can be recapitulated by summing up the fundamental questions to which they address themselves:

- (1) What is the relationship, if any, between the form and the content of artistic products?
- (2) What is the relationship of the artist to his work?  
This question includes the investigation of motivating factors which drive the artist to create.
- (3) What is the relationship between creativity and

pathology? This question deals with the issue of whether art works represent expressions of, compensations for, or resolutions of pathological strivings. It also examines the notion of whether pathology has a deleterious or a beneficial effect on creativity.

- (4) What is the nature of the aesthetic reaction?
- (5) How is the creative process best characterized?

One approach to understanding the ways in which the various authors reviewed answer these questions is to group them according to three phases in the evolution of psychoanalysis: drive theory, ego psychology and object relations theory (Spitz, 1985). In the first phase, Freud's views predominate. The art form is considered an enjoyable disguise for the content which expresses the artist's unconscious, uncensored, instinctual (id) desires. Therefore, interest lies in deciphering the meaning of the content of art (item #1). The relationship between the artist and his work (item #2) and that between creativity and pathology (item #3) are also the focus of discussion during this phase. The second phase coincides with the development of ego psychology as exemplified by the writings of Ernst Kris. It is Kris who begins to explore the dynamics of the creative process itself (item #5). In this phase, emphasis is placed on the ego which is thought to function more or less autonomously during the

creation of artistic form. The third phase is represented by object relations theory and is based on the writings of Melanie Klein, Margaret Mahler and D.W. Winnicott, all of whom stress the importance of the mother-infant relationship. Artistic creation (item #5) as well as the aesthetic experience (item #4) are considered in terms of vicissitudes of early experience and the child's emergence from it. Symbiosis, separation-individuation and transitional phenomena are central concepts for the understanding of creativity. Form and content (item #1) are viewed as constituting an inseparable unity in art.

While such a classification can be useful, it should not be accepted without reservation. Clearly, some authors (e.g., Jung, Ehrenzweig) do not easily fit into such a neat division of ideas and there is obvious overlap among the phases (e.g., Rank's early emphasis on the mother-infant relationship). Furthermore, certain notions, such as the importance of the collective and tradition in art (Jung, Rank) and the special features of the artist's childhood (Greenacre) find no place in the above systematization. Finally, it is this author's opinion that psychoanalytic discussions on art have gradually shifted from the analysis of content (Freud) to the emphasis on form (Rose). This is interesting since iconographic style has demonstrated a parallel movement over the years. It has proceeded from the realistic portrayal of figures and scenes to the

sophisticated, not necessarily realistic, manipulation of perceptual elements. Form has become a source of meaning as well as content and, in some cases, as with abstract art, it has replaced content as the primary carrier of meaning. Thus, a historical perspective on the development of psychoanalytic thinking is not sufficient to understand the differences in psychoanalytic interpretations of art; a historical perspective on the development of artistic style is also necessary. Keeping these limitations in mind, the tripartite division can serve as a helpful guide in organizing the variegated ways psychoanalysts have approached art. To be of most use, however, it should not represent three distinct phases, each with its own focus. Rather, these models, when taken together, form a whole whose utility is more effective and comprehensive in scope than any of the three taken individually.

As a result of combining the three approaches, one discovers that the creative process and the art object involve several dualities which reflect different developmental and structural levels. Dualities of id-ego, primary process-secondary process thought, differentiated-undifferentiated perception, and self-object all become reconciled in their struggle for mutual accomodation. Psychic functions work side by side in creativity and, necessarily, even become blurred at times. Consequently, the creative process should not be regarded

as representing separate phases which follow one another (Kris). Instead, the fact that the artist is constantly in touch with these dual processes in himself becomes reflected in his art. The ongoing nature of the interplay among these psychic dualities is perhaps responsible for the ambivalent aspect of art which has been commented upon by numerous writers (e.g., Kris, Greenacre) and which has resulted in the erroneous division of form and content.

Freud's early writings which view the art work as a repository for the discharge of forbidden impulses and his comparisons of the artist with the neurotic contributed to psychoanalytic interest in the content of art. It was in the content that the artist's uncensored wishes and conflicts were thought to be found. Freud developed the method of "pathography", itself a revealing term, for the psychoanalytic investigation of art. By employing clinical principles to the art work, the analyst could detect the personality dynamics and psychopathology of the artist. These views, in addition to those of Kris (1952) who referred to the regressive mechanism used by the artist, are partially responsible for the correlation assumed to exist between creativity and pathology. Later writers (e.g., Gedo, 1983; Kubie, 1958; Storr, 1972; Waelder, 1963) reject this association and even maintain that aesthetic activity occurs outside of the realm of psychic conflict. Loeb (1959) illustrates how artistic style can remain

intact in the presence of psychosis and how it is also one of the first capacities regained after recovery from psychosis. Therefore, illness is thought to provide the artist with content for his art but not with the ability or motivation to create. The finding that artistic talent is so resilient to pathology has led some ( Gedo, 1983; Kligerman, 1980; Kohut, 1957; 1976) to see it not as a sublimation of unacceptable pregenital drives, but rather, as a vicissitude of narcissism which follows a developmental line of its own.

The current focus on narcissistic issues in creativity seems to be growing. This is perhaps due to the fact that it is being fueled by two separate trends; that of self psychology and that of the increase in subjectivity and semi-autobiographical portrayals of primitive states of being in modern art. This accent on narcissism also brings to light the importance of the development of self (including the physical self) and object relations for the artist. The artist's attempts to overcome deficits in his sense of self constitute the restitutive function of art. This function needs to be accounted for whether it takes the form of mastery (Freud), reparation (Klein) or self-enhancement (Rose). While restitution alone does not make for great art, the extent to which the artist's restitution is successful can determine whether it becomes replaced with the communicative function of art. One of

the aims of this study is to illustrate the manner in which one artist, Egon Schiele, through his use of self-portraiture, dealt with narcissistic issues and how the restitutive function served him and his art.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Eissler, 1967, pp. 35-81.

<sup>2</sup> Peter Fuller in Art and Psychoanalysis (1980) points out that it was discovered during Freud's lifetime that a critical word had been mistranslated from Leonardo's infantile reminiscence (kite rather than vulture) on which Freud placed so much importance. There is no known acknowledgment on Freud's part of this discovery nor of the implications it has on his interpretations.

<sup>3</sup> Fifteen years later, Freud writes in Totem and Taboo that "hysteria is a caricature of artistic creation".

<sup>4</sup> Other writers who see the need for a division of Freud's views on art are: Robert Waelder (1965) who classifies Freud's thinking into id, ego and superego approaches to art; and, Philip Rieff (1959) who differentiates between two of Freud's positions on the purpose of art--the cathartic vs. that of self mastery.

Chapter 3  
Childhood and Youth<sup>1</sup> (1890-1907)

Early Childhood

On June 12, 1890 our dear God finally gave me a son. At six A.M. on June 12, 1890, he saw the light of the world. Egon, that is his name, is a strong and healthy child. May God let us keep him. May he grow and prosper.<sup>2</sup>

--Marie Schiele  
Diary entry,  
June 12, 1890

Any mother giving birth to a son could be expected to be as delighted as Egon Schiele's mother was on June 12, 1890; Marie Schiele, however, had additional reasons to be so pleased. She had already given birth to five children, three of them boys all of whom died at birth. The fourth was a girl, Elvira, who was born in 1883 and who would die at the age of ten and the fifth was also a girl, Melanie, born in 1886. In light of these facts, the pleasure Egon's mother experienced at his birth and her prayers for his good health are all the more understandable. Marie's husband, Adolf Schiele, had contracted syphilis prior to his marriage and, denying the illness and any treatment for it, soon infected his young wife (Marie was eleven years his junior) who then transmitted the disease onto her unborn children. The weary and forlorn expression on Marie Schiele's face in all the photographs of her are perhaps due to the physical and mental pain she suffered as a

result of the disease, its implications and the deaths it incurred. Adolf Schiele would soon die from the effects of his syphilis which in the end left him completely, and at times violently, insane. For the Schiele family, birth had come to be associated with death and disease, punishment for sex, and eventually, madness--all themes which would later persist in Schiele's art.

Egon Schiele was born in Tulln, a small provincial town on the River Danube, about forty miles west of Vienna. His father was stationmaster of the town and the family lived over the railroad station, which proved to be a convenient location for young Egon who spent his early years intently gazing at, sketching and recording the schedules of the various trains he observed. His paternal grandfather had been a railway builder and inspector and his uncle Czihaczek, his godfather who later became his guardian, was also a railway engineer. It seemed only natural that Egon follow in the footsteps of the men in his family. That his mother desired it is evident from a short biography she wrote of her son in 1927. There, she recalls her dislike for the way she thought he wasted his time (i.e., drawing) as a child "because Egon should have studied instead to become an engineer one day, our most ardent wish" (Kallir, 1966, p. ). Only his older sister, Melanie, worked for the railways and even married a railway executive. Egon

did not become an engineer or a railway official or, for that matter, anything remotely connected to railways. He longed only to be an artist and revealed a prodigious drawing ability apparently inherited from his father and grandfather who were both amateur draughtsmen.

Although he did not choose an occupation in the railroads, Egon showed an inordinate interest in trains and everything related to them. His mother claims that he began drawing as early as one and a half years old and that his first drawings involved detailed depictions of all types of railroad trains. His mother and sisters recall that before the age of five, Egon would crawl out the window onto the roof (fifteen feet from the ground) to obtain a better view of the trains he was drawing. Childhood games invariably involved trains which Egon joyfully received as gifts and for which he took great pains to build tracks for.<sup>3</sup> Egon's early personality makeup was even marked by obsessive features, first manifested in his compulsive recordings of train arrivals and departures. His passion for trains remained throughout his brief lifetime and later took the form of impulsive decisions to spend days riding trains with no concern for their destination. Apart from the obvious influence of his environment, Schiele's early preoccupation with trains (plallic-shaped objects) represents an identification with his father whom he idealized. Adolf also took his son on

train trips, deepening the bond between father and son as well as Egon's love for trains.

When he was eight, Schiele's parents offered him a sketch pad on which he was told to draw on a single page per day. By the end of that same day, he filled the entire pad with drawings of trains which he exhibited by spreading them throughout the house, giving the impression of cars travelling from room to room. His mother, incensed with rage, took the drawings and burned them in the oven. Schiele wept over the destruction of his creations which he had so proudly displayed and over the blatant lack of appreciation for his talent.<sup>4</sup> This incident illustrates how Schiele's infantile feelings of grandiosity and omnipotence, so essential for the development of self-esteem, were not sufficiently confirmed by his mother and were to be crucial in later disturbances in his sense of self.

If his family was unprepared to acknowledge his gifts, he seemed confident in his personal assessment of himself as a Wunderkind. Fearless and self-sufficient, he taught himself to ride a bicycle and to swim.<sup>5</sup> Schiele's earnestness and intensity, as described by his contemporaries and as evident in his photographs and self-portraits, are qualities he carried with him throughout his life. He is portrayed as having been an

introverted and quiet child with dark penetrating eyes and wild unruly hair who spent every waking moment drawing uninterruptedly. It is interesting to note that the only picture (photograph or painting) of Schiele smiling is an early one (c. 1894) where he holds tightly onto a precious toy locomotive (Plate 10). Indeed, Schiele seemed to have had little to smile about. Upon examining photographs of his family during these years, one is struck by the fact that no one is smiling. Furthermore, there is a sense of sadness and disconnectedness among all the family members, who are perhaps in physical proximity but apparently worlds apart, each looking in different directions and all showing signs of inward reflection (Plates 11 and 12). Years later, Schiele told his friend, the art critic, Arthur Roessler, "my mother is a very strange woman...she doesn't have the least bit of understanding for me and unfortunately not much love either" (Roessler, 1948, p. 21, 26). Unable to receive love and appreciation for himself and confirmation for his talent, Schiele turned increasingly to his art.

While growing up in Tulln, Egon's preferred companion was his younger sister, Gertrude ("Gerti"), born in 1894, and the person to whom he felt the closest. He taught her how to play trains with him and took her with him to join in a second favorite compulsive activity (the first being his checking, recording and memorizing the timetables of

trains), that of watching the family hens and keeping exact records of their breeding times.<sup>6</sup> This early concern with time and punctuality continued to be characteristic of Schiele and he is described by his sisters as always having had a watch in hand. His close relationship with Gerti had obvious sexual overtones which eventually culminated in her modelling nude for her brother (e.g., Plate 13).<sup>7</sup> Not unaware of the sexual precocity of his children, Adolf Schiele once broke down the locked door to the darkroom Egon had made himself only to find the boy and girl--this time--innocently busy at developing film. Schiele's voyeuristic observation of hens with his beloved sister reveals an early sexual curiosity which was to haunt him all his life and of which he later wrote:

Have adults forgotten how they themselves were incited and aroused by sex impulses as children? Have they forgotten how the frightful passion burned and tortured them while they were still children? I have not forgotten, for I suffered excruciatingly from it (Roessler, 1922, p. 33).

Unlike Freud, who at that time was formulating his theory of infantile sexuality based on the lives of patients, Schiele's painful knowledge of sexuality in childhood derived from his own experiences. These feelings would eventually give shape to many of his self-portraits through which he struggled to make sense of his sexual identity. Schiele's near desperate search to understand his

sexuality, along with his desire for self-confirmation, led him to develop a third compulsive habit which never left him. For the remainder of his life, Schiele never passed a mirror without approaching it to closely examine the reflection of his features in it. Mirrors always held a magnetic attraction for Schiele. Having lacked the beneficial, identity-feeding mirroring responses from his mother, he hungered to provide himself with such feedback. The life-size mirror from which he drew his numerous self-portraits, and which he took with him wherever he went, originally belonged to his mother. His relationship to this mirror seems even to have taken the place of his relationship to his mother and, as such, became the most intimate, and perhaps the most important, relationship of his life.

#### School Years

For four years Egon attended elementary school in Tulln where it seems he made no friends. He was a loner who preferred to spend his time either drawing or with his sister Gerti. His parents' efforts to encourage him to study more were in vain. He did not do very well in school and his teachers reported that he had a dreamy, absent-minded quality about him.

Tulln had no secondary school and, therefore, after completing grammar school in 1901, Egon was sent to live in the nearby town of Krems where he was to continue his studies. Separated from his family and his cherished trains, the eleven year-old boy was entrusted to the care of a strict landlady who rarely permitted him to leave the house.<sup>8</sup> He was in despair over this situation which is probably what led him to eventually move and live with an army officer's widow. Egon was more pleased with his new arrangement, particularly because of a garden attached to the home. During his year in Krems, Schiele's parents sometimes visited him on Sundays. Since his father was an employee for the Austrian State Railroad, Egon also had the use of a railway pass until his fourteenth year which he used in commutes to visit his family on weekends. Egon's early commuting contributed to the pleasure he later took in riding trains with no apparent destination in mind. The twilight state--that of being neither here nor there--which this activity represents was characteristic of his situation at that time and of his subsequent emotional state as well. During the week, Egon was alone and attended a school which he did not care for. The condition of solitude, loneliness and even alienation which Schiele consciously began experiencing would soon permeate his early self-portraits. In these studies, he is invariably portrayed alone in an oppressive, albeit empty, environment. His external vacuum most likely contributed

to Egon's already introspective nature; he naturally began seeking within for that which he was unable to find without.

By 1902, Egon's father started to show signs of mental deterioration and was gradually becoming an invalid. This state of affairs continued and worsened through the last three years of his life, forcing him into an early retirement and creating serious financial difficulties for the family. As a result, they moved to the abbey town of Klosterneuberg, situated a few miles northwest of Vienna, where Egon joined them. As the eldest child, Melanie took a position as a clerk at the local railroad station to help relieve the family's financial burden. The Schiele family not only had to face Adolf's occupational and economic decline, they were also obliged to witness his mental decompensation. Comini (1974) describes the pathetic condition of Egon's father at the time and the family's reaction to it:

The family had to adapt to the unpredictable presence of imaginary visitors--railroad inspectors and other dignitaries whom the father often produced, introduced and invited to stay for dinner. Out of compassionate complicity the family entertained these invisible guests and ceased to show surprise (p. 11).

The impact his father's illness had on young Egon

apparently did nothing to lessen his love for him. On June 17, 1903, mistakenly believing it to be his father's birthday (It was actually his parents' wedding anniversary), he offered him a poem which read in part:

A day of joy has come  
 to our small circle of love  
 Which brought the nicest thing  
 that I know on earth.  
 Today Daddy was born  
 who brought about all our fortune in life  
 That is why pure joy  
 gleams in my heart and face....  
 (Nebehay, 1979, p. 53).

Schiele's admiration for his father remained unspoiled throughout his life and he never spoke negatively of him--an observation which is in stark contrast to the way he recalled and depicted his mother. Nevertheless, the consequences of his father's syphilis were far-reaching. Schiele spent the rest of his life trying to understand the agony of his father's illness and death, always fearing that perhaps he was doomed to echo his tragedy. Schiele's relentless self-searching (and searching for the father in himself) are evident in his art--whose major motifs are sexuality, insanity and death--and in his series of father-surrogates.

The first of these father-figures was Professor Ludwig Karl Strauch (1875-1955), a painter of local distinction

and Egon's art teacher at the Klosterneuberg abbey school. Strauch was the first to recognize Schiele's talents and he encouraged the boy in his artistic pursuits, even allowing him the use of his studio. Strauch later described the young Schiele as

always outside in the meadows, on the slopes, by the brooks, and [he] drew sheet after sheet, mostly in pastel, of nature sketches. He drew quietly and with perseverance as if nothing existed except nature, pencil and drawing paper. His thin, earnest face with its dark eyes was immobile, and his black shock of hair, which was combed back, fell to his coat collar. An unusually quiet boy, not shy, but by no means gregarious, he was somewhat mannered in the way he intertwined his long hands (Comini, 1974, p. 13).

Egon found two other "allies" in Klosterneuberg, both of them older men. The first of these was Dr. Wolfgang Fanker (1867-1950), an art historian and the custodian of the abbey museum. The second was Max Kaherer (1878-1937), a painter of landscapes who joined Schiele in his plans to create a "Union of Art, Drawing and Painting Institute". In a 1903 letter to Kaherer, Schiele reveals, in somewhat bombastic language, his diligence, his ambition and his grandiosity:

Most Highborn One!  
 ...how industriously I have been working  
 on the entries for the 'Union Art Exhibition'.

Had I had more time for drawing and painting,  
I would produce three times that amount.  
Since our discussion of the 28th of this month,  
I have undertaken to produce five works per day.  
I kindly urge you to remain true to our agreement  
so that our plan for the future may result in  
praise for us and fame for the illustrious city  
of Klosterneuberg....

Hail! your true companion  
Egon Schiele

Our address from now on is:  
E. Schiele & Co.  
Union Art Drawing and Painting Institute  
(Chipp, 1964, p. 33).

Schiele's earliest known sketchbook (the "Weiss sketchbook") probably dates from the years 1904-5 when Morris Weiss was Egon's schoolmate in Klosterneuberg. Although recently purchased by the Galerie St. Etienne, the sketchbook was in the possession of Weiss for many years. Weiss recalls how, as children, he and Egon would sit on the hills drawing, smoking cigarettes and drinking wine from his father's wine-press factory. The sketchbook, which Schiele gave to Weiss, includes a number of copies of diagrams from botanical textbooks, probably class exercises, and independently produced studies of plants and landscapes drawn from nature (Plate 14). The latter include a volcano, a mine (showing the miners at work in tunnels and shafts through a transparent underground) and a detailed map of Klosterneuberg. It also includes several experiments Schiele made with his signature.<sup>9</sup> His early ability as a draughtsman is evident in these drawings as well as his obsessive mastery of the minutest details. His

interest in latent eruptions (in his volcano drawing) and what transpires underground (a symbol for the unconscious) serve as previews to his depth-psychological exposures of the psyche--usually his own--in his later portraits.

Apart from art, calligraphy and gymnastics, Egon received unsatisfactory grades in all his subjects. In addition to the year at Krems not being accredited by the Klosterneuberg school, Schiele's grades were so poor during his first year there that he was required to repeat it. This left him two years older than his classmates from whom he now had further reason to keep his distance. His poor school performance has always been attributed to his lack of interest in anything outside of art, however, such failures in school generally reflect trouble in one's home life. His father's illness, which created the emotional and financial strain under which the family lived, no doubt influenced Egon's lack of motivation for schoolwork. The family, due to economic difficulties and embarrassments related to the father's increasingly insane behavior, was forced to move four times during their four years in Klosterneuberg. This unstable and morbid atmosphere of illness and insanity in which Egon lived had a profound and longlasting effect on his outlook on life.

Schiele escaped from his unsavory reality by finding refuge in the quiescence of the surrounding nature and his

art. These two aspects of his early life--on the one hand, the disturbed and sick human beings lacking control over their emotions and, on the other hand, the poetic, serene and peopleless images of nature--came to comprise the dual themes of his oeuvre. His sister, Gerti, described the young Schiele as going "out into the meadows to draw...something he always did when he was depressed" (Whitford, 1981, p. 28). Even later in his life, Schiele turned to scenes of plants, trees, towns and landscapes to achieve an inner peacefulness which the obsession with his self-studies did not allow him. This duality of his early life is evident in a poetic description significantly titled "Sketch for a Self-Portrait" that Schiele wrote when he was twenty:

I received the pictorially lasting impressions of my childhood from the flat lands with spring avenues and raging storms. It seemed to me in those first days as if I were already hearing and smelling the magic flowers, the speechless gardens, the birds in whose shiny eyes I saw myself mirrored, pink. I often cried with half-closed eyes when it was autumn. When it was spring I dreamed of the universal music of life. Later I enjoyed the glorious summer and laughed when in its glory I painted the white winter for myself. Until then I lived in joy, a joy alternately happy and melancholy. Then the times of compulsion [obligation] began--elementary school in Tulln, high school in Klosterneuberg. I entered cities that seemed quite endless and dead, and I mourned for myself. During this time I experienced my father's death. My insensitive teachers were my perpetual enemies. They--and others--did not understand me (Nebehay, 1979, p. 498).

Schiele's "Sketch" led Alfred Werner (1960), an art critic, to perceive Schiele as having been "an unusual and slightly disturbed child", claiming that "There is something hysterical about...[the] boy" (p. 46). However, Schiele's description of how he was as a child is significant for it recalls Greenacre's (1957) portrayal of the artist's childhood as marked by an inordinate sensitivity which takes the form of a "love affair with the world". That nature was more receptive to Schiele than human beings (e.g., teachers) is revealed in its (e.g., the bird) accepting the mirroring function which it seems his mother could not. His personification of nature--later evident in his paintings of nonhuman subjects--is manifested in the animated descriptions he offers of animals (bird) and towns (dead). The joy Schiele took in nature and his pain in humanity also reflect the dual identity in artists which Greenacre wrote about (1958b). His artistic and non-artistic identities, however, are only two identities with which Schiele became preoccupied. His awareness of the duality within himself, in conjunction with the obsession he had with his mirror image (his alter ego or double) eventually found expression in several series of double self-portraits which he later painted. Among other things, his double image represented that of his father. The above mention of his father's death in passing is perhaps aimed at minimizing the impact which this event had on Schiele.

Adolf Schiele died on January first, 1905.<sup>10</sup> The loss of his father was deeply felt by the fifteen-year old Egon and would haunt him in various ways for the rest of his life. Later, he would write to his friend and brother-in-law, Anton Peshka,

I don't know whether there's anyone else at all who remembers my noble father with sadness. I don't know who is able to understand why I visit those places where my father used to be and where I can feel the pain....why do I paint graves and many similar things? -- because this continues to live on in me (Whitford, 1981, p. 29).

Schiele's search for his lost father also took the form of an identification with him. Approximately one year after his father's death, Schiele took his sister, Gerti, then twelve years old, by train to Trieste where they spent the night in a hotel, thereby duplicating his parents' honeymoon. (Schiele would later wed his wife on his parents' wedding anniversary.)

Schiele's first self-portraits are also related to his father. Only days away from the one-year anniversary of his father's death, he gave his first oil painting, a self-portrait, to a school friend, Edward Weber. On that same day, Schiele wrote a poem, originally from his father, in Weber's album.<sup>11</sup> The relationship between his father's death and Schiele's own self-searching are evident. This first self-portrait shows Schiele in profile

with his head bent downwards in contemplation or sadness. Perhaps he is mourning his father's death or, as he stated in his poem, "I mourn for myself" (i.e., the internalized father in himself). In 1905, when this first self-portrait was painted, Schiele was only beginning his long and arduous journey destined to discover his lost self.

Growing up in a predominantly feminine household, Egon's relationship with his sister grew fonder while that with his mother became cooler. Part of the resentment he harbored towards his mother is due to what he believed to be her neglect of his father's memory.<sup>12</sup> Schiele's resentment of his mother could also reflect what he considered to be her criticism of him. He later stated, "My mother, every time I saw her, gave me reproaches, nothing else" (Nebehay, 1979, p. 64). In the many portraits which he went on to draw of his mother, her glance noticeably turns downwards or to the side, always avoiding eye contact; many are profiles (Plate 15). His dead and blind mother paintings also reflect Schiele's feelings towards his mother, particularly in response to her having failed him as a mirror, in the Winnicott/Kohut sense of the term.

Leopold Czihaczek, Adolf Schiele's brother-in-law, became Egon's legal guardian following his father's death. As a railway inspector at Vienna's North Station, Czihaczek

enjoyed a comfortable bourgeois life and strongly opposed Egon's wish to leave the Klosterneuberg school early in order to attend art school in Vienna. Not as unempathic as he imagined her to be, Schiele's mother, having made the decision to go along with his plans, fought Czihaczek and once even proclaimed, "You may be the legal guardian of my children, but you are not my legal guardian and I shall do with Egon whatever seems appropriate to me" (Nebenhay, 1979, p. 21). Egon first took his artwork to the Kunstgewerbeschule, [School of Applied Arts], where Klimt and Kokoschka had studied. The professors there were so impressed with Schiele's work that it took them some time to believe he did it. When they did, however, they advised his mother to enroll him instead at the Vienna Academy of Fine Arts. Whatever the reason, Schiele followed their advice and he passed the Academy's entrance exam (which Adolf Hitler had failed several months earlier).

#### The Academy

Schiele began his studies at the Academy in October of 1906 when he was only sixteen years old. For the first time, he took his role as student very seriously and rigorously applied himself to his new studies. One of the reasons for this zealous attitude towards his work is related to his wish to prove his talent to his uncle

Czihaczek and thereby win his approval. Although the relationship between him and his uncle was a rocky one, it is clear that Egon took his new father-substitute seriously; in 1907 alone, he painted seven oil portraits of his uncle and numerous studies (see Plates 16 and 17). One of these portraits shows Czihaczek at his piano in what proves to be an unusual early portrait because his sitter is situated in an elaborate background very unlike the oppressive vacuum of his usual portraits. This rare attention to environment on Schiele's part may be due to the fact that Czihaczek's home played a crucial role for him during his Academy years. Not only did Schiele take his meals at the Czihaczek home but it was there that he was given lessons in morality and culture. Eager to please his uncle, Schiele also sought his understanding by sharing some of his innermost thoughts with him, which is illustrated in a letter he wrote him describing the manner in which he overcomes feelings of depression:

Dear Uncle! May I tell you the following about my view of life...Depression brings about patience, patience brings experience, experience brings hope and hope prevents harm...Life may be a struggle against attacks of enemies, leading through floods of pain. Everybody has to fight by himself to taste that which Nature intended. The ignorant child is fitted to cross a long bridge which is exposed to the greatest storms....But nothing is more harmful than to be dependent, nothing more ruinous and destructive for the strong mind...I am not to blame...All fault lies with Nature.

Your nephew who owes you thanks, Egon  
(Nebehay, 1979, p. 110).

Revealing his dependence (in the closing line) and deploring it (in a paranoid manner) all the same, Schiele tries to make his uncle aware of the struggle he is up against in order to attain his independence and individuality.

### Early Self-Portraits

Schiele's self-portraits during his early Academy years attest to an outward growth in his self-esteem which was largely attributable to the pride he took in his newly legitimized identity as artist. These early self-portraits (Plates 18-20) are close-ups of his face in three-quarter view revealing just enough of his upper body to display the white collar and black cravat which distinguished Viennese art students at that time. One such self-portrait (Plate 20) shows how he grew his hair long and donned a large, floppy hat, evoking a somewhat bohemian appearance. There are no traces of his arms and, in anticipation of his later portraits, he is shown alone against a blank, sometimes darkened, background. It is interesting to note that Schiele's expression in these self-portraits is a rather empty one; his clothing conveys his identity, not his facial expression. Content in the meantime with his outward identity of artist, Schiele has not yet begun the quest for his inner, psychological identity. Before that

could happen, several events needed to take place in his life. The first of these was his meeting with Gustav Klimt.

## Notes

1 The title of this and the following four chapters is adopted from Daniel Levinson's (1978) stages in the adult life cycle.

2 This and all following quotations from Nebehay's 1979 book were translated by the author.

3 Nebehay, 1979, p. 39.

4 Comini (1974) states that it was Schiele's father who burned the drawings. However, both his mother, Marie Schiele, (Kallir, 1966) and his sister, Gertrude, (Nebehay, 1979, p. 39) remember that it was his mother who performed this cruel act. I tend to go along with the latter version since it also seems to better fit the rest of the facts known about Schiele's early life.

5 Nebehay, 1979, p. 39.

6 Nebehay, 1979, p. 39.

7 Comini (1974) tells how Schiele also persuaded his sister, Melanie, to model--at times in the nude--for him.

8 These are the facts as reported by Schiele's mother in Kallir (1966). Comini (1974, p. 11), on the other hand, claims that Egon was sent to live with an unidentified relative. I believe the former version of the facts is true.

9 The manner in which Schiele signed and dated his paintings throughout his artistic career changed significantly as did the paintings themselves. A stylized art deco signature (1907-1909) turned into an abbreviated (e.g., "S.10") one in 1910 and 1911. The shortened form coincides with the time Schiele felt the least secure about his identity. Later, needing boundaries for protection, Schiele began to box in his name and date. Although Schiele framed his signature until 1918, he eliminated the frame in his final paintings revealing an unprecedented sense of freedom and inner security.

10 Schiele's father actually died on December 31, 1904 but the family was convinced to report that he died in the new year in order to be able to claim a larger pension (Comini, 1974, p. 15).

11 Leopold, 1972, p. 517.

12 Whitford, 1981, p. 29.

## Chapter 4

## Adolescence (1907-1909)

Schiele: Do I have talent?

Klimt: Yes, too much!

During the late nineteenth century, the visual arts in Vienna were regulated by two major institutions: the Academy of Fine Art and the Kunstlerhaus Artists' Association, an exhibiting society founded in 1861. Professor Hans Makart (1840-1884), who taught at the Academy in the 1880's, was the most famous and admired artist of the second half of the nineteenth century. Makart's style was a formal and rigid one and his subject matter borrowed heavily from history and mythology; in short, it glorified the past as the Ringstrasse did. Under the tutelage of Makart (whose art is hardly known today) and the notorious Professor Christian Griepenkerl, Academy students were instructed in a conservative, formal style which emphasized naturalism and realism. The Kunstlerhaus, an organization dominated by commercialism and bureaucracy, was also a bastion of conservatism.<sup>1</sup>

Klimt and the Secession

Gustav Klimt (1862-1918) was an artist who clearly mastered the 'old style' of painting as is evident in the

historical murals he did for the Ringstrasse Burgtheater (e.g., Altar of Dionysus). Impressed by his talents, the Ministry of Culture asked Klimt to design three ceiling paintings for the new university in 1894. Revealing the beginnings of his artistic maturity, Klimt's panels--Philosophy, Medicine and Jurisprudence--abandoned the classical style of painting in which he had been trained. These paintings presented merging bodies floating in an unreal (Freudian-Schopenhauerian) dream world where man appears impotent in the face of abounding eroticism (Plate 14). Needless to say, many were outraged by Klimt's treatment of what they considered honorable academic themes and, after seeing the second painting, eighty-seven faculty members signed a petition protesting the paintings. As a consequence, Klimt's work was not only rejected by the Ministry of Culture, but he had to reimburse them for the advance he had received. Klimt retreated from his role as public artist and used his art, with its sensual, pleasure-loving images, as attempts to liberate sexuality from the constraints of a hypocritically moral society.

In April 1897, a group of students led by Klimt withdrew from the Kunstlerhaus to form their own exhibiting society which they named the 'Secession'. Klimt was elected first president of the Secession. Parallel to the Berlin Secession--Jugendstil--which began in 1892, the art of the Viennese Secessionist painters, and of Klimt in

particular, was influenced by the art nouveau symbolic style. According to this style, "nothing was explicit, just as in the art of Makart everything was explicit" (Janik & Toulmin, 1973, p. 95). The major aim of the Secession was to break away from the artistic conservatism and commercialism of its forefathers. It wanted both to elevate the public interest in Viennese art and to bring international art of repute to exhibit in Vienna. The Secession's belief in its function to regenerate art in Vienna was expressed in the title of its periodical, Ver Sacrum [Sacred Spring]. Indeed, the Secession has come to be associated with the beginnings of modern art in Vienna.

The first Secession exhibition, held in the Spring of 1898, was so successful that funds were made available for the construction of its own exhibit hall which was completed in November of the same year. There is symbolic significance to both the building and the site of the Secession hall. This most modern of buildings was built not only with its back turned on the Academy of Fine Arts, but also, in the form of a temple, implying that the new religion in Vienna was to be none other than art. Joseph Olbrich, a Secession architect, designed the building (Plate 15) and had the motto of the movement inscribed below its gilded dome: Der Zeit ihre Kunst, der Kunst ihre Freiheit [To the age its art, To art its freedom]. The inscription was later removed by the Nazis and restored in

1960.<sup>2</sup> Secession exhibitions were held from 1898 to 1905 and they included works from abroad (e.g., Van Gogh, Munch, Gauguin) which were to have an impact on the younger artists who were thus able to view them first-hand.

The Secession not only tried to break down the barriers between different artistic styles; it also set out to deliberately blur the distinction between fine art and applied (craft) art. Its exhibitions and magazines were therefore replete with art objects famous for their tradition of appliqué ornament. These artifacts came to include furniture, jewelry, kitchen utensils and even clothing. As the popularity of these objets d'art grew, their design became increasingly determined by aesthetic rather than practical considerations. The fact that they were allotted the same respect and treatment as other artworks inspired outrage in some Secession members who viewed the use of decoration for its own sake as an unacceptable violation of art.

The tension within the Secession movement resulted in the formal establishment of the Viennese craft guild. The Wiener Werkstätte [Vienna Workshop] was founded in 1903 by Joseph Hoffman, a previous co-founder of the Secession. The formation of the Werkstätte, however, did not renew the internal harmony once enjoyed by Secession members. Having been swept away by the crafts movement himself, Klimt and

his 'group' decided to resign from the Secession in 1905. Klimt's withdrawal from the Viennese art scene lasted for the remainder of his life and he developed an inordinate need for privacy. His sheltered life influenced the way his art evolved as well; he took to painting portraits of women from Vienna's high society. In these portraits, his previous style of challenging society's values by disclosing man's erotic nature disappeared. Instead, he encapsulated his figures in a highly stylized environment (Plate 16). Colorful geometric shapes with real gold inlays formed continuous designs which enveloped the sitter's face and hands producing a "mask of beauty" (Schorske, 1961, p. 269). Klimt's figures, like himself, inhabited an increasingly unreal world where design took over meaning. How ironic and yet understandable that Freud's interpretation of art as sublimation for a dissatisfactory or painful reality developed at this time. The Secession aim, in the words of Otto Wagner, "to show modern man his true face", would have to wait for the following generation of artists of which Schiele was one.

In 1907, therefore, Gustav Klimt represented the exact opposite of what the Academy stood for. Professor Grienpenkerl, Schiele's principal teacher, even forbade his students to attend Secession exhibitions where Klimt's works were being shown. Increasingly at odds with

Griepenkerl and his old-fashioned Academy methods, Schiele decided to seek out Klimt in his atelier to request feedback on his own work. Upon encountering the bearded master who characteristically dressed in a long caftan and sandals, Schiele handed him a portfolio of his work and simply asked, "Do I have talent?" After looking through the portfolio, Klimt is said to have responded, "Yes, too much!" (Comini, 1974, p. 21). From that day onward, a friendship developed between the two men. Klimt exchanged drawings with Schiele, provided him with models and introduced him to patrons; he even arranged a temporary job for him at the Wiener Werkstatte as he had previously done for Oskar Kokoschka. Perhaps due to his being an artist--indeed, the best known modern artist in Vienna--Klimt, twenty-eight years his senior, became Schiele's most significant father-figure. The influence he had on Schiele is obvious both in the Jugendstil style which Schiele adopted in 1907-1909 and in the increase in his self-confidence. Having finally received confirmation for his (artistic) gifts, Schiele returned to the Academy a different person. No longer willing to submit to Griepenkell's boring teaching methods, Schiele became increasingly critical of his teacher, even cocky and rebellious in his classes. Unable to handle impudence of any sort, an inflamed Griepenkerl once declared, "You Schiele! The devil has shat you into my classroom!" On another occasion, he pleaded with him, "For God's sake

don't tell anyone that I was your teacher!" (Whitford, 1981, p. 35). Schiele was, in his friend Benesch's words, Griepenkerl's "enfant terrible". Although Schiele stayed at the Academy for a while longer, the style and content of his art became manifestly influenced by Klimt. A striking example of his imitation of Klimt's style is Schiele's 1907 painting Watersprites I which he directly modeled after Klimt's 1904 Water Serpents (Plate 17).

A more meaningful example of Klimt's influence on Schiele is visible in his 1909 self-portrait (Plate 18) where a bearded Schiele (Schiele's father also had a beard) wears a long smock like those Klimt was known to wear. While the drawing, in its use of decorative silhouette, borrows from Klimt's stylistic tradition, the elongated hands are posed and mannered (recall Strauch's description of Schiele as a boy) in a way which would soon become Schiele's own trademark. This is the first of many self-portraits Schiele was to draw depicting himself as a monk or similar type of figure. Among other things, his espousal of the monk identity reinforced a grandiose view of himself. It shall soon be demonstrated that it was used to convey much more.

In a double portrait, Two Men (Plate 19), of the same period, Schiele portrayed himself with Klimt. This time, both men are bearded, don monk-like habits and stand on a

pedestal which takes up the lower third of the drawing. Schiele looms over the shorter Klimt whose head is bent down towards a blank tablet. Is Schiele grandiosely and symbolically comparing himself to Moses who, standing on Mt. Sinai, gave the tablets containing God's commandments to the people? Or, more simply, is this drawing merely a graphic representation of the first encounter between the two men, with Schiele showing the master his art, here a drawing of which only the reverse blank side is visible? While these interpretations are not mutually exclusive and may both be correct, the examination of additional elements in this drawing point to an even deeper, probably unconscious, meaning which the drawing had for Schiele. Both men are given halos which join together to create a heart-shaped form above and enclosing their heads implying a romantic attachment. Could not the large tablet or white (pure) sheet of paper, then, stand between the two men as a device to protect Schiele from his own feared homosexual feelings towards his mentor?

To better answer this question, a look at a preparatory drawing for Two Men is in order. In the sketch, Two Men in Decorative Robes (Plate 19), it is Klimt rather than Schiele who is in the foreground of the picture and he is wearing an enormous, decorated robe that threatens to engulf Schiele. Instead of the tablet in Two Men, Schiele stands erect and holds up his left hand (also

erect--symbolic of an erect penis?) in a "stop" gesture aimed at Klimt. Both men wear earrings in this drawing (something quite unusual for men of that time) and, rather than adjoining halos, they are connected by a line which passes through both their heads. Unlike their appearance in Two Men, Klimt and Schiele both look old and weary and are balding (losing their virility?) in the preliminary sketch. Could this be a punishment for their blatant feminine identifications in a manner similar to the punishment Schiele's father suffered from his disease whose origin was sexual?

Returning once more to examine Schiele's Two Men, one can now appreciate the way he succeeded, through his art, in controlling his passions. No longer engulfed by Klimt's robe, he now stands tall before a diminutive Klimt. He has gained control by placing his tablet between his and Klimt's body and by ridding the figures of their feminine apparel. Despite Schiele's apparent control in this drawing, however, certain elements remain which, having escaped censorship, betray the hidden meaning of the work. The heart-shaped halos have already been mentioned but, more importantly, Schiele's hand, now fingerless and protruding erectly towards Klimt is situated where his penis would be.

Perhaps it is necessary to state at this point that such an interpretation of Schiele's art work is not meant to imply that he was a homosexual, but rather, that he had sexual identity problems (which will soon become clearer) which led him to have a preponderance of feminine identification. It should also be recalled that Greenacre (1957) postulated the higher frequency of bisexuality and fetishism in artists due to their overlibidinalization towards others (including objects) and their lack of resolution of psychosexual phases. Schiele's identity as an ascetic and colleague of Klimt are what superficially give him a special status. On a deeper level, however, the special status is at least partially due to Schiele's feminine identification. The "robe" he wears not only creates a monk-like appearance, but also, resembles feminine attire. Most important of all, however, is the fact that such clothing serves to conceal all aspects of the body, particularly its genitals. While he succeeds in hiding his sexual parts, he is not so successful at concealing his sexual feelings which are revealed by other, more subtle, elements in the drawing (i.e., halos, hand). Perhaps as a result of being unconsciously frightened by what this double portrait with Klimt really signified, Schiele was to stay away from self-portraits with another figure (except himself) for quite some time.

In the year 1908, Schiele was invited to exhibit for

the first time in a group showing of Klosterneuberg artists. It was in this show that Henrich Benesch, a railway executive who had a passion for art, initially encountered Schiele's work. Benesch would eventually become Schiele's life-long friend, ardent collector and, probably, his most real father-figure. Benesch's first impression of the young artist's work was not an overly enthusiastic one; however, it did include a recognition of the unique quality which already characterized his art:

In 1908 I encountered in an exhibition in Klosterneuberg, in the marble hall of that monastery, the works of a young artist that caught my attention. These were mainly landscapes painted in oil, and painted in a fast sure manner showing a certain peculiarity. (Often the paintbrush handle was used on the wet paint in a strong and purposeful manner). That was [the work of] Egon Schiele (Benesch, 1965, p. 9).

The following year, Klimt invited Schiele to exhibit in the international Kunstschau [art show] of 1909 which was held in Vienna. It was at the Kunstschau that Heinrich Benesch once again noticed Schiele's work. This time he saw two of his oil paintings of which he could only remark that they were "a weak imitation of Klimt" (Benesch, 1965, p. 9). While it is true that Schiele's work of 1909 still show a tremendous Klimtian influence, his self-portraits of this year reveal the beginnings of the development of his own artistic idiom. Curves give way to angles in

portrayals of a centered figure, isolated and stripped of environment as well as clothing. Dramatic poses are accentuated by a strong outline and emphasis on eyes and hands. For example, in Self-Portrait with Hair Band (1909), apart from a few Klimt-like decorations (e.g., the headband), a centrally positioned, extremely lean Schiele intently stares out at us (himself?) in an almost daring manner (Plate 20). With his elongated and bony right hand, of which two fingers form a V-shape, he symbolically pulls down his right lower eye lid. His left hand is cut off (symbolic castration?) by the drawing's bottom edge as it hangs limply (impotence?) around the genital area. The Klimtian style of portrait which glamorizes, decorates and disguises the sitter slowly gives way to Schiele's uneasy exploration and exhibition of a self laid bare.

In his 1909 Self-Portrait Clothed (Plate 21), Schiele continues to employ Klimt-like devices such as the use of gold paint which surrounds his face on three sides. And yet, the pink cheeks and lips of the painting once more reveal his feminine identification as do the V-shape (vagina?) forms which his elongated fingers at the genital area connote. In these early paintings and drawings, Schiele increasingly confronts his own sexuality in what seems to be a guiltless and extremely open manner. Nevertheless, signs of guilt are apparent, albeit more hidden, in his art. In Self-Portrait Clothed, for example,

the gold bar surrounding his head not only divides the head from the rest of his body (creating a mind-body split), but also, threatens to cut into his neck. Is this unconscious suicidal symbol meant to punish Schiele for his feminine identification? Only examination of more of his works can substantiate such a speculation. What resemble piano keys in this painting may serve as a symbolic allusion and identification with Schiele's uncle Czihaczeczek who played the piano.

A final self-portrait of this period, Schiele's 1909 Nude Self-Portrait (Plate 22), is a transitional one. On the one hand, Schiele is shown wearing a decorative drape over his right arm and genitals while leaning against a triangle of flowers--both art nouveau ornaments. On the other hand, and most significantly, is Schiele's nudity--that is, his partial nudity. The "pretty boy" of some of his previous self-portraits has given way to a deliberately ugly, emaciated and nude representation of himself (Compare to concurrent photograph, Plate 23). Attention is again directed to his eyes, one of which squints at the onlooker (himself). Since the word 'schiele' means to squint in German, this gesture could be intended as his artistic signature. Perhaps due to the stylistic and personal confusion which this self-portrait expresses, it tends to evoke a sense of tension and uneasiness in the spectator.

For the next two years, the self-portrait takes over as the most important subject of Schiele's art. Most of his self-portraits will show him at least partially nude. No longer satisfied with a superficial exploration of himself, he now finds it necessary to strip off all covering in order to facilitate self-discovery and, of course, exhibitionism. Indeed, the decorative drape of his 1909 Nude Self-Portrait appears to be falling from Schiele's body in a symbolic gesture revealing his letting go of the Jugendstil elements in his art. Although self-portraiture was becoming quite popular in Vienna at the turn of the century, self-portraits such as these were nevertheless innovative and rather shocking.

As a result of his participation in the Kunstschau, Schiele's status at the Academy, and his dissatisfaction with it, only worsened. Along with a group of students, he decided to leave the Academy after having completed his third year of studies there to help form an independent artists' association called the Neukunstgruppe [New Art Group] of which he was elected president. Before leaving, the group presented Professor Griepenkerl with a document which included thirteen rhetorical questions expressing their criticism of his outdated and overly conservative teaching methods. These included questions such as, "Is Nature only that which the professor recognizes as such?...Is the Academy...the only place where the quality

of a work of art can be judged (Whitford, 1981, p. 44)?

Schiele decided to leave his family's home in order to live alone at about the same time that he left the Academy. Without the frameworks of his family or the Academy, Schiele was on his own personally and artistically for the first time. As a result, his underlying psychological difficulties, only hinted at in his art so far, became overpowering and took the form of a profound identity crisis which he recorded in his plentiful self-portraits of the time.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Waissenberger, 1971, Ch. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Werner, 1964, p. 60.

## Chapter 5

## Transition into Early Adulthood (1910-1911)

I want to tear into myself, so that  
I may create again a new thing which I,  
in spite of myself, have perceived.  
--Egon Schiele,  
from a letter to Oscar Reichel, 1911

The years 1910-1911 mark Schiele's departure from Klimt's influence and the beginnings of the development of his own artistic style. The struggle to establish a separate identity--both personal and artistic--however, resulted in Schiele's rushing to his mirror to check and chronicle the numerous masks which he tried on. Claiming that "All disguises for us are, anyway, for naught; since they conceal us" (Comini, 1974, p. 94), Schiele mercilessly tore one mask after another from his face compelling him (and us) to face the horror of someone who is in the process of losing his self. Confused and distraught by what he saw reflected in the mirror, he depicted his feelings in his self-portraits. That Schiele was experiencing a profound identity crisis is evident from the number of disturbed and disturbing self-portraits which he created during this period (The majority of Schiele's self-portraits were done at this time). Furthermore, the fact that he reserved the largest canvases for his self-portraits reflects his own conviction of the importance of these works.<sup>1</sup> It will soon become clear that these self-portraits reveal a duality which is basic

to Schiele's sense of himself and central to the understanding of his personality as well as his artwork.

In his self-portraits of this period, Schiele's body is portrayed as mutilated or fragmented (often castrated) and exaggerated or distorted into awkward positions. Floating heads with expressions of angst and horror (Plate 24), clawlike hands, amputated limbs, emaciated torsos (Plate 25), skin transparencies revealing underlying organs (Plate 26) and human screams that get lost in the void in which they are presented (Plate 27) abound in Schiele's art of these years. He is alone in these works and there is nothing but him--exposed in both nudity and psyche. His brittle, angular lines and expressionistic (nonrealistic) use of color contribute to the strong impact which these tense body contortions and facial grimaces express. The fragmentation he experienced during this period became so great that he began to draw split-off parts of himself in double and triple self-portraits (Plate 28). When asked why he drew such ugly representations of himself, Schiele responded;

Certainly; I have made pictures which are 'horrible'; I do not deny that. But do they believe that I like to do it in order to act like a 'horror of the bourgeois'. No! This was never the case. But yearning too has its ghosts. I painted such ghosts by no means for my pleasure. It was my obligation (Comini, 1974, p. 92).

What ghosts does Schiele refer to? And what were the circumstances under which he felt so "obligated" to distort, mutilate and multiply his features as he had done so often in his self-portraits of these years? What was it he yearned after?

Rickman (1940) suggests that an artist's need to "uglify" is probably associated with unconscious feelings of guilt and anxiety. Uglification of features has also been connected to feelings of disgust whose origin is in the anal stage of development. Schiele's use of the ugly in his art also seems to perform the function of self-punishment. By transforming himself into an ugly, hateful image, he both expresses his disgust and self-hatred (and hatred for internalized parental images), perhaps for his femininity, while simultaneously punishing himself for such inclinations. Kris (1952) also points to the use of grimacing, such as Schiele's, for the expression of aggressive drives. Commenting on the same issue, and perhaps coming closer to explaining Schiele's use of the ugly, Picasso claimed that artists whose emphasis is on the ugly rather than on the beautiful are people who are confused about who they are. He says;

It's very easy to make something beautiful when you know where you're going but you must make things ugly when you don't know where you're going (Martin, 1980).

Schiele was indeed confused about who he was and where he was going. Separated from his family and the Academy, Schiele was on his own--isolated and alone.

Although the relationship with his uncle Czihaczek had been fraught with difficulties all along, it was not until 1910 that things came to a head. In May 1910, fed up with his nephew's demanding personality and unconventional lifestyle, Czihaczek refused further responsibility (including financial support) for Schiele and severed all ties with him for good. In a letter he sent special delivery to Schiele's mother, Czihaczek emphatically attempts to justify his decision:

Dear Marie!

The behavior, which Egon has been showing for quite a while now, insults all moral concepts and my person to the highest degree. After all my attempts to bring him to his senses turned futile, and in light of present circumstances no change can be expected to take place due to his stubborn nature, I see myself obligated--especially due to my advanced age I should not expose myself to great excitement--to resign from Egon's guardianship, which I carried out for more than five years...

Your honest brother-in-law

Leop. Czihaczek

(Nebehay, 1979, p. 132)

Czihaczek not only stopped writing to his nephew; he also refused to answer any of the letters he received from him. In these letters, Schiele periodically tried in vain to impress his uncle with his artistic successes and to mend

their broken relationship.

Financially and emotionally on his own for the first time, Schiele perceived himself as a victim:

After I had made myself independent against the wishes of my mother and guardian in order to live as an artist, things quickly became miserable. I wore my guardian's cast-off clothes, shoes and hats, all of which were too large. My clothes, their linings ragged, the material worn thin, hung loosely on my skinny limbs. The shoes were worn out... so that I could only shuffle along. I had to push entire newspapers into the faded, crumpled and mouldy hat to stop it falling down over my eyes. My underwear was an especially precarious item of my wardrobe in those days. I don't know whether... netting...can be described as underwear at all. My collars had been handed down from my father and were much too large and too deep for my thin neck. On Sundays and on special occasions I therefore wore paper collars which I had cut myself and had shaped in an original way...in addition to all this my hair was too long and I was frequently unshaven. I did not give the impression of being a nice young man from an upright, middle-class official's family, which is what I basically was (Whitford, 1981, p. 67).

His dwelling was described by him as equally "miserable" with its "dirty window panes", "sloping walls" and "tattered, faded wallpaper" (Nebehay, 1979, p. 64). Although Schiele painted the walls of his studio white, he painted everything else black to convey something of the mood he was in at that time. Arthur Roessler, his patron, father-substitute and eventual biographer, describes

Schiele's obsession for black as reflected in the décor of his first studio:

You looked around and found yourself surrounded by chalk white walls and black objects: black boxes, black tables and chairs, black curtains, black silk covers, black cushions, black lacquer boxes and black glass ash trays, black bound books, black vases on black shelves, black Japanese stencil cuts in black frames. In the midst of this choir of polyphonic blacks the young artist stood before a black easel in a white painter's smock which looked like a monk's habit (Whitford, 1981, p. 45).

Schiele adopted Klimt's habit of wearing monk-like smocks. Unlike Klimt, however, Schiele had a special affinity for black which was further revealed in the edges of his mirror which he painted black and the fact that he insisted that all of his works be framed in black.

It is interesting to note that while Schiele seemed to be cultivating an image of himself as a deprived victim steeped in poverty, contemporary photographs and accounts of those who knew him present a somewhat different view. For example, fellow painter Paris von Guttersloh, describes Schiele as

unusually handsome [with]...nothing at all artistic about him: his hair was not long, he never had even a day's growth of beard, his finger nails were never dirty and he never wore poor-looking clothes even in his poorest period. He was...an elegant young man (Whitford, 1981, p. 91).

Indeed, Schiele was even somewhat of a dandy (see Self-Portrait in Street Clothes Gesturing, Plate 29). He designed all of his clothing and at least once felt too humiliated to be seen carrying a package.<sup>2</sup>

Appearances--his appearance--played a very important role in the constitution of his "false self"; he always took great pains to make a good, albeit eccentric, impression on others. The discrepancy between his self-image and the image others had of him, therefore, helps explain Schiele's inner belief in his victimized state. On some level, he probably was feeling deprived--deprived of his father, deprived of his mother's love and attention, deprived of his uncle's (as father substitute) understanding, support and acceptance. And, as was to become his habit, Schiele began perceiving himself--and depicting himself--according to his inner emotional state rather than according to objective reality. Painfully self-aware, he once exclaimed, "My outward bearing does not agree with my inner needs" (Comini, 1974, p. 91). His was an emotional realism comparable to that of Kafka's. And like Kafka who, due to his own problems (largely with his father), could identify with being "metamorphosized" overnight into an enormous cockroach, so Schiele reacted to his feelings of having been rejected and left alone by transforming himself into the tortured, deformed, fragmented and frightened being he felt himself to be (Plate 30). His uncle's rejection of him (and his art) seemed to revive earlier feelings of

abandonment which he, at least consciously, experienced most acutely when his father died. Haunted by images of his dead father, Schiele began seeing death and decay everywhere and in everyone, including himself. Roessler wrote that "Schiele saw with crystal clear eyes the pale colors of decay in human faces, he saw death under the skin" (Nebehay, 1979, p. 170).

Portraits of his disfigured face and contorted, seemingly wounded, body increasingly came to represent Schiele's sense of his own decay. As he removed his masks (primarily Klimtian imitations), he also removed his clothing (Klimtian-like smocks which concealed the body) revealing a voyeuristic pleasure in his exhibitionism, thereby satisfying two needs at once.<sup>3</sup> Now at the center of the viewer's (and his own) attention, Schiele also became exposed and vulnerable. Whereas the eye and hand were the body parts most focused on in the previous stage, the focus of the nude self-portraits came to include the genital area. The very fact that Schiele chose to emphasize face, hands and genitals is of utmost significance when one considers his desperate struggle to establish a differentiated identity at this time. As Phyllis Greenacre (1958a) explains,

The body areas which are then most significant in comparing and contrasting and establishing individual recognition of the body self, and that of others, are the face and the genitals....Both

face and genitals are highly differentiated body areas with their special configuration of small parts (features)...They are obviously of basic importance in the sense of identity. At the same time they are the areas which are least easily visible to the individual himself. As no one ever sees his own face, the nearest he approaches this is the reflection of his face in the water or a mirror (p. 117).

Besides representing major body areas for the establishment of a sense of identity, these three body parts possess further significance for Schiele, and perhaps, for most artists. Much has been written about the special meaning which the hand has for artists. The pencil, charcoal stick or paint brush which it holds can even be considered an extension of his body image. Quite simply, it is with his hands that the artist creates. From birth, we learn to use our hands both to express ourselves and to satisfy our bodily needs. Rose (1980) compares the infant's use of the hand to help relieve oral tensions with the artist's use of the hand to transmit "tensions of love and hate out to the canvas as in infancy the hand spread stimulation from the mouth to the skin" (pp. 101-2). The hand is also a social organ; it can either welcome another or push him away. Schiele's focus on the eyes (as the major expressive feature of the face) is similarly related to their use to him as artist in observing and interpreting the world. Like all artists, Schiele was preoccupied with seeing but, unlike many, he was equally concerned with being seen. Finally, both the eyes and the hands are

central to sexual activity. The eye can serve a voyeuristic function and the hand, a sexually gratifying one either through masturbation or through sexual contact with another. The sexual significance of these body parts leads us to contemplate the function which Schiele's focus on the genitals, the third area, had for him.

Although the majority of Schiele's self-portraits of this time show him in the nude, it is interesting that his genitals are often conspicuously absent. Clearly a profoundly conflicted body organ for the artist, it appears that Schiele expressed his ambivalence toward his penis by having it alternately appear and disappear. Schiele's nude self-portraits which depict his penis as giant and erect (Plate 31), or painted in fiery red colors (e.g., The Lyric Poet) stand in even greater contrast to its blatant absence in his other self-portraits (Plate 32). Since the former self-portraits sometimes show Schiele in the act of masturbation, there is one interpretation which classical psychoanalysts could not resist making. That is, his guilt and anxiety over masturbation lead Schiele to punish himself through castration or amputation of his limbs (symbolic castration). While convincing, this is not the only interpretation of the manner in which Schiele dealt with his genitals and, in fact, it does not seem to be the major interpretation. To better understand why an artist like Schiele might castrate himself, one needs to

appreciate his art in the context of the narcissistic defects he suffered from and the ways he attempted to compensate for them through his art. Castration is only one form of self-damage which is representative of Schiele's pervasive sense of fragmentation and lack of bodily (and psychic) integrity. The sense of damage to one's body image is in fact extremely prevalent in narcissistic disorders for which it is nearly pathognomonic. By showing himself masturbating, or at the point of orgasm, Schiele not only punishes himself, but more importantly, tries to affirm his self. For what better way to feel alive and creative than through sexuality?<sup>4</sup>

On another level, by rendering himself androgynous and, even at times totally female, this "playful" hide-and-seek game with his penis represents the ambivalence Schiele showed with regard to his gender identity. He feminized himself through emasculation and accentuation of lips, nipples and feminine body postures (Plates 33 & 34). (In Self-Portrait in Street Clothes Gesturing, he even appears to be proudly exhibiting a pair of imaginary breasts.) That for Schiele the penis came to be associated with a death-dealing instrument for his father's venereal disease and eventual death (as well as the death of his siblings), should not be overlooked either. Thus, in an attempt to separate himself from this image of a sexually diseased

male, he castrates himself. By doing so, however, Schiele ironically fuses his image with that of his father's by turning that image into one permeated with decay, disease, and ultimately, death. In light of these facts, Schiele's nude self-portraits are often less sexually revealing than they initially appear since they usually show either no male genital or a hidden or castrated one. They are nevertheless psychologically revealing for they convincingly highlight the conflicts which Schiele encountered in his search for identity.

Reminiscent of Schiele's artistic castration are several self-portraits which show Schiele screaming, in a Munchian manner, revealing one or two teeth with the remainder blatantly absent (Plates 27 & 35). In addition to constituting a metaphor for a desolate existence, Schiele's conscious removal of teeth in these crying self-portraits appears to serve the same unconscious function for him as the removal of genitals. On the one hand, these works seem to be emphasizing his fury at feeling impotent and damaged while, on the other hand, they prevent him from doing any further damage by carefully removing potentially dangerous body parts. His screams, while full of rage, can do no harm due to the lack of teeth. His sexuality, although pervasive, is likewise circumscribed due to the lack of genitals. Thus, in an attempt to differentiate himself from his father's infected

eroticism, Schiele ironically turns himself into a double for his father--sick, impotent and dead-like.

#### Father as Double

It is interesting that at this time Schiele embarked on a series of double self-portraits which seems to illustrate his struggle to establish an identity separate from that of his male model-father. While there are many possible interpretations for Schiele's double self-portraits, they need not be mutually exclusive and, in fact, may even serve to complement one another and build upon each other. Beginning with the most general perspective, the significance of the double self-portraits is to illustrate the relationship of the self to the self. It is therefore no coincidence that Schiele gave the title "Self-Seer" to several of his double self-portraits. What the artist "sees" is important and this artist's "seeing" was always done with a mirror. Schiele was known to draw only from nature and he used the mirror he took from his mother for all of his self-portraits except four which he drew while in prison. The "invisible" mirror which he used in his previous self-portraits is now included as his second self, thereby revealing a more complete dynamic picture of what the artist's relationship to his self--reflected image--is about. However, the portrayal of double selves not only

indicates two selves, but also, split selves. Thus, Schiele may have been trying to illustrate two aspects of himself. This is most evident in Self-Portrait with Black Clay Vase in which his face is shown next to a black vase whose shape delineates a man's profile (Plate 36). The most obvious interpretation here involves Schiele's sense of possessing a dark side which is represented by the vase, itself multifaced. In this sense, his double is reminiscent of an alter ego as in Joseph Conrad's "secret sharer".<sup>5</sup>

Another interpretation of Schiele's preoccupation with the theme of the Doppelgänger concerns its protective function against the loss of self. It is clear from his self-images of this time that Schiele was undergoing an identity crisis. According to his own accounts, he was feeling abandoned, victimized and alone. No longer allying himself with Klimt or Czihaczek, and even distancing himself from his mother, he found himself needing to face the emptiness he felt inside with greater urgency. Sensing that he was losing himself in this horror vacui, he protectively and instinctively created a second self. If he--as a result of an inevitable identification with his father--was to die, his second, created self would no doubt survive. Of course, there is also truth to the fact that an artist finds immortality through his work. As Otto Rank (1971) states, in his thorough exploration of the

double motif in anthropology and literature, "The idea of death...is denied by a duplication of the self..." (p. 83).

The obvious connection which Schiele's double had with death once more leads back to the subject of his father's death. Partly in denial of his death, Schiele conjures up his idealized parent. Although on one level, Schiele's father takes the role of Death--for example, in his double self-portrait painting The Prophet (Plate 37)--on another level, he is brought back to life in these works, thereby gaining immortality. Thus, in his double self-portraits, Schiele faces his father's and his own death while simultaneously rendering them both immortal.

It should come as no surprise that Schiele was preoccupied with thoughts of his father at this time. In fact, he even had a Hamlet-like "vision" of his father's ghost in August of 1910. Sharing this unusual experience with his sister and confidant, Gerti, he wrote of it in a letter to her:

Today I really experienced a beautiful case of spiritualism. I was awake yet under the spell of a spirit who had announced himself in my dream before I awoke. While he spoke to me, I was rigid and speechless. Egon  
(Nebehay, 1979, p. 134)

During this period, Anton Peschka, Schiele's friend and

fellow artist, communicated to Gerti, his future fiancé, that her brother "always talks in his sleep. Last night he said that Papa was with him and he was real, not a dream--He spoke to him a lot" (Nebehay, 1979, p. 134).

Comini (1974) has suggested that Schiele's creation of a double may have served the function of alleviating the strong loneliness which he was experiencing at that time. Roessler also commented on the intensity of Schiele's loneliness during these years, and connected it to his sexuality:

What drove him to depict erotic scenes from time to time was...the fear of loneliness which grew to terrifying proportions. The feeling of loneliness, for him a loneliness that was totally chilling, was in him from childhood onwards--in spite of his family, in spite of his gaiety when he was among friends (Whitford, 1981, p. 89).

In the above description, Roessler perceptively points to Schiele's dual nature (private vs. social) as well as to the childhood origins of his loneliness. The double's function as reliever of loneliness can indeed be compared to the child's creation of an imaginary companion.<sup>6</sup> Schiele's loneliness seems to have led him to communicate and bring back to life, as it were, his dead parent. Rank (1971) effectively shows in his study on the double how man's basic conflict becomes enacted in the concept of the double in that there is a reciprocal satisfaction of one's

need for likeness as well as the need for difference or uniqueness. Thus, the inevitable consequence of Schiele's revival of his father from the dead was the need to scrutinize his own identity, questioning the ways in which he was like his father and whether his penis was doomed to become a diseased death dealer like that of his father?

Schiele's self-portraits began to be filled with vagueness and ambiguity which reflected the blurring of his own boundaries. Whereas he previously emphasized the outline of his figures, creating a firm delineation of self and surrounding space or self and other, these boundaries began to dissolve as he and his double became one. Losing his sense of separateness, he started feeling unreal, haunted, possessed. Those who knew Schiele at the time describe him in terms of a curious otherworldliness. For example, Heinrich Benesch recalls how

The mobile features of his face were usually fixed in an earnest, almost sad expression, as though suffering from inner, weeping grief. When spoken to he turned large, dark, astonished eyes--which had first to chase away the dream that possessed them--upon his interlocuteur (Comini, 1974, p. 66, my emphasis)

Otto Benesch, Heinrich's son, mostly remembers how Schiele was a serious man:

It was rather the quiet seriousness of a man absorbed by a spiritual mission...Schiele's

nature was childlike (not childish). (Comini, 1974, p. 64, my emphasis)

Otto also describes the manner in which "Schiele drew rapidly...as if guided by the hand of a ghost..." (Comini, 1974, p. 119, my emphasis). Even Schiele himself felt possessed by powers beyond his control. In his own words:

An eternal dreaming of the sweetest abundance of life--restless, with frightened pains inside the soul. It blazes, burns, waxes toward battle--spasm in the heart. Poised--and madly excited with aroused lust. Powerless is the torment of thinking, senseless to reach for thoughts. Speak the tongue of the creator and give. Demons! Break the power! Your language--your symbols--your might (Comini, 1974, p. 60, my emphasis).

As he stripped away layer after layer of defense (masks, false selves), Schiele was left with a mere death mask, an x-ray, a skeleton of a self (Plate 38). The double's function as protective shield had backfired. The splitting of himself in two (or the doubling of himself) brought out Schiele's most primitive fears related to a dichotomy of concepts and feelings: if he were both himself and another (father) or his opposite (female), then he was neither; and if he could exist in two places at once, then was not his body ego disintegrating? Was he, in fact, going mad? Although Schiele brought his father back to life, these fears urged him to eventually kill off the

father's image by having him portrayed as Death (e.g., in Death and Man). Rank (1971) explains that "The frequent slaying of the double through which the hero seeks to protect himself permanently from the pursuits of his self, is really a suicidal act" (p. 79). Trying to unify opposite images in order to assure himself of being alive had ironically forced Schiele to continuously face the terror of his own death.

Did Schiele feel that he was killing himself or was this apparent suicide a murder in disguise? Upon careful examination of his double self-portraits, an additional interpretation surfaces. In all of these portraits he is shown as castrated and making a V-gesture with his hand (vagina symbol) while his double stands behind him as homosexual lover/persecutor. The link to narcissism is again inevitable here: the homosexual love object is a narcissistic one since it comes closest to resembling the self. Becoming his own love object in this manner illustrates the extent of Schiele's narcissism. (In the ultimate autoerotic act, Schiele even produced a work where he performs fellatio on himself!)<sup>7</sup> One lesson learned from the myth of Narcissus concerns the dangers of self-love. In his famous Schreber case, Freud (1911a) shows some of these dangers by illustrating how narcissism is linked to homosexual feelings as well as paranoid, persecutory fantasies. Thus, on the one hand, Schiele

overrates himself sexually while, on the other hand, he begins to feel persecuted by his own ego. The fear of being a man with a deadly penis (father identification) led Schiele to castrate himself which, in turn, led him to take on, at least partially, a feminine identity. As a result of this feminine identification, however, his love object became a homosexual one (with a deadly penis of his own) thereby threatening him with the very death he was trying to escape from in the first place. Feeling persecuted, Schiele's creation of a double took on a double-edged meaning: as a second self, it protected him from mortality yet, as a persecutory homosexual self-object, it both symbolized and threatened death.<sup>8</sup>

Insufficient evidence exists to answer the question of whether Schiele was actively homosexual. However, a letter (10/21/1910) from a young admirer of Schiele's, Wally Lidl, attests to the fact that he inspired, and perhaps even encouraged a homosexual attraction to himself:

Egon! The whole world is rearing up against me. And it is going to crush me. At school they reprimanded me terribly because of you, and I love you so much, I only live for you. If you stay with me, I shall become strong, but if you leave me, it will be my death. Egon, I am tired. Do you love me? Give me assurance, otherwise a misfortune will take place. My brain is burning. Do not be hard. I shall sacrifice myself for you, only stay with me. Come soon, you promised me.

Lidl Wally

(Nebehay, 1979, p. 137)

This letter does little to help discern whether Schiele engaged in actual homosexual behavior. In the final analysis, however, it is not really that relevant whether Schiele was or was not homosexual. What is important is his fantasy life: the fantasy of being feminine/a woman; the fantasy of being a woman in order to avoid becoming a deadly/dead man; and the fantasy of being a woman in order to become the love object of a man/himself.

The manner in which Freud (1911a) linked homosexuality and paranoia was by stating that both entail narcissistic fixations. According to him, unacceptable homosexual longings (often for the father) are defended against by projecting them outwards so that they assume the form of persecutory delusions. Thus, just as the Lidl boy felt persecuted because of his homosexual feelings, so did Schiele express some paranoia with regards to his colleagues in Vienna:

I want to leave Vienna very soon.  
How hideous it is here! Everyone envies  
me and conspires against me. Former  
colleagues regard me with malevolent  
eyes. In Vienna there are shadows. The  
city is black and everything is done by  
rote. I want to be alone (Whitford, 1981, p. 95).

In January of 1911, Schiele's paranoia nearly caused him to lose his friend and patron, Arthur Roessler as he had previously done with his uncle Czihaceck. Roessler

became so impatient with Schiele's irrational beliefs and behavior that he wrote him a letter accusing him of

making mischief, writing spying letters  
behind my back and gossip...you tell other  
people what I told you in confidence...I  
must restrict my dealings with you until  
you bring to your behavior--which I hope  
will become more adult--as much consideration  
and cultivation as you devote to your art  
(Whitford, 1981, p. 95).

Schiele's feelings of being a victim were reinforced by Roessler's accusations. Once more, convinced of his being unappreciated and unseen, he declared:

I, eternal child--  
I sacrificed myself for others...  
who looked and did not see me...  
(Whitford, 1981, p. 95).

Unlike Freud, Melanie Klein (1932; 1964) claims that homosexuality often develops as a defense against paranoid anxiety in relation to the mother (and her breasts) which then become perceived as a persecuting object(s). Latent homosexuality has also been explained as an escape from women (the mother) who are feared. These views may partially explain why Schiele's attention was so absorbed by his father, especially since separation and individuation issues, such as those Schiele was dealing with, are usually associated with the mother-child relationship (See Mahler). The father as double,

therefore, may have been summoned by Schiele to support him in his struggle in confronting and separating from the phallic mother whom he perceived as castrating. Serving to aid him in his turning away from the mother, Schiele's father (as double) became a kind of transitional object, a bridge, an emotional replacement for the mother. Furthermore, the suffering Schiele experienced in connection to his mother was probably less available to him as an adult since it occurred at an earlier developmental stage than that associated with his father.

#### Mother as Dead

While Schiele brought his father back to life as his alter ego in the double self-portraits, he was busy killing his mother in a series of Dead Mother portraits. For Schiele, it appears that the wrong parent died and that one function of his art served to try and correct this painful and unjust reality. As much as his father was idealized by Schiele, so did his mother become a repository for all of his bad feelings and projections. Killing off his mother became one way in which Schiele denied his need for her and asserted his independence from her. Trying to reassure himself that he would go on living if his mother died--perhaps his greatest fear--negated his need to merge with her. Nevertheless, Schiele's art denotes both impulse

and defense and therefore it should not surprise us that his portraits showing a dead mother also include a baby--himself (Birth of a Genius)--inside the womb in the ultimate state of fusion. In another painting of this period, Madonna, (Plate 39) Schiele again shows mother and child as one inseparable entity.

Why did Schiele feel obligated to kill off his mother? The most obvious reason, as stated above, was to avoid facing his own needs for merger with her. Unable to escape these needs, his portrayals of a dead mother always include at least one child who is alive--but, of course, struggling for life. Once more, the life or death issue surfaces as one which was a constant threat for the Schiele family, and for Schiele in particular. In addition, it is evident that Schiele deeply resented his mother and felt her largely responsible for his misfortunes, partly due to what he considered her neglect for her late husband's memory. Furthermore, she probably communicated to him her concern that he would die as did his four siblings (see introductory quotation to chapter 3). Like his father, however, Schiele wished to deny the possibility of death and most probably blamed his mother for bequeathing her death anxiety to him. Expressing his death wish towards his mother in a displaced manner, Schiele at first did a series of paintings of Krumau--his mother's birthplace--as a dead town. Noticing the troubled relationship he had

with his mother, Roessler suggested to Schiele on December 24, 1910 that he do a series of allegorical paintings with motherhood as its major theme. Very excited by this idea, Schiele spent that Christmas eve riding a train and then painting his first "Mother" painting: Dead Mother I (Plate 40). Having gone without sleep the entire night, Schiele rushed to Roessler in the morning to show him the still wet painting which remained his favorite for quite some time. Dead Mother I led to Dead Mother II which Schiele subtitled Birth of a Genius. Identifying his mother (Marie) with Mary and himself with Christ (born on Christmas day), Schiele was able to eliminate the need for a father in these paintings (Years later, he did paint Holy Family which included all three family members).

At about the same time, Schiele drew a nonallegorical portrait of his mother sleeping which tends to evoke a somewhat eerie impression for several reasons (Plate 41). First of all, although the title indicates that she is asleep--Portrait of the Artist's Mother Asleep--she gives the definite impression of being dead. Her eyes are closed and she looks as though she is lying in a coffin. Secondly, her features bear an uncanny resemblance to those of Schiele himself which further illustrates not only his identification with a woman, but also, with the dead. Finally, Schiele places his signature so that the picture be held in a vertical manner rather than in the horizontal

fashion in which it was drawn. For all of the above reasons, this portrait of Schiele's mother produces an uncanny effect which is rather disconcerting to the observer but which nevertheless indicates the extent of Schiele's ambivalence toward his mother. It is interesting to note at this point that Freud, in his (1919) essay on "The Uncanny", remarks that "the idea of being buried alive is the most uncanny thing of all" (p. 235). Significantly, the two examples Freud offers of the uncanny have to do with castration (identification with the woman, in this case Schiele's mother) and a fulfilled death wish (Although defensively trying to deny it by rendering the drawing vertical, the death wish towards the mother comes through all the same). What produces the picture's uncanny, disconcerting effect is the observer's awareness of Schiele's death wish towards his mother as well as his defense against it. Sheldon Bach (1985) claims that uncanny experiences are quite common among narcissistic patients and defines such feelings as being directly related to a failed mirroring experience (p. 127).

The double is also considered by Freud as an uncanny representation of one's unconscious. Therefore, the creation of double selves may, upon closer examination, have more to do with motherhood than with the image of the father. The double may, in fact, represent the quintessential maternal symbol of nurturance: the two

breasts. Schiele's vertical signature, while illustrating his power in treating reality as plastic material for him to shape, also demonstrates his oppositional character--essential for his assertion of independence from his mother. Furthermore, the creation of a double self for Schiele appears to draw upon idealized aspects of the father which are in contrast to his view of the mother as all bad. Idealization of the father is known to occur in reaction to loss of mother.<sup>9</sup> Alternately killing and reviving his parents in art, Schiele expresses a further duality. In line with the theme of the double, and reinforcing the uncanniness of his art, Schiele deals with issues of separation and individuation by depicting himself as grandiose and omnipotent on the one hand, while simultaneously feeling like an impotent, frail human being who holds on for dear life, on the other.

Throughout his life Schiele would continue to be concerned with portraying the theme of motherhood in his art. In these "mother paintings", he nearly always shows a dead or blind mother with at least one, but usually two, infants who struggle for life at their dead mother's depleted breasts. Their struggle for acknowledgement and nurturance is unresponded to since the mother is either dead, blind or turning her back on the infants. It is impossible to ignore the significance that these mother paintings had for Schiele. As Rudolf Leopold (1972) points

out, there is no greater contrast than that of the hungry child eager to suck with that of the exhausted, drained, death-like mother whose breasts are slack, dried up and shriveled and whose eyes are dark with shadow, too inwardly preoccupied to take any interest in her child(ren) (p. 150). Later depicting himself with only eye sockets instead of eyes, Schiele, in identification with his mother, becomes a sightless seer (like Tiresias, the blinded seer/prophet) in his final Self-Seer paintings.

To fully understand the complexity of Schiele's relationship to his mother, it is helpful to examine the psychological concept of mirroring. It has already been mentioned (chapters 1 & 3) that Schiele's mere preoccupation, bordering on obsession, with self-portraiture most probably has its roots in the view he held of his mother as a failed mirror. It is known that as an infant, the mother literally represents the child's first relationship to the outside world. Thus, when Schiele paints World's Anguish (Plate 42), it is understandably his mother's town which he depicts. The mother, as the infant's first external object, outlines the child's image for him. She does this by reflecting back to him her unconscious needs with regards to him thereby contributing to his first sense of self. If this "mirroring" experience (which takes place approximately between the sixth and eighteenth months of the infant's

life) is empathic, according to Winnicott, Lichtenstein and Kohut, the child emerges with a positive sense of self which is at first a body self. The infant feels himself to be lovable, integrated and whole. If, however, the mirroring experience is unempathic, distorted, negative, completely absent, or in Spitz's words, if there is a "derailment of the dialogue" between mother and infant, then the child's own existence becomes negated and he develops a disturbance in his primitive self-feeling. According to Lacan (1966), a failure in the mirror phase results in the infant's sense of body fragmentation which he calls le corps morcelé [the dissected body]. Faulty mirroring may be explained by the mother's own narcissistic self-involvement or depression, a state also noted for its inordinate self-absorption.

That Marie Schiele was a very depressed woman has already been commented upon (see photographs and Chapter 3). However, she was also the type of person who made sure others knew of her suffering. For example, she frequently sent Egon postcard reproductions of Whistler's Mother to remind him of his filial responsibilities,<sup>10</sup> and, in response to Czihakzeck's resignation from his role as Egon's guardian, Marie empathized with him and added the perception of herself as a martyred mother:

I suffer--I did not deserve this!...because  
of the children I am forced to lead such a

miserable life. Often I ask myself who they resemble. They do not resemble me nor poor Adolf. Since the time Egon moved from me, since that time, he has become what he is like now....If I were a frivolous mother and did not concern myself about them, then I would not be surprised, but everybody can see how I live. Since Tuesday of last week, Egon is staying with me. Where else shall he go--his money gave out--now mother is good enough again.... (Nebehay, 1979, p. 133)

In addition to expressing her depression and sense of being a martyr, Schiele's mother also reveals her inability to mother her children--now grown--and her own desperate need for parenting in this letter:

...what is going to happen now? I need somebody, who will firmly take care of me, the children have to obey. Already two times I decided to take over the main guardianship, again and again I hesitated. What shall I do? Advise me (Nebehay, 1979, p. 133).

Schiele graphically represents his own personal mirroring experience through depictions of his mother as dead (Plate 43), blind (Plate 44) or unavailable (Plate 45)--because he experienced her as though she were dead, blind or emotionally absent. His portrayal of himself as fragmented, helpless and confused naturally follows since this is how he probably felt as he looked into his mother's face as a child where he found not himself, but her own self-involvement, depression and confusion (see photographs, Plates 4 & 5). Through his self-portraits, Schiele seems to be painfully striving to see what he did not see (e.g., confirmation in his mother's eyes), to be

seen (by his mother) and, as a result, to delineate his own sense of self. By repeatedly recreating himself--e.g., in Birth of a Genius--Schiele even redoes his own birth scene. Once more, Schiele's problem and his attempts to arrive at a solution are simultaneously represented. Trying to master the most painful of childhood experiences over which he had no control, he repeats them again and again. Not only does he struggle artistically with the theme of his mother as a faulty mirror but, through his self-portraits, he replaces her by becoming the mirror he never had. With himself as mirror, he can be anything: boy or girl, young or old, good or bad, pretty or ugly, alive or dead.

In the year 1910, concern with his mother led Schiele to reflect on his own birth and infancy. His interest in these subjects grew to the point where he asked permission to draw women patients at the gynecological clinic of a certain Dr. Graff. There, Schiele produced a number of drawings of pregnant women (Recall, his first Dead Mother painting which shows a live foetus in the womb) and babies--both alive and dead. Schiele's fascination with sickness and death, especially as related to the babies, is most certainly connected to his stillborn brothers and his sister Elvira's death which he witnessed at the early age of three. The portraits of the women are quite grotesque (Plate 46) and those of infants show the most frightening

aspects one can imagine about the birth process. Feelings of shock, fear and alienation abound in these drawings which show screaming, terrified infants, alone and abandoned--crying for life yet near to death (Plate 47). Babies never looked like this before and these pictures illustrate the link Schiele believed existed between motherhood and birth with terror, alienation and death. The awfulness of this first separation--that between mother and infant--appears to symbolize for Schiele the absolute terror inherent in all separations. In a September 1911 letter to Dr. Oskar Reichel, one of his patrons, Schiele expresses, in a somewhat confused language--typical of his state of mind at the time--the deep feelings he had connecting his art to the merger-separation issue in relation to his mother:

There was, is and will be the old or the primal spirit, which wants, which out of something, out of interminglings, must bring forth, must create; the real great Mother of all, of everything similar but still separate, who wills, and so was, is and will be the wish always out of these our eternal means, to be able to create the most manifold human beings, animals, plants, living creatures in general, as soon as this physics is present, just so soon does the common will of the world exist (Comini, 1974, p. 94).

At the end of 1911, Schiele painted Pregnant Woman and Death with himself as death (Plate 48) and a self-portrait in which he is nude, death-like and looks pregnant.

Pregnant Woman (Originally titled Mother) and Death is signed in triplicate as if to assure his not being dead.

Unconsciously seeking to get in touch with his mother, Schiele left Vienna in May 1911 with his model/mistress (sent to him by Klimt), Valerie "Wally" Neuzil, to live in Krumau, his mother's native town in Bohemia. Two self-portraits, Delirium and Melancholia (World's Anguish), both painted in 1910, include scenes from Krumau which he called a "dead town" (parallel to "dead mother"). In Melancholia, Schiele, with his usual V-hand gesture and castrated genitals, gazes despairingly at us (himself) while the buildings of Krumau surround him. In Delirium, Schiele paints five self-portrait heads which are skull-like and falling downwards--again surrounding himself with rooftops of buildings from the "dead town". These paintings and their titles clearly express Schiele's sense of identification with the dead and the insane rather than as Comini (1974) claims, "varying stages of sexual excitement" (p. 63), although the two may have been connected in his mind. Whereas Schiele loved Krumau, the city's residents actively disapproved of his lifestyle--i.e., living in sin with his mistress--and pressured him and Wally to leave. At the end of July 1911, he describes his feelings in a letter to Roessler:

You know how much I like to be in Krumau (sic) and now life is made impossible. People boycott

us simply because we're red. Of course I could defend myself, even against all 7000 of them, but I don't have the time and why should I bother? (Whitford, 1981, p. 99)<sup>11</sup>

Disillusioned by his exclusion from Krumau, Schiele's suspicion of others was reinforced. Krumau, his mother's town, had rejected him just as she had.

Feeling like a homeless orphan, Schiele's sense of being abandoned and victimized grew. His friend Osen, a pantomime artist who probably inspired Schiele's use of unusual poses in his portraits, had introduced him to the works of Arthur Rimbaud. Rimbaud quickly became Schiele's favorite writer and it is likely that poems like the following, The Orphan's Gifts, held a special appeal for him:

...--Is there no mother for these small children,  
 No mother with a fresh smile, and triumphant  
 glances?...  
 Your heart has understood:--these children are  
 motherless.  
 No mother in the home!--and the father far away!...  
 (Rimbaud, 1966, pp. 9-15)

Encouraged to try his own hand at poetry, Schiele unsurprisingly titled many of his poems Self-Portrait. Seeking verbal expression for what his self-portraits of this period portrayed, Schiele's poetry mostly treated only one side of his dual nature. While he could say in one

breath, "I am the shyest of shy" and "I am divine" (Comini, 1974, p. 91), it is his "divine" self which found expression in his poems. Thus, for instance, he writes:

I am from the noblest the most noble one--  
and among those who make restitutions I am  
the one who makes the greatest effort--I am  
human, I love death and love life (Nebehay,  
1979, p. 499).

Schiele's assertion of his nobility reaches megalomaniac proportions in his poetry which is constituted of a series of largely incoherent ramblings about his greatness. This megalomania takes on a religious meaning as he refers to his "astral light", also noticeable in the white aura or halo which surrounds him in many of his self-portraits of these years. His religious identification continues the trend we observed beginning with his donning of monk-like garbs to an identification with Moses (Two Men) and Christ (Dead Mother) to identifying himself with the role of prophet (Self-Seer II) to the V-gesture which he repeatedly makes with his hands. Aside from symbolizing the feminine genitals (vagina opening), Schiele's hand gesture also resembles those associated with religious figures. For example, medieval saints and Jewish priests (called the Cohenim) are known to make exactly such hand gestures when performing blessings (see Plate 49). These hand gestures were observable on the tombstones of the Cohenim in European graveyards (Plate 50). The triangular shape which this particular hand gesture produces also recalls the "eye

of God" and, according to Kris (1952), was traditionally found as a religious symbol in Austrian baroque.

Schiele's sense of specialness originated in his early childhood. Unlike four of his siblings, he survived and he was the only boy (and after his father's death, the only male family member). Furthermore, his talent was evident early on and resulted in his being treated as a Wunderkind--perhaps appreciated for his gifts rather than for his self. Subsequently, Schiele's sense of nobility is not only understandable but quite justified. On the other hand, however, it is already known that Schiele's sense of himself derives from some very negative introjections (internalizations) of his parental figures. Thus, his megalomaniac tendencies are probably as defensive as they seem arrogant. His self-concept was so closely bound to his relationship with his parents (as is everyone's) that he vacillated between feeling he was the greatest human being alive to feeling that he was mad, depressed, damaged, anxiety-ridden and diseased. Displacing his dual self-image onto the children he fantasized having, Schiele once stated that they would probably turn out to be "either cretins or geniuses" (Comini, 1974, p. 91). At times, wishing to avoid his "negative" side, he reveals it nonetheless in an exaggerated egotism which is illustrated in a letter he wrote to his mother in 1913:

This is the great separation. Without doubt I shall be the greatest, the most beautiful, the most valuable, the purest, and the most precious fruit. Through my independence will all beautiful and noble effects be united in me-- this also, no doubt, because of the man. I shall be the fruit which after its decay will still leave behind eternal life; therefore how great must be your joy--to have borne me? (Comini, 1974, p. 87).

In her book, The Drama of the Gifted Child, Alice Miller (1981) shows how grandiosity, such as Schiele's, is a defense against depression. Depressive feelings, which we also know Schiele to have had, she says, constitute a defense against the pain one experiences over the loss of self.

In sum, it is clear that Schiele's major issue during the years 1910-1911 concerns the establishment of a separate identity. Issues of fusion and separation therefore are crucial, take on life and death proportions, and become highlighted in his relationship to both his father and mother. He is haunted by merger fantasies which take the form of homosexual union with regard to the father and return to the womb wishes with regard to the mother. His mother, having failed as a mirror to reinforce Schiele's sense of himself as good, whole and worthy of esteem, led him to seek an idealized relationship with his father. This too proved difficult, however, for as much as he tried to retain an unblemished image of his father, the reality of his father's illness (damage/lack of

omnipotence) and death rendered it impossible. Alone and feeling powerless, ready to give up on the hope of making contact with another, he was left gazing at his own image: that of a man who lacked the basic psychic organization necessary for true self development. Brutally confronting the reality of his situation, Schiele was determined to correct it even if it meant becoming his own parent, his own creator, his own mirror. Desiring fusion with another, Schiele also fought against it for he knew that to merge would ultimately mean a loss of self or death. One manner in which Schiele fought fusion with another was through fragmentation or multiplication of his self. If he had many parts, or many selves, it would surely become more difficult to envisage fusion. A second manner was through a gender breakdown. No longer male or female, his was a regression which defended against the terror of a homosexual fusion with the father and, by implication, with the mother.

Castrated and mutilated, through his art he sought to repair the damage he felt. Serving as an external structure, which his mother or father could not be for him, his art--and particularly, his self-portraits--allowed for an objectification of his features which in addition, organized and synthesized them in a concrete way. Furthermore, what is absent in one part of a painting is found, if only symbolically, in another. Thus, for

example, the absence of his penis becomes compensated for by a representation of his entire body as penis.<sup>12</sup> Rigid and upright and topped with a head, he resembles an enormous phallus, a phallic man (Plates 25 & 51). Showing the damage and repairing it at one and the same time, it seems that Schiele was able to achieve a sense of wholeness through his self-portraits. By focusing on restitution, through a balancing of the thematic, formal and symbolic elements in his paintings, Schiele was able to find containment for his fragmented body image.

This dual function of Schiele's self-portraits is best explained by the Kleinian theory of aesthetics which postulates that both destruction and restitution are represented in art. Opposing those who believe the primary function of the aesthetic experience to be the gratification of pleasure, the Kleinians point to a destructive substratum in art. For example, Segal (1980-81) even connects the destructive in art to the ugly. She writes:

Take, for example, the aesthetic concepts of the ugly and the beautiful; from the psychoanalytic point of view...the ugly corresponds to the destroyed, to what is fragmented, lacking in rhythm and wholeness and harmony. I would say the ugly signifies the destruction of the inner world and its results; the whole--corresponding to the experience of a loved, whole, good object and self. Both the ugly and the beautiful are an essential part of aesthetic experience. A work of art devoid of the elements we

might call ugly would not be beautiful, but merely pretty (p. 118).

The "merely pretty" works of art which Segal refers to could be those of Klimt's later portraits which show a world where design overtakes meaning often resulting in a lifeless cloak of beauty. It was against portraits like these that Schiele and other Expressionist artists were revolting. In order to best attain expressions most true to their experience of spiritual pain, it became increasingly essential for them to make ugly art. Schiele himself exclaimed, "I want to tear into myself, so that I may create again a new thing which I, in spite of myself, have perceived" (Comini, 1974, p. 94).

And what Schiele perceived derived not only from his inner self and childhood experiences, but also, from the external world in which he lived. Despite the blatant subjective content of his visions, even the self-portraits of this period can be understood as transcending Schiele's personal state of mind to include a statement about his times. This becomes evident when one compares the vivid descriptions of writers who witnessed the events so unique to this historic period. Robert Musil, for example, was a novelist who chronicled the general sense of fragmentation which existed then when he wrote that "These days one never sees oneself as whole and one never moves as a whole" (Sypher, 1962, p. 61). In a similar vein, Henry Sedgwick,

in his attempt to communicate the climate of fin-de-siècle Vienna, chose to use such graphic images as those habitually encountered in Schiele's self-portraits:

Poor Vienna! To be cast down from the height of an Imperial city, Queen of an Empire, to the humble position of a provincial town, a head without a body, a stomach without hands (1939. p. 281).

Schiele's disembodied visions of himself, his preoccupation with the psychological, death, the self and the sexual--all found expression in his art while also characterizing the time and place in which he lived. His particular visions and his manner of dealing artistically with them are fascinating for they enabled Schiele to speak for himself and his times while transcending both.

## Notes

- 1 Comini, 1974, p. 65.
- 2 Comini, 1974, p. 91.
- 3 Comini, 1974, p.55.
- 4 Eissler, 1958, p. 242. There, he says, "orgasm is the strongest affirmation possible to man."
- 5 Schiele's Self-Portrait with Black Clay Vase could also be a reference to Paul Gauguin's Self-Portrait with Yellow Christ where there is a "primitive" mask and a studio setting as well. Paul Klee and James Ensor, two other artists who lived at that time, also frequently used masks in their work, illustrating this device as a common trope of the period. Indeed, the use of the mask in art can be interpreted psychoanalytically in a manner similar to that applied to the double and its mirror function.
- 6 Nagera, 1969, pp. 169-196.
- 7 Comini, 1974, p. 92.
- 8 Kohut, in The Analysis of the Self (1971), defines "self-object" as "objects [persons]...which are either used in the service of the self and of the maintenance of its instinctual investment, or objects which are themselves experienced as part of the self", p. xiv.
- 9 Kohut, 1977, p. 11.
- 10 Comini, 1974, p. 84.
- 11 Egon Schiele, from a letter to Arthur Roessler, quoted in Whitford, p. 99. "Red" here refers not to communists, but rather, to non-church-goers.
- 12 Comini, 1974, p. 60.

## Chapter 6

## Early Adulthood (1911-1914)

Anyone who has not suffered as I have--  
how ashamed he will have to feel before me  
from now on!

--Egon Schiele's final words  
in his prison diary, May 8, 1912  
(Comini, 1973, p. 105)

After leaving Krumau, Schiele did not yet wish to return to Vienna. Instead, he decided to settle in Neulengbach, a small village about twenty miles from Vienna. His model/mistress, Wally, accompanied him to Neulengbach in August 1911 where they remained until May 1912. Schiele rented a garden villa with a beautiful view on the outskirts of town. His new living situation was idyllic and he seemed at peace for the first time. Keeping his "persecutors" at bay, he thus maintained his distance from the colleagues he distrusted in Vienna. He also purchased a pistol at this time which further contributed to his sense of safety. In Wally, he found a healthy outlet for his strong sexual drive and his relationship to her seemed to help strengthen his frail masculine identity as well. (Schiele also grew a mustache--a sign of masculinity and virility--at this time.) Amid nature, with a loyal companion/mistress, Schiele was able to devote all of his energy to his art. Indeed, he was in such an elated state of mind that he even wrote to his estranged uncle Czihaczek to share in his joy:

I have come to Neulengbach in order to remain here forever. My intentions are to bring great works to completion, and for this I must work in peace--that was impossible in Vienna. Up to now I have given, and now, because of this, I am so rich that I must give myself away (Comini, 1973, p. 17).

Schiele's friend Benesch also remembers this period as having been "the happiest during his life which can be deduced from the rich production of high artistic value that came about during this time" (Benesch, 1965, p. 28).

And Schiele certainly did produce many "great works" during his stay in Neulengbach. Probably the most notable of these is a double portrait painting he called The Hermits (Plate 52) in which two life-size figures merge into one. The figure in the foreground is a self-portrait of Schiele and the figure in the background resembles Klimt. Like all of his double portraits with a Klimtian figure, however, one is aware of Klimt's function as substitute for Schiele's father. That Adolf Schiele was a bearded man like Klimt reinforces such an interpretation as well as the fact that Schiele's father was enlisted as his double in his double self-portraits (see chapter 5). Furthermore, in a letter describing The Hermits to his patron, Carl Reininghaus, Schiele himself points to the relevance of his father to this painting:

This is a picture I could not have painted overnight. It reflects the experiences of

several years, starting from my father's death;  
I have painted a vision...(Leopold, 1972, p. 511).

It is also important to note here that Schiele used the word "vision" in reference to experiences he had with his father's ghost or memory. In light of these facts, the meaning of his painting The Hermits becomes clear. Previous interpretations of the picture invariably include Schiele's homage to or rebellion against Klimt, with no mention of his father. While these explanations are possible, they are secondary to the primary meaning this painting had for Schiele, that of mourning the death of his father through a process of identification and merger with him. In Schiele's own words:

I would like to say something, however, about the line of thought in the picture--it justifies much, perhaps even everything, not only for me but for the onlooker. This is no grey sky, but rather a world in mourning in which the two bodies are moving. This is the only place where they grew up, and they have--organically--sprung from its soil. This whole world is meant to represent how all existing things are liable to decay...That [Schiele figure] on the left is bowed before the seriousness of the world; its flowers are meant to have a cold effect--merciless, extinguished flowers, as I would put it, to be compared with the similarly muted words of some very ailing person, who can do no more than stutter hollowly and hoarsely...the indefiniteness of the figures, which are collapsed inwards, the bodies of people tired of life, of suicides, yet men of feeling. Look at the two figures as though they represented a cloud of dust, shaped like this earth, which seeks to grow but can do no more than collapse impotently (Leopold, 1972, p. 511).

Schiele elevates his figures' suffering to a religious level by dressing them in ascetic robes and by having them wear wreaths on their heads. Although the rear figure is given a wreath of live fruit (in contrast to Schiele's Christ-like crown of thorns), he is clearly the more impotent one owing to his lack of hands and closed (blinded?) eyes. Similarly, the plant of winter cherries to the left of the figures shows one upright cherry while the other falls dead to the ground. The triangle connecting the plant to the figures points to its symbolic function as a miniature representation for the figures themselves. Thus, Schiele, although "bowed", is alive and upright while his father/Klimt leans handless, sightless, impotent and dead(?) behind him. Schiele has begun, probably for the first time in his life, to accept not only his father's death, but also, his father's limitations and weaknesses as a man.

Using large geometric shapes as well as sexual imagery (e.g., cherries, red lips, triangles) and religious imagery (e.g., wreaths, robes, triangles), Schiele unites the two figures. Continuing the struggle with his masculine and artistic identity, he recognizes that through his suffering he most resembles his father--a fact which both reassures him (in his masculinity) and terrifies him (because of its deadly implications). And suffering like his father always seems to imply castration for Schiele. Thus, his

thumb is missing in symbolic castration representing the sexual damage incurred upon men in the Schiele family. In a protective effort against those forces he believed threatened such castration, Schiele assumed a paranoid stance:

If you knew something of how I see the world and how people have behaved towards me so far-- how treacherously, I mean; so I must retreat [to my world] and paint such pictures, which have value only for me (Leopold, 1972, p. 511).

Schiele was wrong to believe that his pictures only had value for him; however, his statements are significant in that they help highlight the extremely personal sentiments which inspired such works. He signed The Hermits three times as if to counter the effects of the thematic content of fusion, thereby reassuring himself of his existence as an alive and separate being.

Continuing in his martyred position against the world, Schiele painted Agony, another double portrait of himself and a Klimt/father-figure (Plate 53). Both men, again disguised as monks, have their eyes closed and seem to be engaged in a struggle for power. This time, the father figure appears to be the stronger, more forceful, of the two. Schiele, on the other hand, turns away as though pleading to be left alone while admitting his own weakness and impotence (his thumb hangs limply). The Hermits and

Agony are two paintings which deal with the father-son theme in an allegorical manner. During the next several years, Schiele painted few self-portraits and those he did resemble the kind discussed here--i.e., symbolic double portraits where he is depicted with a father figure. It is almost as though Schiele--as a result of his previous overindulgence in self-examination--now needed to obtain some distance from himself. The pure expression of personal emotions, which characterized Schiele's prior phase, was gradually being replaced with the objective (i.e., allegorical) communication of those same emotions.

The lessening of Schiele's self-preoccupation is also evident in the large amount of land and townscapes which he painted during these years. These paintings are, nevertheless, related to his self-image in that they demonstrate a clear anthropomorphism of nature. Thus, his thin autumn trees, many of which are connected to supports, reveal frailty and isolation, feelings with which Schiele dealt during this time (e.g., Plate 54). Unlike his portraits and self-portraits which were drawn from nature, however, Schiele's landscapes were painted from memory, a device providing further distance for the artist. Schiele's erotic drawings, which constituted his major source of income, also proliferated at this time. This may be partly due to the continued sexually-inspiring presence of Wally who, herself, became the subject of some of

Schiele's most sexually-explicit drawings (e.g., Plate 55, Reclining Woman with Upturned Skirt). An additional reason for the abundance of these drawings, however, involves the many local children who were attracted to Schiele's isolated home and whom he invited to model--sometimes in quite seductive poses--for him (Plates 56, 57 & 58).

### Prison

On April 13 of 1912, Schiele was arrested, more than one hundred of his drawings were confiscated and he was taken to jail. According to a diary he kept during his incarceration, it seems that Schiele was unaware of the charges brought against him--"immorality" and "seduction of a minor"-- for more than one week.<sup>1</sup> The charge of immorality referred to the corruption of children which Schiele allegedly contributed to by exposing them to his erotic drawings which hung about in his studio. That Schiele was, in fact, guilty of such carelessness is attested to by his friend Benesch who remembers on many occasions having

warned Schiele to be careful when working with child models, and to never do anything with them without the consent of their parents. He always gave me reassuring explanations about this (Benesch, 1965, p. 28).

The second, more serious, charge against Schiele involved a thirteen year old girl who, according to his account, ran away from home to stay with him. Against his better judgment, and due to bad weather conditions, he allowed her to spend the night with Wally and him. The following day, he and Wally accompanied the girl to Vienna taking her to her grandmother's home. Preferring to stay with Schiele instead, the three returned to Neulengbach until her father angrily arrived to take her home. By that time, the girl had become so desperate that she unsuccessfully tried to slash her wrists. Believing the matter settled after the departure of father and daughter, Schiele's surprise seemed naive when he realized the connection this incident had to his arrest. Mistrusting these charges, he became convinced that his uncle Czihaczek was involved in his legal persecution:

I was not arrested because of the hysterical female, but rather--and I suspect as a result of the accusation of my guardian--because of a suspicion of lewdness with children, little girls, because of the production of erotic--that is, obscene drawings which I am supposed to have shown to children or at least which, negligently, I am supposed to have left lying about. Now at last I know why I am "sitting" here! It is a scandal! An almost unbelievable crudity! Vulgarly! And a great stupidity (Comini, 1973, p. 57).

Schiele's "psychotic insight"<sup>2</sup> connecting his uncle to his arrest reveals his denial of the events which led to his arrest, and more importantly, tell us about his guilt feelings which he then projects onto his uncle. Whether

there was any sexual misconduct on Schiele's part is unknown and seems unlikely. What is clear, however, is that Schiele unconsciously equated his incarceration with a punishment for his sexual feelings--probably early incestuous feelings. As a result, he mentions his fear of being castrated several times in his diary:

Well, they certainly are not going to castrate me, and they can not do that to art either....  
Castration, hypocrisy!...He who denies sex is a filthy person who smears in the lowest way his own parents who have begotten him (Comini, 1973, p. 62).

Previously, Schiele's need to be punished for his sexual feelings found expression in self-castration of penis or limbs as portrayed in his self-portraits. Now, finding an objective, external punishment--which he compares to castration--not only causes him pain, but also, serves the function previously taken by his art. Thus, believing that "man must suffer from sexual torture as long as he is capable of sexual feelings" (Comini, 1973, p. 59), Schiele also welcomes his punishment on some level for its aid in absolving his guilt. It is not in sarcasm, therefore, that Schiele exclaims in his diary and the title of a prison self-portrait: "I feel not punished but purified!" (Comini, 1973, p. 45).

For the first few days in prison, Schiele had no art

material and, to maintain his sanity, he tried to be creative by using bread (see Plate 59) or his saliva:

...in order not to go really mad [I] painted-- with trembling fingers dipped in bitter spit. Using the stains in the plaster I painted landscapes and heads on the walls of the cell. Then I watched as little by little they dried up, faded and disappeared into the depths of the masonry, as if wiped out by an invisible, magically powerful hand (Comini, 1973, p. 41).

On the third day, Wally brought him some art supplies which made him ecstatic; "At last! At last! At last! At last alleviation of pain! At last paper, pencils, brush, colors for drawing and writing" (Comini, 1973, p. 41).

Of the thirteen watercolor drawings he produced during his incarceration, four were self-portraits--the only self-portraits he is known to have executed without the use of a mirror. The first two of these self-portraits show Schiele lying on his cot covered with a gray blanket and an orange overcoat. He is unshaven, his hair is cropped and, although one empty sleeve hangs loose, his hands are not visible--a sign of his impotence. His look is one of quiet desperation tinged with an air of defiance. Schiele titled the first of these self-portraits Hindering the Artist is a Crime, It is Murdering Life in the Bud (Plate 60) and the second I love Antitheses (Plate 61). Revealing his oppositionalism, both paintings are signed so that a

vertical reading is necessary.

The last two self-portraits differ from the first two in several ways. First, the colorful orange coat is rendered gray to match his surroundings:

Around me all the colors are extinguished. It is frightening. A glowing fiery hell would still be beautiful!...a flaming hell would be no punishment--...only the gray, gray, gray which is part of the endless monotony and wilderness is the true, terrible satanic punishment (Comini, 1973, p. 51).

In Prisoner!, the third self-portrait, he squirms defenselessly to free himself from the enveloping coat (Plate 62). Once again, an empty sleeve is shown hanging. In the fourth self-portrait, and definitely the most impressive of Schiele's prison drawings, he shows his hands for the first time (Plate 63). Now, he is wrapped in a womb-like encasement, struggling desperately for his own existence. His expression is one of sheer anguish and his hands claw like an animal at the sheathe surrounding him. His nails leave clear scratch marks--enough to make one shudder. Although it carries the most optimistic of titles, For My Art and My Loved Ones I Will Gladly Endure to the End, this self-portrait is that which most clearly captures Schiele's sense of desperation. It is interesting to note that he previously depicted himself in a similar

pose as the terrified baby being born to a dead mother (Dead Mother I and II). Likewise, these four self-portraits--and especially the final one--seem to convey the horror of the birth experience with its impending threat of death. For Schiele, the womb never represented security but was associated rather with the fear of being engulfed, consumed, killed.

Schiele's prison drawings, along with his diary entries, prove the extent to which he was able to use art in a restitutive manner. He repeatedly declares that his art is that which allows him to continue enduring an unjust punishment (although we have already seen that he had unconscious reasons for doing so as well). Through his art and for his art, Schiele was able to express his innermost feelings while simultaneously reminding himself of the single aspect of himself from which he most derived a sense of worth--his talent. Only through his art was he able to transform the ugly into the beautiful:

What would I do now if I did not have art?  
...to feel pulled into senseless crudity that  
lacks everything that beautifies crudity--  
which can also be strength (Comini, 1973, p. 48).

Schiele was held in jail for a total of twenty-four days which he served in a basement cell of the Neulengbach district court house and later at the nearby St. Polten prison. On May seventh, he was given a trial. The

"seduction" charge was dropped however he was declared guilty of "immorality". The trial culminated in the judge's setting fire to one of Schiele's "pornographic" drawings.

The public condemnation of his art (and himself), with its direct replication of a painful childhood experience (see chapter 3) proved humiliating and traumatic for Schiele. His paranoid stance against society intensified along with an increase in the ascetic portrayal of himself as saint or martyr. In his Self-Portrait as Saint Sebastian (Plate 64), for example, Schiele chooses to identify not only with a Christian martyr but one who was brought back to life after believed dead by a nurturing woman. Schiele, as Saint Sebastian, has six fingers on one hand to compensate for a missing finger (the combination of two fingers) on the other. Penetrated with arrows, he demonstrates his new vulnerability to outside forces. It is no coincidence, therefore, that he is clothed in his self-portraits of this period, expressing a need to reinforce his external boundaries and to protect himself from caustic forces.

While clothing himself, Schiele simultaneously undressed society. Determined to scourge society's sexual hypocrisy, Schiele now exposed its genitalia. Thus, in his painting, Cardinal and Nun (Plate 65)--a variation of

Klimt's famous The Kiss (Plate 66)--he shows himself as a cardinal and Wally as a nun engaged in a sexual embrace. While there is no nudity (except for the figures' legs) in this painting, sexuality is implied in Schiele's neck which closely resembles the shaft of an erect penis. Furthermore, the interlocking triangular shapes which, when taken together, form one big triangle or pillar and the use of a flaming red color signify intense lust or passion.

Indeed, many of Schiele's self-portraits of this period depict him with Wally. He painted matching portraits of himself and Wally with a grapevine and in another religious allegory, Sleepwalkers, he is posed as a monk reaching out to her (Plate 67). Deeply appreciating her loyalty during his imprisonment, Schiele grew more intimate with Wally and even considered her "noble" (the word he used to describe his father); he took her with him everywhere he went. Painting her as the Woman in Mourning, he dressed her in black and made her look sad while his bizarre, tortured face seems to grow out of hers (Plate 68). Unlike his mother, Wally's loyalty and devotion demonstrated that she knew how to mourn a dying man. By perceiving Wally in this light, it seems that Schiele's image of motherhood began to soften. Thus, in sharp contrast to his previous "mother" paintings, his paintings Mother and Child (Plate 69) and Holy Family (Plate 70) both show Wally as a gentle, loving mother.

While Schiele's image of women--through Wally--was being tempered, his relationship with his own mother was becoming more and more strained. Letters between them dealt primarily with sexual issues in the family. Namely, Gerti's engagement to his friend, Anton Peschka, led Schiele to become concerned about the status of his sister's virginity. Likewise, Melanie's friendship with a girlfriend aroused his suspicions regarding the possibility of her being a lesbian.<sup>3</sup> His mother, on the other hand, reproached Schiele for irresponsible behavior regarding money matters and wished he'd contribute to the improvement of his father's grave site:

The most unkempt poorest grave holds the bones of your father, who would have sweat blood for you]...How much money you waste...You have time for everybody and everything...but not for your poor Mama! May God forgive you...I am unable to do so...Who changed you so much...curse him...and a mother's curse sticks (Nebehay, 1979, p. 263).

Horrified by such accusations, Schiele responded to his mother by telling her that she never did anything to help him and by reasserting his devotion to his dead father:

Out of nothing [I made everything], nobody helped me, I have to thank myself for my existence...You are wronging me constantly...Out! Whoever doubts my feelings, whoever doubts my memory of the deceased, he stabs me in the heart (Nebehay, 1979, p. 266).

Schiele ends his letter by promising to have his father's grave fixed by building a concrete pedestal to hold a ceramic sculpture which he would make.

Schiele's preoccupation with his father (and his grave) at this time compelled him to do many paintings related to death and to identify with his father once more. It was then that he painted his largest painting, a double self-portrait which he titled Resurrection (Plate 71). Schiele referred to this painting as Graves, however, since it shows two figures (himself and his father) rising from their graves. He also drew a self-portrait, Remembrance (Plate 72), at this time in which he is portrayed in a clown suit shaking his fists in the air while the ghost of his father (Klimt) lurks behind his head. Schiele's anger and frustration at his father's death is further represented in his painting, Encounter (Self-Portrait with Saint--Plate 73), where he is shown in front of an older man who is in the guise of a saint. His pose is identical to the one he takes in Remembrance, pointing to the symbolic connection of this painting to his father. The body boundaries are no longer firmly delineated as the two figures merge into one. In fact, it takes the viewer a moment to sort out which legs belong to whom. (In Remembrance, he is shown with four legs.) It is interesting that in what seems to be a preparatory sketch from a 1913 sketchbook for this painting, Schiele is

portrayed as he is in both Remembrance and Encounter, however, the father figure there is depicted as kneeling before him.<sup>4</sup> The theme of anger at his father's death, therefore, may have substituted for that of domination and power struggles which existed between father and son.

The double portrait of Heinrich Benesch and his son Otto which Schiele painted in 1913 stands out as a revealing statement about how he envisioned the relationship between father and son (Plate 74). Schiele's relationship with Heinrich Benesch was itself a father-son relationship which became more intense during Schiele's stay in prison. Benesch visited three times, arranged for the transport of Schiele's belongings and accompanied him back to Vienna after his trial. Schiele was deeply moved by both Wally's and Benesch's support and devotion during this troubling time. He offered three prison drawings to Benesch, two of them self-portraits, thereby revealing the extent of his gratitude to the older man who reminded him of his (idealized) father. The impressive portrait which Schiele painted of Benesch and his son was probably an extension of his gratitude as well as a representation of the filial feelings Benesch evoked in him. That the father-son theme was an intensely conflicted subject for Schiele is evident from the large number of preparatory sketches he drew for the Benesch portrait, some of which offer quite a different impression from that of the final

painting (e.g., Plate 75). At first, the two figures are placed rather close to each other: the older Benesch is seated or has his hands in his pockets while his son stands to his left and behind him. In the final version, Heinrich stands next to his son with his left arm thrust in front of Otto in a strong gesture aimed at stopping him or holding him back from something. Heinrich has a stern look on his red, angry face; his lips are red and pursed and his gaze does not meet that of his son. Otto, on the other hand, is portrayed by Schiele as a tall, gangly youth whose thick red lips and dreamy eyes are in contrast with the harsh severity of his father. Otto clasps his hands over his genital area in a protective gesture--perhaps in reaction to his father's angry forbidding stance--in fear of castration. The son's fear of an imposing father's castrating threat is also expressed by the cutting off of the top of Otto's head in the painting. Anger, violence and sexuality unite in this complex painting revealing the feelings Schiele probably repressed in relation to his own father who had once kicked down a door to forbid any sexual foul play between Egon and his sister (see chapter 3). The son's sexuality is effeminate (red lips, triangle shape directed at father) while the father's redness expresses both passion and the need for strict control. Just as Schiele needed to create distance and boundaries between himself and Klimt (as father) in his 1909 double portraits (see chapter 4), he now produced two isolated

figures--separated by their gazes and, most importantly, by the placement and function of their hands. The color is darkened at the outlines of the figures, reinforcing the firming of body boundaries.

Schiele's success as an artist began to grow towards the end of 1912. Klimt introduced him to a wealthy Jewish Hungarian family, the Lederers, whose home he was invited to for the Christmas holiday. Schiele was so impressed by the attention he received from this family, who both welcomed him and praised his art, that he wrote to his mother and Roessler boasting of the rich elegance of the setting with its servants, cars, services, etc. Such attention fed into Schiele's grandiose needs and his belief in the fact that he deserved special treatment. Thus he wrote with a certain pride that "the Lederers...are amazed at how adroitly I work while they watch" (Comini, 1974, p. 114). The Lederers became Schiele's patrons and he even gave art lessons to young Erich Lederer whose artistic talent can be seen in a portrait he painted of Egon Schiele at the time (Plate 76). Schiele was also commissioned to paint several portraits and his work was shown in exhibitions both at home and abroad. Franz Hauer, a major art dealer, took an interest in Schiele's work and was added to his ever-growing list of patrons and father-figures.

Despite the artistic and financial successes which Schiele's art work brought him during these years, he continued to complain of his lack of funds. It appears that this was due to his carelessness towards money more than his inability to earn money. Heinrich Benesch, in his book Mein Weg Mit Egon Schiele [My Way with Egon Schiele], recounts several incidents of Schiele's reckless spending, for example the following:

I sat with Schiele and his model (a girlfriend) Wally Neuzil in a café in Heitzing. While Schiele played billiards Wally told me that he had absolutely no money and did not know how he would pay for a lunch next day. I did not have much myself at the time, but after he had finished his game I gave him 10 Crowns for absolute necessities. What did our Egon do then? After he had said goodbye he took Wally to the Burgtheater and afterwards to a restaurant. There was just enough left from the 10 Crowns to get home on the train (Whitford, 1981, p. 136).

Schiele's reckless spending was not the only indication that all was not going well for him. Single self-portrait drawings (as distinct from his double self-portraits) once again show him as an isolated figure lost in a void. A self-portrait head which he drew in 1913 depicts him with his hair standing on end and heavy slash marks across his neck (Plate 77). His self-portraits of 1914 show him in rigid, unnatural, pantomime-like poses (Plate 78). The look on his face is empty and he gives the impression of depersonalization--a man devoid of emotions, making

puppet-like gestures, a blinded catatonic (Plate 79). Indeed, in one such self-portrait, which he entitled Pierrot, he is poking himself in the eye with his finger (Plate 80). His body is once more covered with shapeless smocks which often reveal an empty pocket where the genitals once were (Plate 81). No longer carrying the aggressiveness associated with the amputations of his previous self-portraits, Schiele's eyes and genitals in these self-portraits are frighteningly empty, vanishing into nothingness. Only Schiele's hands remain to communicate the life he still felt in him. With his hands, he continued to create and, therefore, could not be totally dead. A new sense of fragmentation and lack of unity led Schiele to a complete geometrization of his features in his self-portraits of 1914.

Perhaps as a result of his dissatisfaction with the outcome of these self-portraits, Schiele began experimenting with two new artistic techniques in 1914. In collaboration with his photographer friend, Anton Josef Trcka, he produced a series of photographs of himself. These pictures may be considered self-portraits since Schiele clearly played a critical role in the way they turned out. That Schiele chose his poses is evident since they often imitate those in his self-portrait drawings and paintings. For example, his famous V-hand gesture is prominent in most of the photographs (Plate 82). Schiele

also painted over the photographs (once to create an aura surrounding his body) and even autographed them and their negatives to leave no doubt as to the identity of their true creator (Plate 83).

On several occasions, Arthur Roessler had suggested to Schiele that he try his hand at lithography. In response, Schiele usually claimed his impatience with a technique that demanded so much time saying, "In the time it would take me to do but one single etching on a copperplate, I can easily create 50 or 60--no, certainly as many as a hundred drawings" (Kallir, 1970, p. 36). However, after Robert Philippi, a graphic artist, offered to train Schiele in etching techniques, he agreed to try. Not surprisingly, his first etching was a self-portrait head which does not resemble his other self-portraits (Plate 84). In it, his right eye is empty but we find a third eye (with a pupil) floating in close proximity to his mouth. The theme of blindness is not only restricted to this etching for Schiele's Squatting Woman and Sorrow, both produced in June 1914, are directly related to his paintings Blind Mother I and Blind Mother II (see Plates 85 & 86), also completed in 1914, in that they are reverse images of these paintings. Both etchings portray a woman, but unlike the paintings, there are no hungry infants clutching at their mothers' breasts. In Sorrow, a black cloth covered with innumerable, menacing intercrossing strokes replaces the

infants from the related Blind Mother painting. It is as though the "sorrow" in the picture derives from the woman who here gives birth to blackness.

Thus, while Schiele was doing relatively well during the years 1912-1914, he was disquieted by feelings of suspicion and confusion. Extremely vulnerable after his imprisonment and trial, his was a need to reinforce already weak body (and self) boundaries. One way of doing this was by focusing less on self-portraits and by including a strong male in most of the self-portraits he did produce. While he continued to idealize his father, it seems as though he began the process leading to a more realistic acceptance of him. In doing this, Schiele confronted his own weaknesses and limitations as man and artist. Disappointed in his father as an object to be idealized and in his mother as an object from which to obtain nurturance, Schiele ultimately faced the disappointment he felt in himself. In 1914, he wrote Hauer of his disillusioned state:

I wanted to begin a new life, but I haven't yet been able to do so; so far I have not succeeded in anything in my life (Comini, 1974, p. 111).

In striking contrast to his previous megalomaniac

declarations, Schiele here appears in a weakened state. However, the truth is that he was just beginning to arrive at a more realistic and mature vision of himself which, of necessity, included facing feelings of disappointment. Although he experimented in different mediums, he always remained in touch with the major task guiding his life and art: the exploration and exhibition of self.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Excerpts from Schiele's prison diary are quoted from Alessandra Comini's Schiele in Prison (1973). It is important to note, however, that Comini herself was never allowed direct access to the original diary. Rather, she translated a copy of the diary which had been in the possession of Schiele's patron and biographer, Arthur Roessler. This version of the diary may, therefore, have been tampered with or changed in ways which are impossible to determine.

<sup>2</sup> Silvano Arietti (1974/1955) coined the term "psychotic insight" to describe the process by which a disturbed person explains to himself confusing experiences. The insight is psychotic because it makes sense only to the person in question.

<sup>3</sup> Nebehay, p. 252.

<sup>4</sup> Comini, 1964, pp. 90 & 277.

## Chapter 7

## First Adult Structure (1914-1918)

Whatever happened before 1914 belongs to a different world.

--Egon Schiele,  
from a letter to Gerti, Nov. 1914.

Schiele moved to a top-floor studio in Vienna in November of 1913. For one year he tried in unusual ways to court two sisters who belonged to a petite bourgeoisie family living across from his studio. Exhibitionistically posing in front of his window in a skimpy jerkin, he often held up bizarre portraits of himself for the girls to see (e.g., Plate 87). On one occasion, upon meeting them by chance in the park, it seems Schiele became so excited that he began shouting obscenities at them.<sup>1</sup> Although Schiele's behavior was certainly very childlike and inappropriate, the Harms sisters became fascinated in a schoolgirl way with this odd stranger who lavished them with attention. After repeatedly turning down Schiele's invitations, they surprisingly accepted one following his outrageous behavior in the park. It is clear from his invitation, which among other things attempts to excuse his behavior, that Schiele did not yet show a preference for either sister:

Dear Fräulein Ed. and Ad. or Ad. and Ed.  
I believe that your Frau Mama will permit you to go with Walli (sic) and me to the movies, or to the Apollo, or wherever you want. You

may rest assured that in reality I am entirely different from an 'Apache'. That is nothing but a momentary pose out of bravado. If you would like, therefore, to entrust yourselves to me and Walli, I would be delighted, and I await your reply as to which day would be convenient for you (Comini, 1974, p. 136).

Not satisfied with dating both sisters at once, Schiele apparently considered it entirely natural to propose that his live-in mistress/model/companion, Wally, join them as well as act as their chaperon.

As he continued to see the Harms sisters, Schiele began work on a final self-portrait with Wally, Death and Maiden (Plate 88), which he completed in the spring of 1915. In this painting, which can be conceived as his farewell to Wally, he depicts her as a forlorn, desperate woman clutching onto the figure of Schiele who, as death, resembles a vampire sucking blood from her head. His eyes are empty and dead-like and his features geometrized to match the rocky landscape background. He makes his famous V-gesture with his hands from which both thumbs are absent. Comini (1974) interprets these hand gestures as representing an A for Adele and an E for Edith. It appears more likely, however, that if they stand for letters at all that they represent a W for Wally and an E for Edith. Whatever the case, this painting clearly deals with the confusion which characterized Schiele's behavior at that time. Even unable to decide on a single title for the

painting, he came up with three: Death and Maiden, Man and Maiden and Two People Entwined.<sup>2</sup> A longstanding theme with which this picture continues to struggle concerns the strong bond Schiele saw existing between sex and death; his sexuality, which he considered deadly, here threatens to destroy his mistress.

Torn between the two sisters, it appears that Schiele initially preferred Adele, who was closer to his age and spoke fluent French. Claiming to be a nun (which is ridiculous in light of the seductive, half-nude poses she exhibits in later photographs and portraits of her, e.g., Plate 89); however, she refused Schiele's marriage proposal which led him to consider the younger Edith as his future wife.<sup>3</sup> Schiele's sudden sense of urgency to marry had practical implications for him. Having received a draft notice in February 1915 to report for military service, he discovered that he would be entitled to receive improved benefits as a soldier (e.g., the right to live outside of the barracks with his wife) if he were married. In a letter he wrote to Roessler that February, he revealed the connection between these two events:

Went to the recruiting office today and was sent home definitely. I am contemplating getting married--most advantageous, perhaps not W[ally] (Comini, 1974, p. 143).

A second military summons arrived in May and accelerated

Schiele's wedding plans. Once more identifying with his father, he married Edith on June 17, 1915, the date of his own parents' wedding anniversary. Schiele's mother was not present, nor was anyone else from his family. Only Edith's father witnessed this most important of events.

### Marriage

While Edith was not as worldly or experienced as Schiele, she clearly had a practical nature and therefore immediately insisted that her husband rid himself of his longstanding relationship with Wally. She allowed Schiele to see Wally for one last time and he made a date to meet with her at Café Eichberger. There, he presented Wally with a formal document in which he proposed to "undertake a yearly summer vacation trip of several weeks" (Comini, 1974, p. 144) with her. Hurt and disgusted by now with Schiele's selfish and inconsiderate behavior towards her, Wally left the café never to see him again. The little that is known about Wally's life after that time concerns her volunteer work for the Red Cross at an army field hospital where she died of scarlet fever in 1917.

Although Schiele's behavior towards Wally appears callous and selfish, he was deeply affected by the choice he made which led to the loss of his devoted mistress. It

symbolized a first step towards his assimilation into a society he had previously taken pains to be no part of. All his life he had fought against conventional values, as represented by formal schooling--including the Academy--and his uncle Czihaczek. His letters, and especially his poetry, reveal these beliefs and are replete with expressions of how artists are a special breed of people who need not adhere to rules which govern others' behavior and who deserve privileged treatment and freedom to live as they wish. For example, in 1910 he wrote:

...Artists feel easily  
 the trembling big light  
 the warmth, the breathing of living beings  
 the coming  
 and disappearing...  
 They are chosen ones,  
 fruits of mother earth  
 the most benevolent humans....  
 Anything they say  
 they need not explore,  
 They say it,  
 it must be so,--out of overgiftedness.  
 They are discoverers.  
 Divine ones, highly gifted ones  
 versatile, omniscient ones--  
 modest human beings.

Without modesty, however, Schiele continues his "poem" by condescendingly contrasting the artist with the conventional man:

Their [the artists'] opposite is the prosaist,  
 the commonplace fellow....  
 They eat and drink  
 and sleep, the same  
 monotony day after day.  
 They learn

and study  
 work physically  
 and mentally to  
 ennui.  
 They don't know  
 the days of spring  
 enjoy the highest  
 that is human,  
 love....  
 They fumble all their lives...  
 (Nebehay, 1979, p. 143).

Following his 1912 prison experience at Neulengbach, Schiele realized for the first time that his status as artist no longer earned him the privileged attention he expected. Severely disappointed, as he had been earlier when his mother failed him as an empathic mirror, he initially isolated himself and developed a strong negative reaction against the society that publicly condemned him and his art. This attitude resulted in paranoid suspicions and a withdrawal from others. Edith Harms' appearance in Schiele's life served to lure him away from his seclusion into becoming part of society. Acting on his deep-seated wish to be accepted and belong, he now tried to become part of the society which he had rejected and which had rejected him. By acquiring two socially approved roles--that of soldier and husband--Schiele was declaring a major change in his life. In a letter to his sister Gerti on the eve of her wedding to Peschka in November 1914, Schiele wrote:

We are living in the mightiest period the world has ever seen....whatever happened before 1914 belongs to a different world (Comini, 1974, p. 143).

Schiele's words refer not only to the war, but also, to his own life which had taken a dramatic turn after 1914. As soldier and husband, Schiele now belonged to society. An outsider no more, his feelings of persecution subsided and his art became more naturalistic (less expressionistic). No longer leaving his figures isolated in space, he began to include contextual objects and provide them with an environment. His self-portraits were becoming more human and alive while containing a quiet, almost pensive quality about them.

This turning point in Schiele's life paralleled the reappearance of the double self-portrait in his art. Unlike his 1910-1911 double self-portraits which represented Schiele and his father and showed both figures in the nude, in 1915 the two are clothed and seem to represent Schiele exclusively. Thus, in a double self-portrait drawing of 1915, two Schiele heads are so alike that they look like twins (Plate 90). Neither figure is bizarre or disfigured; nevertheless, their necks are emphasized by lines and slash marks indicating a division between mind (Edith) and body (Wally) as well as self-destructive impulses which probably arose at this time of transition. A second 1915 double self-portrait (Plate 91) is a photograph in which, for once, Schiele is shown gazing at himself (he has become the mirror) with a look of curiosity and compassion. In his double self-portrait

painting Soaring (the only self-portrait he painted in 1915 besides Death and Maiden), we see two nearly identical Schiele figures floating in space (Plate 92). The split he was experiencing between the bohemian lifestyle shared with Wally and the desire to belong to and be accepted by society through marriage with bourgeois Edith Harms probably led to an inner divided sense in Schiele. In confirmation of the hypothesis postulated previously, Schiele's V-hand gestures recur in this painting, again probably signifying the confusion he was experiencing between Wally and Edith and what each of them represented for him. Thus, one figure holds up his hands making a W form while the other holds his hands sideways producing an E shape. Also, although his figures are dressed in familiar smocks, Schiele chose a non-religious title for this work. Thematically and formally related to Schiele's 1913 double self-portrait Resurrection (see chapter 6), in which he depicted two figures rising from their respective coffins, in Soaring it appears that the figures, having already risen, are only half-alive, but perhaps, on their way to a rebirth.

Schiele continued to draw double portraits until his death in 1918, however, after his double self-portraits of 1915, they no longer showed him with a double for himself (except for one) or even with a man, but rather, with a woman--often his wife. In fact, during their first year of

marriage, Schiele drew a series of double portraits with Edith which he titled Embrace. These portraits are extremely revealing in terms of the early stages of their relationship. The two figures are usually half-clothed and locked in an embrace which joins them and creates a circular movement as well as a lack of distinction between one body and the next. The merging of bodies, as well as the position of the two figures, indicates that these "embraces" resemble those between a mother and child more than those between a grown man and woman. For example, in Embrace I (Plate 93) and Embrace II (Plate 94), Edith's striped dress, which she made from Schiele's curtains, stands out as does the position of his head which is meaningfully situated at the level of her breasts. It is interesting, furthermore, that in all of these drawings, one figure is given a realistic face while the other is made to look like a puppet. Afraid of intimacy with a woman who, unlike Wally, reminded him of his mother (see Plate 95) where he is shown with Edith and looks more like her child than her husband), Schiele needed to create distance between them. He accomplished this by rendering Edith or himself into an inhuman, doll-like creature and by using clothing as a protective barrier between them. The simultaneous portrayal of symbiosis and depersonalization which these double portraits illustrate is indicative of Schiele's incapacity for relatedness at this time.

That his wife resembled Schiele's mother is further evidenced by the entries in a diary Schiele encouraged Edith to keep after their wedding.<sup>4</sup> Although she expresses her love for Schiele in an infantile, almost hysterical manner, she also reveals a nature which, like Schiele's mother, was self-pitying, complaining and whining. It is likely that he also experienced her as castrating since in one of the Embrace sketches (Plate 96), his penis is drawn over with three strong slash marks. Adopting Schiele's compulsive approach to sexual matters, however, Edith made records of the times and places she made love with her husband reporting the occasions they were clothed and on the sofa and distinguishing them from the times they were nude and in bed.<sup>5</sup> Having difficulty keeping up with Schiele's sexual appetite, she is shown in Embrace III (Plate 97) with a panicky expression on her face as she clutches her husband from behind while he--apparently unable to find satisfaction with her--masturbates while staring vacantly into his mirror image.

#### Army Life

Schiele was called up for military service on June 21, 1915--four days after his wedding. It was ascertained that he had a weak physical constitution which would prevent him

from engaging in combat duty. Therefore, following basic training, he was sent to Prague where his job was to guard factories and prison camps. Edith followed him and remained close by throughout his entire army career. In May 1916, he was transferred to Mühlring, a village in Lower Austria. It was while stationed there that Schiele kept a diary (March 8 to September 30, 1916) in which he recorded his activities during that time.

Schiele's "war diary" is quite different from his "prison diary" of 1912. While his army situation may partially account for this difference, it does not seem to be the primary factor. If Schiele had been inducted into the army in the year 1912, for instance, he probably would have experienced it as a prison. In his 1916 "war diary", however, there is strikingly little emotional content.<sup>6</sup> Rather, he repetitively gives accounts of his army tasks and is quite concerned with details such as exact times (to the minute) of train arrivals and departures and lengths of visits; he also offers daily reports of weather conditions.

Schiele was a good--not exceptional--soldier who conformed to army regulations and never rebelled against authority. His commanding officer, Lieutenant Dr. Hans Rosé, recalls Schiele's demeanor at that time:

He was then a man of twenty-six years, extremely neatly dressed and behaving modestly, clean shaven, his hair standing up, talking quietly. At first glance you would not have thought what genial gifts he possessed...he spoke gratefully about those people who appreciated him...He preferred wearing tweed suits but as he wanted neat creases in his trousers which was not possible with tweed he had the creases sewn down by his tailor to look always tidy (Rosé, 1969, p. 11).

It seems that the blatant lack of emotional substance in Schiele's diary entries is at least somewhat attributable to his conforming behavior (Plate 98). This may have been the price he had to pay for joining society. The only diary entries revealing his artistic disposition concern several graphic accounts of nature which he observed on the numerous walks he took. In these, he offers moving descriptions of the various colors of storms and sunsets in the countryside.

Indeed, Schiele became less self-preoccupied in 1916, a year during which he painted only one self-portrait--a double portrait with Edith--now lost. A preparatory sketch for this painting still exists and shows them clothed, seated next to each other and frontally faced (Plate 99). He mostly painted landscapes, many of them scenes he describes in his diary, and portraits of officers and Russian war prisoners whom he guarded. The combination of his marriage to a woman who in many respects reminded him of his mother along with his adhering to the rules of the

army system seemed to result in the resurgence of feelings Schiele had as a child. He became obsessed with time schedules and took refuge in nature from his daily activities as he was known to do then. Once again, he got in touch with feelings of maternal deprivation and, although his relationship with his mother had drastically cooled off, he reproached her in writing for her lack of attention and nurturance: "My comrades constantly receive cakes and tarts and mail from home, I have not yet received anything from anywhere" (Comini, 1974, pp. 148-9).

Likewise, reminded of his father, Schiele worked on his most important portrait painting of 1916--that of his father-in-law, Johann Harms (Plate 100). In it, we see an old (he was seventy-three at the time), weary man who sits on the edge of a chair. Although not immediately apparent, this painting deals with sex and death, the two themes most related to Schiele's conception of his father. The old man, with his eyes closed, has to hold up his head with one hand and is nearly falling off the chair due to the extreme frailty of his decrepit body. His right hand, located in the genital area, forms a circle and looks as though it is making a masturbatory gesture. Of course, the hand is empty and lies impotently on his leg, under which we see the chair's leg--a symbolic penis. Schiele was rather fond of Harms who, like his father, had been connected with the railways prior to his retirement, a fact which perhaps

contributed to his becoming the last of Schiele's father substitutes. Through his portrait of the elderly man, he seems to be confronting his father's frailty and impotence one last time, rendering it with compassion and tenderness. He even offers the ailing man a chair he has made on which to lean his tired body.

Though Schiele was busy with his army and conjugal duties in 1916, he occasionally took the opportunity to visit Vienna and take care of business matters. His art was represented in four exhibitions that year and his reputation was growing abroad, particularly in Germany. In September 1916, a special edition of Die Aktion, a major periodical of the Expressionist movement, was devoted to Schiele's art. It included a self-portrait on the cover plus five drawings, a woodcut and a poem by him. The issue also contained a portrait of Schiele by the artist, Felix Harta, and two critiques of his work.

In January 1917, Schiele received an impatiently-awaited transfer to Vienna where he was assigned to work in the Heeresmuseum [army museum] which had been converted into a supply house for the Vienna arsenal. His living conditions improved as he was allowed to sleep at home and devote more time to his art work. As his artistic career continued to thrive, Schiele began making plans for founding a new art movement and for making

paintings of monumental size.<sup>7</sup> Influenced by Edith's practical advice, he produced hundreds of drawings--mostly erotic--which sold easily, thus improving their financial lot. The abundance of these drawings, many of which are not of the highest quality, facilitated some degree of forgery by other artists, among them Schiele's brother-in-law, Anton Peschka. In May 1917, Schiele was invited to exhibit his work at the Kriegsausstellung [Austrian War Exhibition]. Again, with a practical aim in mind, he showed his 1913 painting Resurrection, appropriately re-titling it for the occasion, Resurrection of War Heroes.

#### Final Self-Portraits

Although the number of Schiele's self-portraits decreased drastically, he did not entirely abandon the genre. For example, he drew a series of squatting self-portraits in which he is portrayed alone and nude, with a realism that betrays his new sense of maturity. The first, Self-Portrait Squatting I (Plate 101), drawn in 1916, bears close resemblance to a 1912 self-portrait of him squatting with his head bent to the side (Plate 102). In the 1912 version, however, Schiele employed a crude blend of watercolors and used no outline, procedures which were very unusual for him and which are evident in one

other self-portrait of that period, Self-Portrait Masturbating (Plate 31). In both of these early self-portraits, the colors are brownish, dirty-looking, and the painted features bear little resemblance to Schiele's. The uniqueness of these self-portraits is perhaps attributable to Schiele's feelings of shame and guilt which result from the "forbidden" subject-matter to which they allude. In the 1916 Self-Portrait Squatting, on the other hand, one immediately recognizes Schiele although he has made himself look older than his years. Schiele's pose is not contorted and his body is not emaciated; his penis is intact and the colors he employs are naturalistic. The only part of the picture which recalls Schiele's early style is the absence of his hands which are hidden under his leg or trousers. In Self-Portrait Squatting II (Plate 103), drawn in 1917, the hands are absent--cut off at the wrists--while the penis is hidden under a piece of cloth. Once more, however, Schiele offers a realistic rendition of his features and uses naturalistic colors. In these self-portraits, he looks downward with a sad, inwardly preoccupied gaze. His left arm (Plates 103 & 104) is held out to the side and bends at the elbow, a gesture Schiele was to repeat in many of his self-portraits until his death and which replaced his earlier hand-to-cheek and V gestures.

The squatting self-portrait series clearly shows a more

realistic side of Schiele. One is no longer aware of the intense psychic pain so prevalent in his earlier self-portraits. Egon Schiele the man, not his emotional despair, is now portrayed. Yet, one cannot help but wonder what happened to Schiele's psyche because what one sees is a man weary of life, almost as tired as his elderly father-in-law seemed in the 1917 portrait he painted of him. In the absence of other manifestations of his self, the squatting position perhaps holds the psychological key to understanding Schiele's later self-portraits. In addition to his squatting self-portrait series, numerous drawings and several paintings--uncompleted and mostly unknown--exist from this period where the figures are shown in squatting positions. A final double self-portrait painting showing two squatting Schiele figures is formally and thematically related to a painting, Two Squatting Women, both of which were begun in 1917. His most significant painting from his final years, also uncompleted, The Family (Squatting Couple, Plate 105), also depicts Schiele in a squatting position similar to that in Self-Portrait Squatting III. His body position encloses a woman's body which squats and in turn encloses that of a child.

On one level, the squatting position is associated with defecation, a fact reinforced by Schiele's use of brown, smudgy colors when first drawing himself in this pose. The

connection to defecation and the smearing of faeces is also related to the anal/obsessive characteristics (i.e., recording time schedules of trains and lovemaking sessions; overconcern with neatness, etc.) which re-emerged at this time in his life. Having gone from a near-psychotic breakdown in 1910-1911 to a more paranoid defensive personality structure, Schiele was now dealing with a basic neurotic (obsessive-compulsive) core. More in touch with reality, Schiele's neurosis enabled him to better function in society in addition to serving as a defense against the feelings of anguish and selflessness with which he struggled for years. His facial and bodily expression in his final self-portraits is not one of a happy or even contented man, but rather, of someone who shows signs of having suffered and who, resigned to accepting a dreary reality, now deals with the common miseries of life.

On a deeper level, Schiele's preoccupation with the squatting position appears to be related to the birth experience. Forming a circle with his arms, Schiele symbolically creates a womb-like enclosure for his body. As always for Schiele, concern with birth leads to concern with motherhood which, initially finds expression in concurrent portraits of his wife, Edith. Schiele's 1915-1918 portraits of Edith (Plates 106 & 107) reveal a new tenderness and affection toward her, part of which seems to be related to the vision he was developing of his

mother. He drew Edith with a child and his double portrait drawings with her resemble mother-child drawings (see Embrace I and II). Several sketchbook drawings from that time also reveal his preoccupation with the notion of an Amazon woman, a Great Mother. Furthermore, his Family (Squatting Couple) painting is significant in that it shows a person enclosed in another who is enclosed in a third--a theme related to pregnancy and his early mother paintings. In Family, it seems Schiele identified with the man as well as the child who appears to have come out from between the mother's legs. Everly repeating his own family situation (see Plate 4), the three members of this family are surrounded by sombre colors and, despite their physical proximity, each gazes off in different directions, revealing their emotional disconnectedness. The child, so unlike Schiele's 1910 portrayals of gruesome babies who appear nearer to death than life, looks up with a glimmer of hope. Having transformed Edith into the ultimate Great Virginal Mother (compare Plates 106 & 108)--she was also pregnant in 1918--he was ready to attempt a realistic portrait of his mother.

Schiele's final portrait of his mother (Plate 109), painted in 1918, is extremely different from his previous mother portraits. She is drawn naturalistically with her face and eyes looking sad and turned off to the side; her hands join together to form a circle. Further blurring the

identities of the two women in his life, Schiele shows his mother wearing a dress with stripes, a characteristic feature in most of the portraits he painted of Edith. It is significant that this time it is Schiele's vision of Edith which influences his perception of his mother and not vice versa. The most striking part of this picture is the absence of stripes in the middle of the figure which produces the effect of a missing object. The gesture she is making in conjunction with this empty space reminds one of that a mother makes while cradling an infant. One is painfully aware, however, of the baby's absence. In this drawing, Schiele has delineated his mother as true to life as he possibly could have. Here is a woman who, as usual, directs her eyes away from the observer (and the baby) and who, although going through the motions of a nurturant mother, is not a true mother at all because her gestures are empty. No longer fighting her for what she failed to give him, for the first time Schiele portrays his mother and her limitations with a humane understanding which he seems to have gained from his relationship with his wife. It is interesting to note that several paintings of Edith (e.g., Plate 107) also portray her with a similar facial expression and in the act of bringing her arms together to form a circle as his mother does.

Towards the end of his life, Schiele was becoming mature at last; he had passed through the final crisis in

his growth. Coming to terms with his mother allowed him to relate to a woman as more than a sexual object, thereby accepting real intimacy with her. Only now was he able to make the transition from being a son to being a lover. Indeed, Schiele assumes the role of lover in his final self-portraits which show him in the act of embracing a woman. Thus, his 1917-1918 drawings and paintings have titles such as The Embrace, Lovers and Man and Woman. In The Embrace, (Plate 110) which he painted in 1917, Schiele holds a voluptuous woman in his arms. This painting marks an important shift in Schiele's conception of himself as lover as well as the woman he is now capable of loving. First of all, a nude Schiele turns his back to the viewer--something his paranoid suspicions and homosexual fears would not permit for many years (since 1911)--revealing a newly found trust which he finds in the arms of a woman whom he is no longer afraid to face and embrace with sensitivity, not lust. The woman, in her nudity, is very different from the countless pre-pubescent androgynous girls of Schiele's early drawings. She is a sensuous, full-grown, well-developed, feminine woman with cascades of dark, wavy hair. Rather than the sheet coming between them, as it had in Death and Maiden, Schiele shows the two figures lying on top of the sheet which then serves as a supportive cushion for their lovemaking. The colors Schiele uses in this painting produce naturalistic flesh tones which further enhance the sensual effect it has and

yellow, his favorite color, surrounds the figures and emphasizes their passion. Yet this is not a painting of sexual torture or even passion for that matter. It is a painting whose theme is love and, most importantly, the love is mutual. Lovemaking and creating have become one for Schiele.

Just as Franz Josef's death on November 21, 1916 left the throne of his crumbling empire to his twenty-nine year old grand nephew, Charles, Gustav Klimt died on February 6, 1918 leaving Schiele as Vienna's undisputed leading artist. Schiele's only serious rival, Oskar Kokoschka, had dissociated himself from Austria and had been living abroad for many years. As proof of his newly acquired status, Schiele was invited to give a one-man show of his work for the forty-ninth Vienna Secession exhibition of March 1918.

Encouraged by the flourishing success of his artistic career and the fact that he had replaced Klimt, his symbolic father, as the leading Viennese artist, Schiele reverted to religious themes in his art, grandiosely assuming the role of Christ. He designed the poster for the Secession exhibition and titled it Round the Table (The Friends, Plate 111). The poster makes distinct allusion to the Last Supper--a subject for which he planned a monumental painting prior to his death. In it, Schiele sits at the head of an L-shaped table surrounded by eight

fellow artist friends. The men are all bald and dressed in monk-like tunics; only Schiele is presented with a full head of hair. Opposite him are two empty chairs. That one of these chairs was reserved for Klimt is evident from a sketchbook drawing which appears to be a preparatory sketch for the poster (Plate 112). In it, a man, shown from behind, occupies the chair directly facing that of Schiele's. Below this sketch is a more detailed drawing of the man in whom Klimt's features are more easily recognizable. That Klimt should have occupied the seat in the circle of artists seems quite natural; that Schiele chose to dispose with the Klimtian figure in his final version is also understandable. Klimt's death may have been responsible for Schiele's decision to remove him from the final poster. With Klimt dead, the conflict between him (as father and rival) and Schiele seemed to find its natural resolution, leaving no need to represent both figures as he had so often done in the past. Nevertheless, the empty chair where Klimt would have sat serves as a powerful reminder of his absence just as the empty space in Schiele's mother's arms (Plate 109) makes one aware of the baby's absence. In both works, Schiele is dealing with the acceptance of loss.

Schiele's portrayal of himself as Christ is not as impractical as it initially seems. It is a well-known fact that many artists compare themselves with Christ and their

talents with god-like gifts of creation.<sup>8</sup> Furthermore, Schiele's recent sense of realism derived in part from his new role as a member of society. He showed himself as a man who, like Christ, had suffered from social injustices and re-emerged with a higher level of human understanding and acceptance. No longer isolated, he is surrounded by other men who, like him, are believers in the spiritual leadership of artists.

Despite the realistic function which his final drawings had for him, Schiele's identification with Christ (he also sketched himself as Christ being carried down from a cross<sup>9</sup>) undoubtedly reveals his exhilaration with regard to the newfound praise and attention he was beginning to receive. The Secession exhibition was an enormous success. Prices for his paintings had trebled; he was offered many important portrait commissions; he was invited to decorate the Burgtheater (as Klimt had once done) and to illustrate periodicals; and in May he was given another exhibition of his graphic works at the Arnot Gallery. He and Edith moved to a larger home with an atelier in a garden courthouse (near Klimt's home) and he even hired a private secretary to help handle his business transactions. Edith was pregnant and everything seemed to indicate a promising future.

Death

Events took a rapid and unexpected turn for the worse in October 1918. Edith yielded to the same influenza epidemic that had killed Klimt eight months earlier. Anticipating her loss, Schiele reached out to his mother one last time:

Nine days ago Edith caught Spanish influenza and inflammation of the lung followed. She is also six months pregnant. The illness is extremely grave and has put her life in danger-- I am already preparing for the worst since she is permanently short of breath (Whitford, 1981, p. 194).

That Schiele was not communicating to his mother prior to this letter is revealed by his informing her of Edith's pregnancy for the first time. Edith died on October twenty-eighth and during her funeral, which took place on October thirtieth, Schiele had already become bed-ridden with the same illness. Cared for not by his own mother, but rather by his mother-in-law, Schiele's physical condition quickly deteriorated and he died on October thirty-first at one o'clock in the morning. One of his final self-portraits was interestingly a sculptured head (Plate 113) which, both visually and texturely, foreshadow the death mask which was made of Schiele's face on his death bed (Plate 114). It is significant that within a few days of his death, the war was terminated and an armistice

signed marking the formal dissolution of the Habsburg monarchy. It was the end of an era.

For Schiele, life and death were forever linked with birth and his mother. Throughout his life, endings brought about beginnings and beginnings endings. His birth had been associated with death--that of his siblings--and now his death, following that of his wife and unborn child, brought him back to his origins. Schiele's dying words were: "The war is over...and I have to go. Mama!" (Comini, 1974, p. 187). Coming full circle in death as he had in his life and art, Schiele expressed the unrequited cry for his mother's love and attention one last time.

## Notes

- 1 Comini, 1974, p. 136.
- 2 Leopold, 1972, p. 104.
- 3 Comini, 1964, p. 118.
- 4 Edith's diary is in the possession of Galerie St. Etienne, New York. Although I was not given permission to see the diary, both Ms. Hildegard Bachert and Ms. Jane Kallir described its general tone and content to me. Statements regarding the diary are based on the conversations I had with Ms. Bachert and Ms. Kallir.
- 5 Comini, 1974, p. 149.
- 6 Comments regarding Schiele's "war diary" are based on Comini's (1966) "Egon Schieles Kriegstagebuch 1916", pp. 86-102.
- 7 Comini, 1964, p. 134.
- 8 See Philippe Junod's "(Auto)Portrait de l'artiste en Christ" in Billeter, 1985, pp. 59-79.
- 9 Comini, 1970, plate 70C.
- 10 Comini, 1974, p. 187.

## Chapter 8

## Conclusion

Some day there will undoubtedly be a science--  
it may be called the science of man--which will  
seek to learn about man in general through the  
study of creative man.

--Pablo Picasso .

Schiele's artistic oeuvre is a highly autobiographical one. Not only does it chronicle the major events and important people who figured in his lifetime, but also, it reflects the devouring intensity with which he faced the most intimate emotional experiences. The analysis of Schiele's art, with its fanatic and prolific focus on self-portraiture, the most self-directed art form, helps to elucidate the motives operative in artistic creation such as his.

In this study, an attempt has been made to identify those occurrences from Schiele's early life which were to become the primary determinants of the content and form of his art. In order to accomplish this, it was necessary to reconstruct Schiele's childhood as thoroughly as the available data would allow. From this reconstruction, two formative events crucial for their effects on Schiele's life and art arose: the failed mirroring experience with his mother on the one hand, and the family deaths, including those of his four siblings and, most importantly,

that of his father who died from syphilis, on the other. Both of these circumstances had a profound influence on Schiele's body image and subsequent self-representation. The mirroring experience is responsible for giving the child his first sense of identity--which initially means body identity.<sup>1</sup> Also, since the child's early self-image is comprised of the mental representations of key figures in his world, the loss of one of these figures is likely to be experienced in terms of his own body loss.<sup>2</sup>

Despite the continuous nature of his self-obsession, Schiele's depictions of himself varied in important ways, both psychologically and typologically. In fact, his self-portraits can be considered as reflecting changes in his psychic organization, particularly regarding the development of his sense of self. After following the changes in Schiele's self-studies over the years, one is able to appreciate the significance of this art form for the elucidation of the manner in which creative processes are enlisted in the service of self-consolidation and identity maintenance. In order to facilitate an understanding of the changes in Schiele's artistic and personal development over time, his self-portraits have been divided into four phases, each of which is thought to represent an important shift in the way Schiele came to deal with the two formative events in his life and how his coping strategies found expression in his art.

The self-portrait in Schiele's art appeared only after the death of his father. The first phase of his self-portraits, therefore, involves those he produced between the years 1905 and 1909. No longer having an adult male model with whom to identify--and the memories of his father were of an emotionally and physically handicapped man--Schiele was now the only male in an all-female household. Needing to reaffirm his masculinity, he sexualized his relationship with his younger sister, Gerti, and, identifying with his father, initiated a repetition of their parents' honeymoon. Searching for his lost father in himself, Schiele turned to self-portraiture in his art. His first self-portraits were relatively realistic portrayals of himself focusing primarily on his external identity as artist. It was as if by using props and clothing (e.g., beret, cravat, palette), he would gain an inner sense of self. One such "prop" involved Schiele's adaptation of Klimtian techniques in his art. Klimt, the greatest Viennese painter of that time, became a substitute father for Schiele in life and art and it was with Klimt that Schiele would enact the many struggles and conflicts which he could not express directly with his own father. Schiele's self-portraits of this phase can be understood as disguises or masks that he unintentionally tried on in an attempt to offer himself some guise of an identity for which he desperately longed.

During the second phase of his self-portraits, Schiele removed all masks to disclose his underlying obsession with sex and death. The years 1910-1911 mark his departure from Klimt's influence and the beginning of the development of his own artistic idiom. Confronting the horror which resulted from the removal of all disguise, he faced the oblivion of loss of self. In his struggle to establish a separate identity, he experienced a profound crisis, reflected in the number of disturbed and disturbing self-portraits which he created during this period. These self-portraits, with their mutilation and fragmentation, represent the variability and fluidity of Schiele's sense of his boundaries involving body, gender and identity. He employed a brittle, angular line and expressionist (nonrealistic) use of color which contributed to the powerful emotional impact of these self-portraits. The facial grimaces and amputated, nude bodies are contorted with the pain of living in a vacuum and facing the fragments of a self from which one is alienated. Setting himself free from Klimt's influence and being cut off by another father-figure, his guardian/uncle Czihakcek, Schiele's profound reaction to the loss of his own father re-surfaced. As a result, he got in touch with primitive yearnings where he brought his father back to life as his double. The idealization of his father was double-edged however. If Schiele became like him, his sexuality threatened to become lethal as his father's had. The fear

of possessing an infected and deadly sexuality led Schiele to feminize (castrate) himself in many of his self-portraits which, in turn, resulted in homosexual panic.

The conscious preoccupation and idealization of his father appeared to have been more accessible to Schiele than the conflicts he had in relation to his mother. Nevertheless, the feelings he had towards his mother emerged in his art and help to inform us about his early experiences with her. Intensely longing for confirmation and validation of his self as a child, Schiele's needs were apparently too great for his depressed and narcissistic mother who perceived herself as a martyr/victim. (It must be recalled that Schiele's mother also had to cope with the deaths of her children and husband as well as the effects--both physical and emotional--of the syphilis which she had contracted from him.) Unable to fully participate and take joy in young Egon's life or gifts, he reacted by blaming her for his father's non-presence and for his problems in general. Filled with rage, he repeatedly killed her off in a series of Dead Mother portraits and defiantly appeared to be saying that he--not she--was responsible for his own creation. Through his art, Schiele gave himself what he felt his mother could not: a mirror. And, although his self-portraits of this period appear grotesque and replete with themes of self-destruction, they

also represent statements about his frantic search for boundaries and about his feelings of omnipotence--he could be anything he chose. By employing his art as a mirror substitute for his mother, Schiele enabled himself to express the anguish and terror he felt at not having a self while simultaneously objectifying his features and thereby organizing and synthesizing them in a concrete way.

Schiele emerged from his identity crisis by adopting paranoid, grandiose defenses to deal with his insecurities, latent homosexuality and feminine identification. During the third phase, which lasted from 1912 to 1914, he began to objectify himself for the first time but accomplished this by depicting himself as either monk or hermit. Schiele's arrest and brief imprisonment, on counts of "immorality" and "seduction", were humiliating and traumatic for him and served to reinforce his paranoid stance against society. Once more, he dealt with the pain of this bitter experience through artistic sublimation. The ascetic portrayal of himself as monk, hermit or saint--which rendered him untouchable--increased. Feeling vulnerable and penetrable, he stayed away from the nude self-portrait. Instead, the self-portraits he produced showed him clothed and often in the presence of another male from whom he seemed to derive some strength. The few single self-portraits he drew during this time reveal a depersonalized, asexual, nearly catatonic, blind and

geometrized self frozen in mute, pantomime postures.

The fourth and last phase in the development of Schiele's self-portraits began with the war and ended with his premature death in 1918. It appears that the war and his marriage were two events which offered him socially accepted roles as soldier and husband. With increased recognition of (and financial stability gained from) his art, he no longer viewed himself as an isolated and misunderstood artist and this was reflected by the introduction of background into his final self-portraits. Changes in his self-portraits also reveal the emergence of a more naturalistic and mature self. His brittle line, previously employed as an outer contour to emphasize strong body boundaries, has softened and begun to work together with his increasingly true-to-life employment of color. Schiele's use of his parental figures as vehicles to express aspects of himself or, in the words of Kohut, as "self-objects", diminished. He has come to terms with and begun accepting his father's death and limitations as a man as well as his mother's incapacity for nurturance. Making the transition from being a son to being a lover, Schiele began portraying himself as a real--as opposed to depersonalized and puppet-like--man capable of sharing sexual intimacy with a woman. He is no longer depicted as a conglomerate of parts which do not always fit, often because they are incomplete; the man as a whole, rather

than his feelings of angst and despair, is portrayed in his final self-portraits. Schiele's last artistic concerns lay more with the formal and compositional aspects of his painting than with the immediacy of the emotional and personal subject matter characteristic of his earlier work. Less narcissistically involved, he seemed to be transforming his later self-portraits into a generalized image of man.

It is clear from the analysis of Schiele's art, with particular emphasis on his self-portraits, that it bears an intimate relationship to his life experiences as well as the historical period to which he belonged. Throughout his brief life, Schiele was a man haunted by images of sex and death. On a personal level, the frequency with which these images appear in his art is traceable to his preoccupation with the sexual origin of the disease responsible for his father's death. Similarly, his near-pathological obsession with his own image derives its origins from the experience he had of his mother as a failed mirror during the formative stages of his self-development. On an historical level, sex, death and preoccupation with the self all played extremely important roles in fin-de-siècle Viennese society. With the advent of psychoanalysis, Freud uncovered the human façade, stripping away layers of deception and pretext in order to arrive at the core self.

Like Freud, Schiele and other Expressionist artists reacted not only against previous art movements, such as Klimt's Jugendstil hedonism with its decorous façade, but also, against the precariousness of the current political situation with its underlying sense of imminent destruction. Choosing to confront the emotional world buried under these layers of false pretense, Schiele's art, of necessity, involved both destructive and constructive elements. Destroying the masks and tearing away at the defenses, Schiele was forced to create and give birth to a virgin self, free of external influence. His attempts to liberate himself from environmental forces, however, were successful only up to a point. Although he presented himself in a vacuum, his cries of anguish and impotence were partially in response to the unreliable and unsafe world of which he was an involuntary prey. Finally joining the society (which he had previously rejected) during his last years compelled Schiele to increasingly deal with reality. Ironically, that same reality began dealing with him as well. World War I had come to an end; Franz Joseph had died and the Habsburg Empire had collapsed; Gustav Klimt was dead from Spanish Influenza, an epidemic that ravaged Europe and cast a shadow of death over thousands including his wife, his unborn child and, ultimately, Schiele himself.

Mirroring vs. Classical Psychoanalytic Interpretation

Throughout this study it has been argued that due to deficient mirroring, Schiele's sense of himself was permeated by feelings of injury, incompleteness and disease. To compensate for these feelings, he transformed his canvas into a mirror where he repeatedly worked at defining himself. His self-portraits not only served to express himself, but also, to create a self. They therefore display the emergence of an evolving self. While alternate explanations can be given for various aspects of Schiele's self-portraits, the mirroring hypothesis is that which makes the most sense and best explains the development of his self-portraits over time.

The major alternate hypothesis a classical psychoanalyst might offer involves viewing Schiele's central problem as an oedipal one. Missing limbs and body fragmentation would be interpreted as castration anxiety and much of Schiele's angst would be understood as reflecting the oedipal guilt he experienced over the death of his father. While such an argument is not entirely refutable, the preoedipal nature of Schiele's conflicts, deriving from the mirroring deficiency, seems much more persuasive.

First of all, the major issues Schiele dealt with

concern preoedipal tasks; namely, separation-individuation and consolidation and maintenance of a cohesive body and self structure. Furthermore, Schiele's defective sense of himself is evident from his endless distorted, mutilated and fragmented self-portraits. Photographs and the descriptions of others testify to the difference between Schiele's true appearance and that of his self-representations. That his experience was such despite the fact that he was indeed physically healthy and quite handsome points to a tragic complexity related to childhood problems. Such body distortions are not usually found in oedipal pathology while they are rather frequent in preoedipal or narcissistic conditions.

Secondly, Schiele's preoccupation with issues of merger and separation became played out in his art through numerous double portraits as well as in his Dead Mother series. If his primary concerns were oedipal, one would expect the artistic portrayal of more triangular relationships than actually exist in Schiele's oeuvre. The dyadic relationship--again, preoedipal in its nature--was clearly the most problematic one for Schiele.

Thirdly, Schiele related to his mother as someone who failed to provide him with something he desperately needed. Never feeling understood or given to, he turned to himself and his art. In addition, there is some evidence

that Schiele's sisters also manifested narcissistic tendencies similar to his. Gerti, Schiele's favorite sister, not only exhibitionistically modelled in the nude for her brother, but also engaged in sexual play with him. Gerti was also a model for the Wiener Werkstatte as well. Melanie, Schiele's elder sister, also modelled for his sketches as well as for numerous photographs in which she showed off the many hats she made for herself. There is a possibility that, like Schiele, she too had problems with her gender identity and engaged in homosexual activity.

Fourthly, Schiele is known to have had a unique relationship to mirrors. He never passed one without stopping to closely examine his reflection and the one piece of furniture he took with him everywhere he went was a large mirror which ironically--because in a sense it became his mother substitute--originally belonged to his mother. Such unusual reactions to mirrors have been clinically and empirically found in narcissistic disorders.

The prodigious amount of "ugly" images Schiele made of himself is understandable only in this context. The majority of his self-portraits--especially those he drew in the years 1910-1911--portray him as a mutilated, amputated, grotesque and almost inhuman figure. Unlike the many artists (e.g., Toulouse Lautrec, Alexander Pope, Byron)

who, Niederland argues, dealt creatively with physical deformities or handicaps, Schiele had no physical problems. His distorted body image represented his subjective state of mind deriving from a faulty and immature sense of himself. His art, and particularly those self-portraits in which he is depicted as an ugly caricature of himself, serves a triple function: first, he offers concrete feedback reassuring himself of his own existence. Secondly, he tests the limits of his self by experimenting with his body boundaries. Thirdly, he renders his innermost fears harmless, thus averting psychosis and dealing magically with his internalized objects and part-selves. Therefore, Schiele's preoccupation with self-portraiture can be regarded as both defensive (acting against feelings of self-disintegration and fears of loss of self) and adaptive (becoming his own mirror, he is able to reconstruct himself). It is no wonder that the themes of birth and death are so prevalent in his art; Schiele perpetually walked the tightrope between being and not existing. As a consequence of his adverse childhood experiences, Schiele's was a lifelong journey in which he searched for his lost parents in himself and for his lost self in his art. His self-portraits, therefore, were focal points for restitutive efforts aimed at objectifying and mastering his problems of identity.

### Self-Portraiture

While the investigation of Schiele's art exemplifies the manner in which he dealt creatively with narcissistic issues, he is not the only artist who has turned to self-portraiture for similar reasons. Francis O'Connor (1985) has suggested that many artists draw frontal self-portraits for unconscious therapeutic reasons at times of transition in their lives. It appears that self-portraits in general--and not only the frontal self-portrait--can serve a therapeutic or restitutive function for the artist. I would even go so far as to conjecture that artists who are known to have painted numerous self-portraits at different times of their lives probably suffer from some form of narcissistic disturbance. The repeated need for self-portrayal can therefore be regarded as an attempt to express personal feelings about oneself as well as to delineate, and perhaps justify, the existence of that self.

Vincent Van Gogh (1853-1890), for example, who experienced severe feelings of depression, often turned to self-portraiture (e.g., Plate 115). Indeed, he produced thirty-seven self-portraits during the last five years of his life which ended in a tragic suicide. Albert Lubin (1972) believes Van Gogh's self-portraits to have been successful measures taken in the struggle to maintain a

cohesive sense of self. Frida Kahlo (1910-1954), a Mexican painter whose oeuvre, like Schiele's, consists primarily of self-portraits (approximately forty), began painting herself as a result of an accident which fractured her spine, shattered her pelvis and broke her foot. She was required to undergo about thirty operations and was bed-ridden and incapacitated over long periods in her life. For Frida, her self-portraits--largely depictions of her own tortured body in its disabled state--allowed her to deal concretely with her pain (both physical and psychic) while concurrently feeding her narcissism which had been injured along with her body (Plate 116). In a somewhat similar vein, Francis Bacon's (b. 1910) self-portraits represent blurred, distorted and mutilated depictions of the human figure which has become little more than a blob of flesh (e.g., Plate 117). Interestingly, Bacon insists on placing his paintings behind glass forcing the viewer to see not only the hideous portrayals of the artist, but to simultaneously gaze at his/her own reflection in the glass. The mirroring function of self-portraiture for Bacon is undeniable.

The aging process deals a heavy blow to one's narcissism by forcing a confrontation with the loss of physical effectiveness, sexual attractiveness, professional limitations and social restrictions. The therapeutic function of self-portraiture is further demonstrated in the

work of some artists who have used it to work through their issues with aging. For instance, Käthe Kollwitz (1867-1945), a German artist, created an unusually valuable chronicle of her innermost feelings through eighty-four self-portrait drawings and a journal. Her work can be understood as a journey in self-discovery as well as a means by which she handled traumatic events in her life, in particular, her son's death and her own aging (Plate 118). Picasso too made numerous self-portraits throughout his lifetime. Some of the most interesting of these are the self-portraits he drew during the last ten years of his life. In them, he too lends expression to his concerns about the aging process and death. Portraying himself as the artist, the outsider, who both witnesses and records but does not participate in life, he stands off to the side, wrinkled and dwarfed by age (Plate 119). At once asserting his lust for life (through depiction of the passionate lovemaking of others including a young Picasso) and confronting imminent death (his own), Picasso used his art from beginning to end as a way of affirming himself.

That so many artists preoccupied with self-portraiture happen to be Austrian is also very interesting. Expressionist artists such as Gerstl, Schoenberg, Kokoschka and Schiele, known for their self-portraits, have already been discussed (see chapter 1). Franz Xaver Messerschmidt (1736-1784), a sculptor who was born in Germany but lived

most of his life in Austria, produced more than sixty expressionistic self-portrait busts (e.g., Plate 121) which prompted Ernst Kris to interpret as the artist's "attempt to prove the existence of his own person again and again" in the process of "self-healing"(1952, p. 144). More recently, Arnulf Rainer (b. 1929), a modern Austrian artist, worked for ten years on a series of "Face Farces". This series consists of painted over photographs of Rainer in violently expressive poses and grimaces (e.g., Plate 122). Commenting on his art, Rainer explains that he is not "embarrassed to use psychotic talents to develop [his] artistic oeuvre"(1985). Whatever the political and cultural situation at the times in Austrian history when these artists lived, it appears that they resemble Freud (also Austrian) in their flight from an external reality to an intrapsychic one. It is ironic, however, that in seeking refuge from an oppressive culture, these artists discover a no less intense oppression when confronting their often nightmarish inner world.

Whereas artists have always depicted themselves in their work, it is significant that self-portraiture as an artistic genre has been on the rise in modern times. More and more twentieth century artists appear to be directly preoccupied with themes of the self. Examples are performance artists whose "art" is essentially the expression of various aspects of themselves or the work of

some modern artists, like photographer Cindy Sherman, which consists solely of depictions of herself in different guises (Plate 120). Erik Erikson (1950) has shown how anxiety in modern times often leads to the taking on of "pseudo-identities" like those of Ms. Sherman (p. 402).<sup>3</sup>

The increase in artistic self-portrayal coincides with a growing emphasis on narcissistic disorders (pathological narcissism) as well as the current classification of our society as "the culture of narcissism" or "the me generation" (social narcissism).<sup>4</sup> Indeed, it seems that narcissism has nearly become a metaphor for the human condition of modern times. This may be due to the fact that increased technology (mechanization, standardization, industrialization), the breakdown of traditional community and family systems and the omnipresent threat of terrorism and nuclear war are all associated with modern living as we know it and create a precarious, unstable and unpredictable environment. The consolidation of an individual's identity, previously facilitated by the equilibrium and sense of stability provided by allegedly "primitive" cultures, has given way to an overriding anxiety concerning the loss of self in a society whose ties with the past are erased and whose future remains uncertain. Furthermore, people are increasingly psychologically sophisticated and encouraged to reach new depths of self-knowledge--the

purported cure for modern anxiety and feelings of meaninglessness. Thus, the contemporary climate and outlook has become more therapeutic than religious. Christopher Lasch (1979) has even called the modern awareness movement a "social invasion of the self" (p. 27). Many artists whose art focuses primarily on themselves may therefore represent a more widespread social trend.

It should be clear by now that no matter how hard the artist tries, he cannot divorce himself entirely from his external world. This is especially true with regards to his parents who, we know, become internalized so that the self-image is, of necessity, a composite of the manner in which they have figured in his life. Thus, if the early relationship with one's parents has been deficient or traumatic, the resultant self-image will tend to involve elements of distortion and/or fragmentation. As we have observed in the case of Schiele, art, and in particular self-portraiture, is one way an individual attempts to correct for such experiences. By providing a framework within which the artist is able to render more bearable frightening or traumatic early experiences, he is able to gain mastery over them.

It is in this sense that art resembles play. Freud, in his 1908 paper, "Creativity and Daydreaming" first compared

creativity with play. Similarly, Winnicott (1951) believed the "transitional object", first witnessed in child's play, to be the precursor for creative works. Both Freud and Winnicott then understood play and art as activities through which an individual learns to master narcissistic issues of separation and identity. In both play and art, unknown terrors (e.g., of being alone without an object or of having no sense of oneself) are made real and tangible and, consequently, less frightening. Through his creations the artist, like the child at play, succeeds in converting passive grief and feelings of helplessness into active mastery.

. . .

The psychoanalytic study of Schiele's self-portraits provides important insights into his life and art as well as the functions of self-portraiture for artists in general. After such a lengthy investigation into a single artist's life and work, one cannot resist speculating as to the psychological relevance, if any, which these conclusions have for the nonartistic realm of human experience. First of all, it seems quite convincing that for Schiele, psychosexual issues were intimately related to those of self-consolidation and identity formation.

Dealing with his anal fixation, oedipal wishes, castration fears, phallic identity, etc. allowed for a more mature and realistic definition of self. On the other hand, Schiele's self-obsession which led to his use of mirroring, doubling and depersonalization enhanced his psychosexual development; he became a healthier and more realistic man who, with increased lack of ambiguity, could take on the role of heterosexual adult. Thus, it appears that psychosexual development and self development interact with each other and work to mutually enhance the individual's sense of himself as a mature and stable sexual being. Classical psychoanalytic theory and self psychology taken together, therefore, provide the most useful and enlightening insights into the psychodynamic conflicts relating to human development.

An interesting illustration of the interaction between these two approaches involves Schiele's relationship with each of his parents. On the surface, he appeared to be preoccupied with oedipal issues which could be interpreted as castration anxiety with regard to his father. On a deeper level, however, it becomes apparent that Schiele never resolved his early separation conflicts with his mother and that much of his awareness of the feelings associated with these conflicts had become displaced onto his father. The reasons for this displacement are two-fold. On the one hand, Schiele's father was already

dead and, therefore, proved to be a less dangerous receptacle for his son's conflicted feelings as well as someone about whom Schiele's beliefs were impossible to refute. On the other hand, the suffering caused by Schiele's relationship to his mother occurred at an earlier developmental stage and, consequently, was not as available to him as an adult. By virtue of the fact that his difficulties with his father were associated with a much later developmental period, they were rendered more accessible to Schiele's conscious awareness and articulation. The analysis of art--which reveals both conscious and unconscious derivatives of the artist's psyche--proves to be particularly effective in highlighting such displacements which are certain to occur in nonartists as well. Thus, problems associated with one parent may function as a mask or disguise for deeper-rooted problems that are related to the second parent. Furthermore, what on the surface resembles classic neurotic symptomatology, upon closer examination, may involve an underlying pathology related to problems of self-consolidation and identity maintenance.

The uses of mirroring, doubling and depersonalization witnessed in Schiele's art also involve processes that are not restricted to artists. As we have seen from the analysis of Schiele's life, these processes were enlisted by him in order to compensate for problems related to

feelings of narcissistic injury of incompleteness. Although it is probably true that artists tend to be more narcissistic and given to greater conflicts with regard to identity (see Greenacre), they are not the only ones who struggle with such issues. The need for mirroring, depersonalization and a double are phenomena common to many who suffer from a defective sense of self or who confront the empty feeling of having no self. Through these processes which, on one level, are defensive, such persons are able to gain a concrete and objective sense of themselves. The price they pay for this, however, is alienation from the self that has now become the other. Nevertheless, it should be recalled that one's sense of self originated in the other--i.e., the self image as reflected by the mother/mirror. The processes of self-mirroring, doubling and depersonalization become ways for those who have had the misfortune of not receiving positive mirroring to do so. While regressive in the sense of re-evoking early narcissistic processes, this dynamic can be regarded as an adaptive use of defense as a means of compensating for loss. By creating (acting) a self and reacting to it, one re-creates the birth experience for oneself. And giving birth (re-birth) to oneself--this time on one's own terms--represents the ultimate creative act.

## Notes

- 1 Lichtenstein, 1977, p. 215.
- 2 Niederland, 1976, pp. 185-212.
- 3 Cindy Sherman's art also reflects a rejection of the notion that there is a stable identity, particularly for women. She appears to be making a statement in her photographs that female identity is a socially produced construct.
- 4 See Beldocho, 1972, pp. 136, 138, and Moore, 1975, p. 265.

## Appendix 1

## Chronology

1890: Egon Schiele is born on June 12, in Tulln, a town on the Danube. He is the third child of Adolf Eugen Schiele (then age 39), a stationmaster, and his wife Marie, née Soukup (then age 28). His oldest sister Elvira was born in 1883. Three boys followed, all stillbirths. In 1886, his older sister Melanie was born.

1893: Schiele's sister Elvira dies at age ten.

1894: Schiele's sister Gertrude ("Gerti"), who later becomes his model, is born.

1896-1900: Schiele attends primary school in Tulln.

1901: He is sent to Krems to attend high school.

1902-1903: Schiele's family moves to Klosterneuberg. Family fortunes ebb as father, suffering from syphilis, begins to deteriorate physically and mentally. Schiele attends secondary school. Professor Strauch, a painter and teacher, is the first to recognize his talent.

- 1904-1905: Schiele's father dies insane on December 31, 1904. His uncle, Leopold Czihaczek, becomes his legal guardian.
- 1906: Schiele and Gerti repeat their parents' honeymoon trip to Trieste. He is accepted to Vienna's Academy of Fine Arts which he attends until 1909.
- 1907: Schiele moves into his first studio in Vienna. He meets Gustav Klimt.
- 1908: Schiele participates in his first public exhibition (ten works) in Klosterneuberg.
- 1909: Schiele exhibits four paintings in the Internationale Kunstschau in Vienna where he also views works by internationally renowned artists, notably Van Gogh, who will influence his art. Schiele leaves the Academy and founds the Neukunstgruppe [New Art Group] with fellow students and they exhibit that same year in the Pinkska Art Gallery. He meets several important people, among them Joseph Hoffmann of the Wiener Werkstatte and Arthur Roessler, writer (and later patron and biographer of Schiele) and art critic of Arbeiter Zeitung [Workers' Journal], who introduces Schiele to art collectors.

1910: Schiele's uncle Czihaczek declines further responsibility for him. The Wiener Werkstatte publishes three cards of fashion design drawings by Schiele. He again exhibits in Klosterneuberg where he meets Heinrich Benesch, a railroad executive and art collector. Paris von Guttersloh and Roessler write publicly of Schiele's work and in April-May, a first retrospective of his art takes place at the Miethke Gallery.

1911: Schiele meets and begins to live with model Wally Neuzil. In May, he sets up a studio in Krumau, his mother's home town. He clashes with local provincials there who urge him to leave. In August, he and Wally move to Neulengbach. He becomes a member of Sema, a Munich art group whose members included Klee and Kubin.

1912: Schiele exhibits his work in Budapest and Munich. On April 13, he is arrested and imprisoned in Neulengbach and later transferred to St. Polen for a total of twenty-four days. His trial on May 8th drops charges against him of seducing a minor but not those of "disseminating obscene drawings". Released on May 8th, Schiele goes to Trieste, where he rents an apartment from his friend Erwin Olsen, and later to Cologne and Munich where he

exhibits. In November, he moves into a studio in Vienna where he stays until shortly before his death. In December, Klimt sends him to Győr, Hungary to meet the Lederers, a wealthy and influential Jewish family who become his patrons. The young Lederer (Erich) becomes Schiele's pupil.

1913: Schiele becomes a member of the Bund Oesterreicher Künstler [Association of Austrian Artists], of which Klimt is president, and exhibits with them in Budapest in March. He participates in more exhibits in Munich, Berlin and Düsseldorf. In Vienna, he participates in the Internationale Schwarz-Weiss-Ausstellung and the forty-third Secessionist exhibition. In November, he meets his future wife, Edith Harms.

1914: Schiele begins to court Edith and breaks off with Wally. He participates in numerous European exhibitions (Dresden, Hamburg, Cologne, Rome, Brussels, Paris). In March, together with photographer Anton Josef Trčka, Schiele experiments with photographic studies of himself. He learns woodblock printing and etching. On June 28, World War I breaks out. In November, his sister, Gerti, marries his friend, painter, Anton Peschka.

1915: There is a collective exhibition of his work in Arnot's gallery in Vienna. On June 17, his parents' wedding anniversary, Schiele marries Edith Harms. June 21, he is called up for military service (after twice having been refused) in Prague. Edith accompanies him there, later to Neuhaus in Bohemia and back to Vienna in July.

1916: Schiele keeps a war diary from March 8th until September 30. On May 1st, he is transferred to P.O.W. camp for Russian officers where he is given a studio and allowed to paint. His reputation grows in Germany where a special issue of Die Aktion [The Action] is devoted to him.

1917: Schiele returns to Vienna and is transferred to the Royal Imperial Military Museum where he is given ample time to devote to his art. He participates in exhibitions in Prater, Glaspalast, Amsterdam, Stockholm and Copenhagen.

1918: Klimt dies on February 6. At the forty-ninth exhibition of the Vienna Secession, the main room is reserved for Schiele's work (nineteen oils and twenty-nine drawings and watercolors). He designs the poster for the exhibition which is a great artistic and financial success. He and Edith move

into a new studio in Vienna on July 5. Six months pregnant, Edith dies of Spanish Influenza on October 28. Schiele succumbs to the same illness and dies three days later on October 31.

## Appendix 2: Plates

## Plate 1



Arnold Schoenberg, Red Gaze,  
1910, oil on cardboard.

## Plate 2



Richard Gerstl,  
Laughing Self-Portrait,  
undated, oil on canvas.

## Plate 3



b) Train drawing,  
c. 1898.

a) Photograph of  
smiling Egon  
holding favorite  
train, c. 1894.

Plate 4



The Schiele family, ca. 1892 l to r:  
Egon, Melaine, Marie, Adolf, Elvira.

## Plate 5



Early photographs of Schiele family: a) Marie Schiele (seated) with Elvira (left) and Melanie (right) and Egon (on lap), c. 1890; b) Egon at age of one year, 1891; Adolf Schiele with his son, Egon, c. 1892.

Plate 6



Portrait of GertiNude, 1910



Plate 8

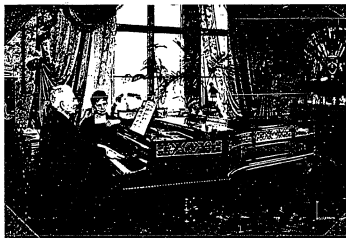


Schiele, Portrait of Schiele's Mother I,  
1907, oil on cardboard.

## Plate 9



a



b

a) Leopold Czihaczek at the Piano, 1907, oil study; b) Leopold Czihaczek at the piano, c. 1913.

Plate 10



Photographs of Egon Schiele with  
his uncle Czihaczak, 1908.



## Plate 11



b) Schiele, Self-Portrait,  
6 Sept. 1906, charcoal.



a) 1906.

Plate 12



Self-Portrait, 1907, oil.

Plate 13

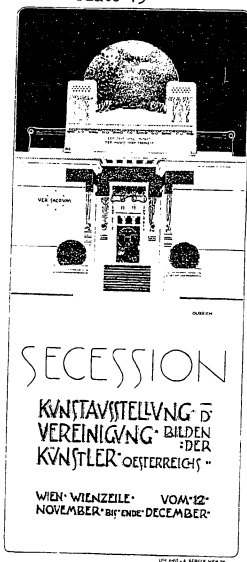


Schiele, Self-Portrait  
with Hat 1907, 1907, oil.

Plate 14

Gustav Klimt, Philosophy, 1899-1907.

Plate 15



Joseph Maria Olbrich,  
Exhibition poster for the  
2nd Vienna Secession  
Exhibition, 1898.

## Plate 16

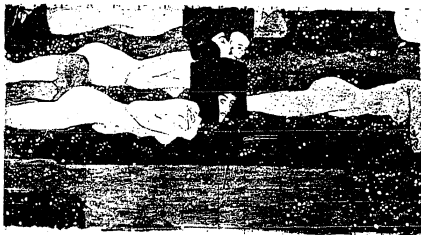


Gustav Klimt, Adele Bloch-Bauer,  
1907, oil on canvas.

## Plate 17



a) Gustav Klimt, Water Serpents,  
1904, oil.



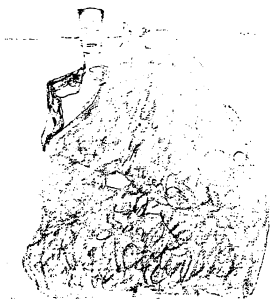
b) Egon Schiele, Water Sprites I, 1907,  
gouache, crayon, gold and silver paint  
on paper.

Plate 18



39  
Man Going to the Right (Self-Portrait),  
1909.

## Plate 19



a



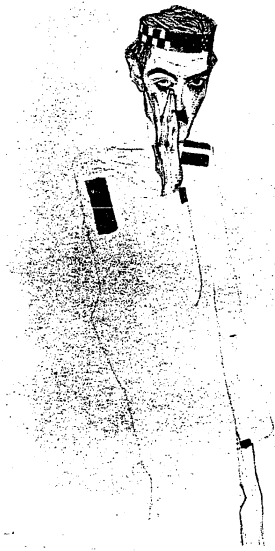
b



c

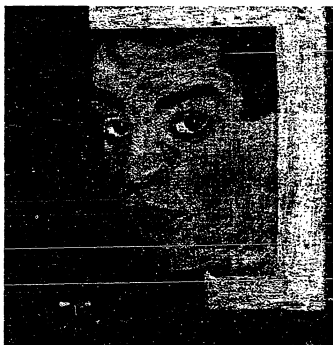
a) Schiele, Two Men in Decorative Robes, ca. 1909, pencil on cardboard; b) Schiele, Two Men, ca. 1909, pen and wash drawing; c) Gustav Klimt, ca. 1912-1914.

Plate 20

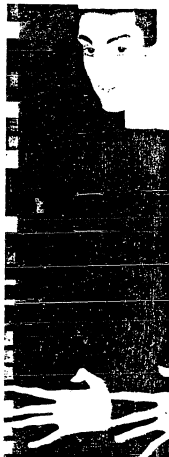


Schiele, Self-Portrait with Hair Band,  
1909, colored crayon.

## Plate 21

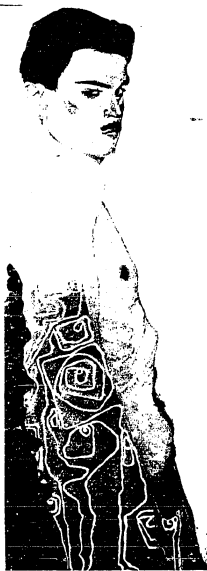


Schiele, Self-Portrait Clothed,  
1909, oil, detail



Schiele, Self-Portrait  
Clothed,  
1909, oil.

Plate 22



Self-Portrait Nude,  
1909, oil on canvas.

Plate 23



Egon Schiele, 1909.

## Plate 24



Schiele, Self portrait  
with Wrinkled Forehead,  
1910, black chalk,  
watercolor and gouache.

Plate 25



Schiele, Self-Portrait  
with Bare Stomach, 1911,  
pencil and watercolor.

Plate 26



Self-Portrait with  
Head Bent to the Left,  
1910.

Plate 27



Self-Portrait, 1910.

## Plate 28



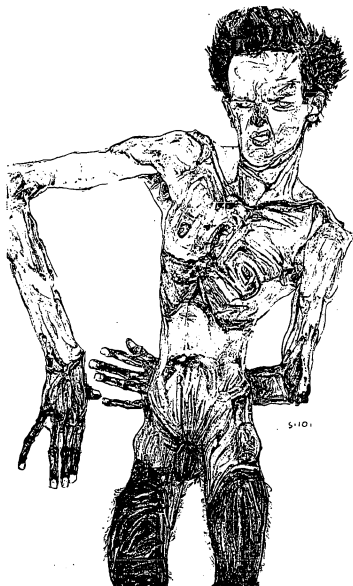
Composition with  
Three Male Figures,  
1911.

Plate 29



Self-Portrait in Street Clothes Gesturing.

## Plate 30



Nude Self-Portrait, 1910.

Plate 31



Self-Portrait Nude Facing Front, 1910.

Plate 32

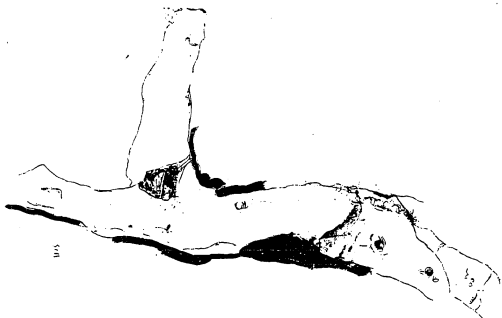
Self-Seers I, 1910.

## Plate 33



Double Self-Portrait, 1910.

Plate 34



Reclining Male Nude  
(Self-Portrait), 1911.

Plate 35

Self-Portrait, 1910.

Plate 36



Self-Portrait with Black Clay Vase, 1911.

Plate 37



The Prophet, 1911.

Plate 38



Double Self -Portrait, The Self-  
Diviner, II ('Death and man'), 1911

## Plate 39



Madonna, 1911.

Plate 40



Dead Mother I, 1910, oil on board.

Plate 41



Portrait of Artist's Mother Asleep, 1911.

Plate 42

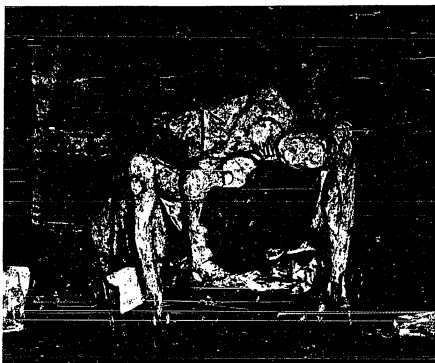
Schiele, Melancholia, 1910, oil.

Plate 43



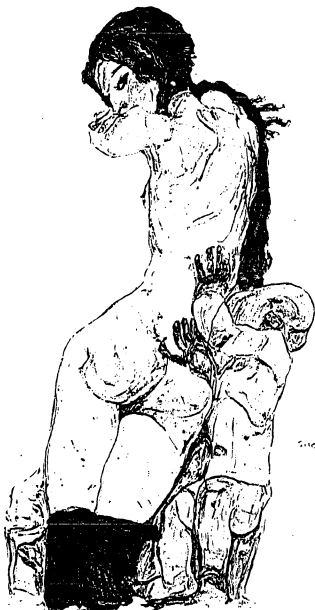
Schiele, The Dead Mother II  
(Birth of Genius), 1911, oil.

Plate 44



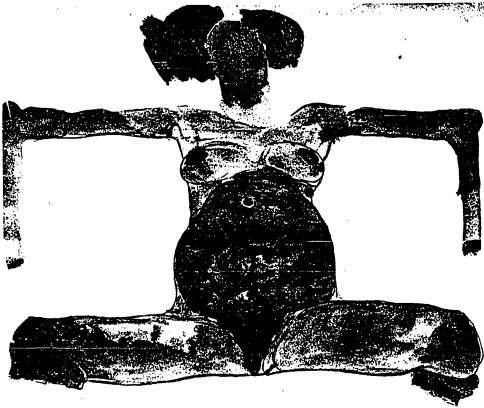
Blind Mother, 1914.

## Plate 45



Mother and Child, 1910.

Plate 46



5-10

Seated Pregnant Woman, 1910.

Plate 47

New-born Baby, 1910.

Plate 48



Pregnant Woman and Death,  
1911, oil on canvas.

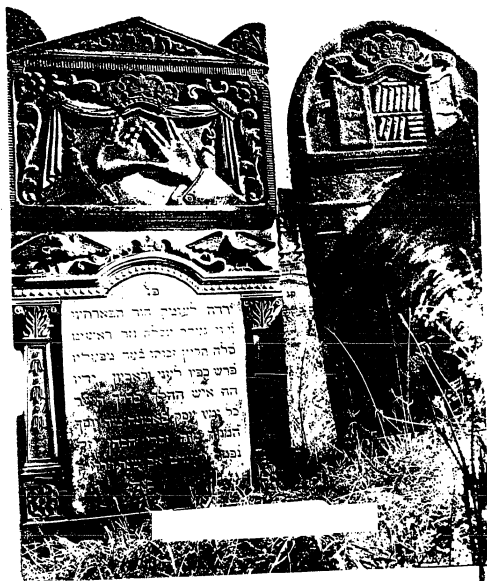
## Plate 49



a) Blessing of the Cohanim, 1920.

b) Cohen Blessing, 1920.

Plate 50



Cohen Tombstone.

Plate 51

Self-Portrait, 1910.

Plate 52



The Hermits, 1912.

Plate 53

Agony, 1912.

Plate 54



Autumn Trees, 1911, oil on canvas.

Plate 55



Reclining Woman with Upturned  
Skirt, 1911.

Plate 56

Reclining Girl, 1910.

Plate 57



Nude Black-Haired Girl, 1910.

Plate 58



Reclining Female, Semi-Nude, 1911.

## Plate 59



Portrait head (self-portrait?)  
made of bread while in prison, 1912.

## Plate 60



Schiele, Hindering the Artist  
is a Crime, It is Murdering Life  
in The Bud! 1912, pencil and watercolor.

Plate 61



Schiele,  
I Love Antitheses, 1912,  
pencil and watercolor.

Plate 62



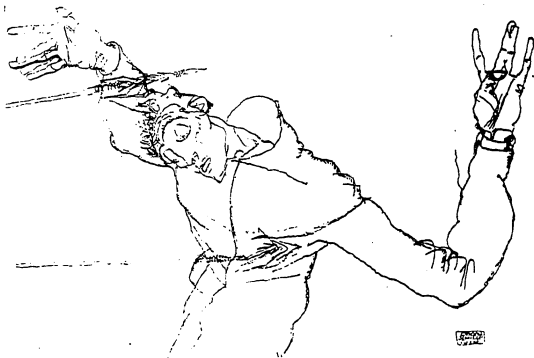
Schiele, Prisoner!  
1912.

Plate 63



For My Art and My Loved Ones  
I Will Gladly Endure To The End,  
1912.

## Plate 64



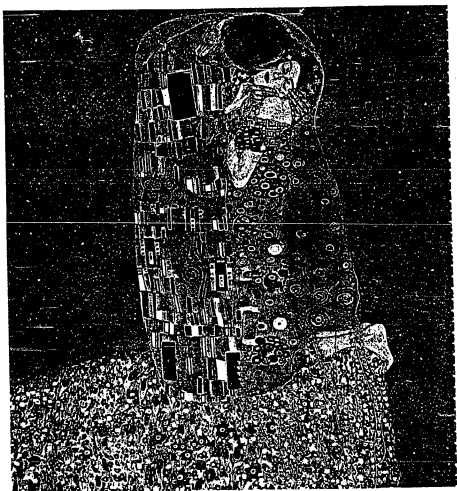
Self-Portrait as Saint Sebastian,  
1914.

## Plate 65



Cardinal and Nun (Self-portrait with Wally),  
1912.

## Plate 66



Gustav Klimt, The Kiss, 1907-8,  
oil and gold on canvas.

Plate 67



Schiele, Self-Portrait with Model (The Sleepwalkers),  
1913, oil.

Plate 68



Schiele, Woman in Mourning,  
1912, oil.

Plate 69



Mother and Child, 1912.

Plate 70

Holy Family, 1913.

Plate 71

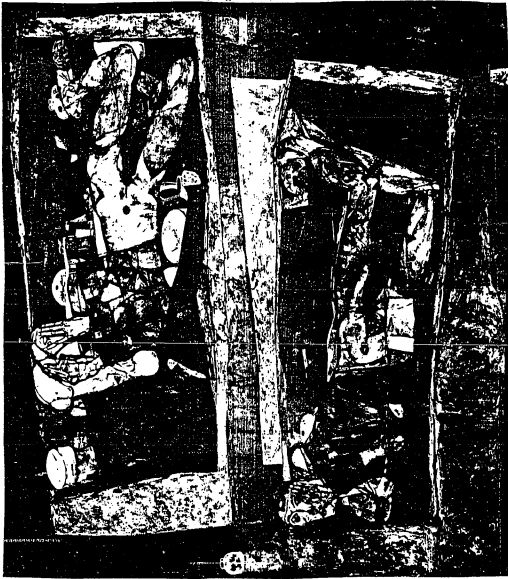
Resurrection, 1913.

Plate 72



Remembrance, 1913.

Plate 73



Schiele, Self-Portrait with Saint (Encounter),  
1913.

Plate 74



Double Portrait  
(Heinrich Benesch and his son Otto),  
1913.

Plate 75



Schiele, Benesch Double Portrait Study,  
Heinrich Standing Right and Otto Standing  
Left, 1913.

## Plate 76



Erich Lederer,  
Portrait of Egon Schiele,  
1913.

Plate 77



Self-Portrait,  
1913

Plate 78

Self-Portrait, 1913.

Plate 79

Self-Portrait, 1914.

Plate 80



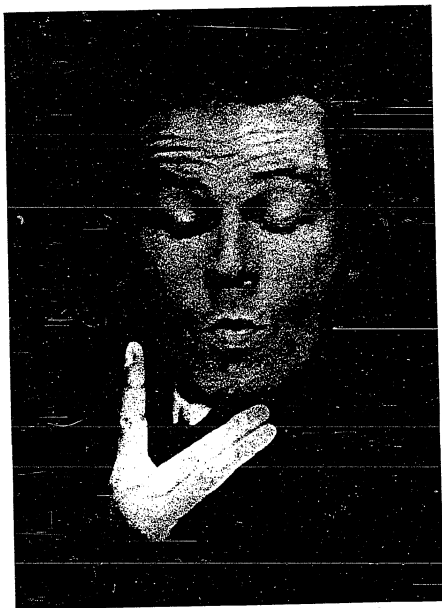
Pierrot (Self-Portrait), 1914.

## Plate 81



Self-Portrait  
with Arms Raised, 1914.

## Plate 82



Schiele with his eyes closed, March 1914  
(photograph by Anton Josef Trčka).

## Plate 83

Schiele with arms raised above his head,  
March 1914.  
(photo by Anton Josef Trcka).

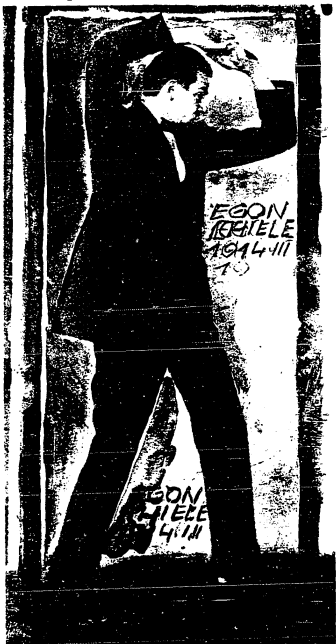


Plate 84



Self-Portrait,  
1914, lithograph.

## Plate 85



b) Reverse image of Blind Mother II, 1914, oil.



a) Squatting Woman, 1914, etching.

## Plate 86



b) Reverse image of Blind Mother I, 1914, oil.



a) Sorrow, 1914, etching.

Plate 87



Self-Portrait in Jerkin from the Back,  
1914, black chalk and watercolor.

## Plate 88



Death and Maiden (Self-Portrait with Wally), 1915, oil.

Plate 89



Portrait of Adele Harms Reclining, 1917,  
black chalk and watercolor.

## Plate 90



Double Self-Portrait, 1915,  
black chalk and watercolor.

Plate 91



Double portrait  
photograph of  
Schiele, 1915,  
by von Fischer.

Plate 92.



Soaring (Double Self-Portrait), 1915, oil.

## Plate 93



Embrace I (Self-Portrait with Edith), 1915,  
charcoal.

Plate 94



Embrace II, (Self-portrait with Edith), 1915,  
charcoal and tempura.

## Plate 95



a) Photograph of Schiele  
with wife and her nephew, 1915.



b) Photograph of Edith  
embracing Schiele, 1915.

## Plate 96



Edith embracing her husband, 1915, charcoal.

## Plate 97



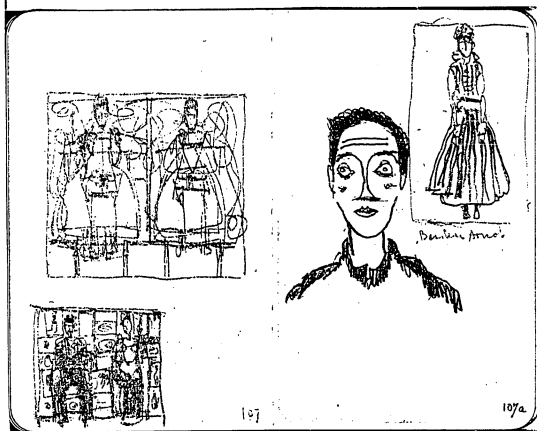
Embrace III (Self-portrait with Edith), 1915,  
pencil and gouache.

Plate 98



Photographs of Schiele in the military, 1916.

## Plate 99



Preparatory sketch for double portrait painting  
of Schiele and his wife.

Plate 100



Portrait of Johann Harms, 1916, oil.

## Plate 101



Self-Portrait Squatting I, 1916.

## Plate 102



Self-Portrait Crouching, 1912.

## Plate 103



Self-Portrait Squatting II, 1917.

Plate 104



Self-Portrait Squatting III, 1918.

## Plate 105



The Family (Squatting Couple), 1917-18, oil.

## Plate 106



Portrait of Edith Standing, 1915, oil.

## Plate 107



Portrait of Edith Seated, 1917-18, oil.

Plate 108



The Virgin, 1917, oil.

Plate 109



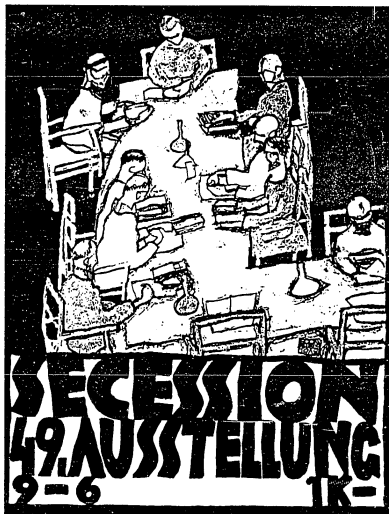
Portrait of Marie Schiele, 1918, black chalk.

Plate 110



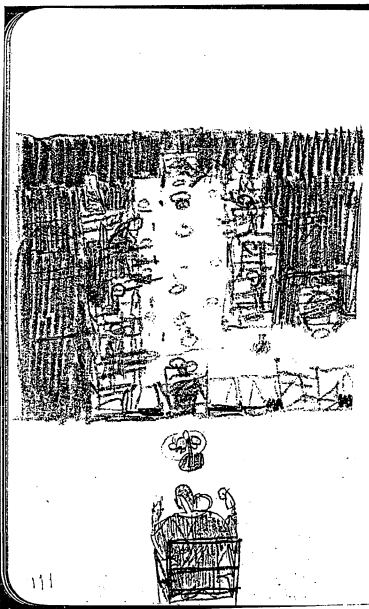
The Embrace (Lovers), 1917, oil.

Plate 111



Round the Table (The Friends),  
1918, lithograph.

Plate 112

Preparatory sketch for Round the Table.

## Plate 113



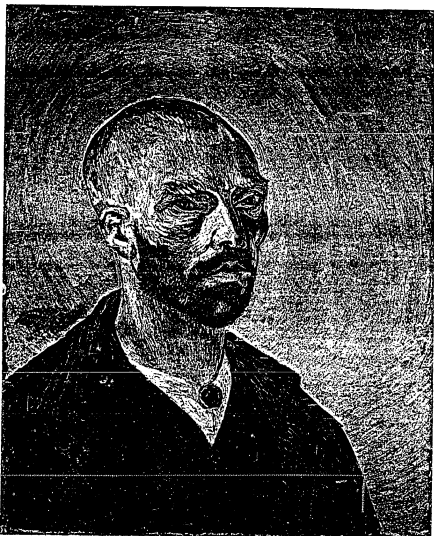
Self-Portrait Sculpture Head, 1918, bronze.

Plate-114



Schiele's Death Mask.

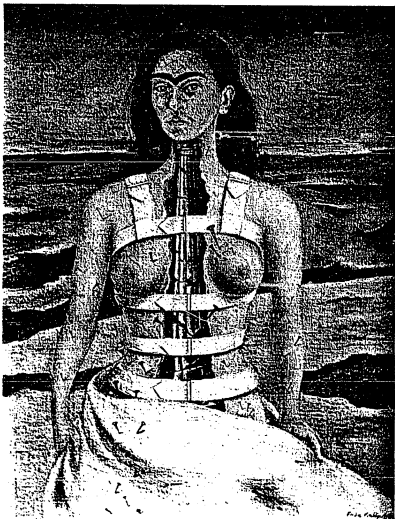
## Plate 115



Vincent Van Gogh, Self-Portrait, 1888.

## Plate 116

Frida Kahlo, The Broken Column (Self-Portrait),  
1944.



## Plate 117



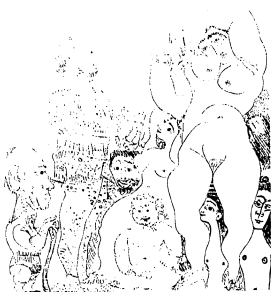
Francis Bacon, Self-Portrait, 1973

Plate 118



Kathe Kollwitz, Self-Portrait with Hand on Brow,  
1934, lithograph.

## Plate 119

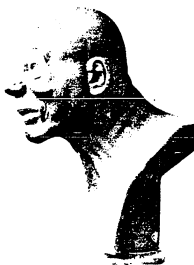


Pablo Picasso, Innocence (Double Self-Portrait),  
1968, etching.

Plate 120

Cindy Sherman, Untitled #129, 1983.

Plate 121



Franz Xaver Messerschmidt,  
Self-Portrait Busts , undated.

## Plate 122



Arnulf Rainer, Face Farces, 1969-70, oil crayon/photo.

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