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# Egon Schiele's Double Self Portraiture

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EGON SCHIELE'S DOUBLE SELF-PORTRAITURE

By

LORI ANNE FELTON

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## ABSTRACT

With few visual precedents, Egon Schiele (1890-1918) was the first artist to systematically explore double self-portraiture's potential to convey multiple meanings, by painting, drawing and collaboratively photographing thirteen works in the genre. In this dissertation, I argue that these works reflect Schiele's interest in establishing a deep engagement with the viewer. I consider Schiele's double self-portraiture in two distinct categories: as an original, intended group from 1910 and 1911 that, borrowing from two of the works' titles, I call the *Self-Seers*, and as a sequence of unique, experimental works after 1913. While the *Self-Seers* paintings exhibit Schiele's concern with the act of viewing, his subsequent works suggest double self-portraiture's potential to be multivalent, engaging with the opposite qualities such as inner and outer, the spiritual and the mundane, and death and life in a highly experimental, yet strategic manner.

To Schiele, the work of art is itself an animate being and art itself is eternal. His views on art's eternal nature stand in stark contrast to the impermanence of selfhood that scholars agree was his deepest concern, as evinced by his serial self-portraits. While his double self-portraits evoke similar themes found in the Romantic *Doppelgänger* topos, Schiele's interpretation of topics such as mirror images, shadows, and death are distinct from it because he does not depict his double as a threat. Instead, the doubles beseech the viewer to be understood differently, for their kinship with the metaphysical to be explored and even embraced. These singular works address Schiele's creative concerns as well as the preoccupations of Viennese culture, and they display his capacity to create art that is thoughtful and thought provoking, presenting an unexamined facet of Expressionistic art.

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## INTRODUCTION

### DOUBLE TROUBLE: THE DOUBLE SELF-PORTRAITS

#### AS AN INDEPENDENT CATEGORY

*Without meaning to flatter you, I know of no greater Viennese art connoisseur than you. Therefore, I have chosen you to receive this picture from my newest series. –In time, you will be completely won over by it, as soon as you begin not to look at it, but to look into it. This is the picture about which G. Klimt said how pleased he was to see such faces. It is certainly the best thing that has been painted in Vienna lately.*<sup>1</sup>

Letter from Egon Schiele to Dr. Oskar Reichel  
(1911)

Beginning in 1910, Egon Schiele (1890-1918) produced thirteen double self-portraits with consistent iconographic commonalities at regular intervals throughout his career. In comparison to his other types of production, this is a minor theme; however, his steady return to this subject suggests that these works are of importance to the artist, a distinction that is further supported by Schiele's writings.<sup>2</sup> Early in 1911, Schiele mentioned a new series that is believed to be related to his painting *Self-Seers I* in a letter to one of his supporters and collectors, Dr. Oskar Reichel.<sup>3</sup> His satisfaction with this new

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<sup>1</sup> Egon Schiele quoted in Jane Kallir, *Egon Schiele: The Complete Works*, (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1990), 295. The German text reads, "ich weiß, ohne Ihnen schmeicheln zu wollen, keinen Kunstwissenderen in Wien als Sie. - Darum ausgesucht hab ich Ihnen dies mein Bild aus der ganz neuen Reihe geschickt. - In gewisser Zeit werden Sie so vollständig überzeugt sein darüber, sobald Sie beginnen, nicht daraufzusehen sondern hineinzuschauen. Das Bild ist jenes, worüber G. Klimt geäußert hat, er wäre froh solch Gesichter zu sehen. - Es ist sicher, gegenwärtig, das höchste [!] was in Wien gemalt wurde." See Christian M. Nebehay, *Egon Schiele: Leben, Briefe, Gedichte*, (Wien: Residenz Verlag, 1979), 165, #176. Egon Schiele Database, [www.schiele-dokumentation.at](http://www.schiele-dokumentation.at), 113.

<sup>2</sup>For example, in a letter to Arthur Roessler dated Dec. 1910, Schiele wrote: "Lieber R.R. ich will wissen, wer mein Bild die Selbstseher bekommt, vielleicht gib ich's demjenigen gar nicht. – Nicht jeder soll von mir was haben." In Nebehay, *Leben, Briefe, Gedichte*, 140, #151. Egon Schiele Database, 288. Underlining occurs in the script of the letter.

<sup>3</sup> Kallir, *The Complete Works*, 295.

development is evident: “It is certainly the best thing that has been painted in Vienna lately.”<sup>4</sup> Yet the same letter indicates that Schiele understood the risk that he was taking by using this almost unprecedented device. He defends his decision by citing Klimt’s support: “This is the picture about which G. Klimt said how pleased he was to see such faces.”<sup>5</sup> He also defends his work against those who might not understand it: “He who laughs should be noted; he is hostile to my art, jealous of my art, etc.”<sup>6</sup>

Schiele’s double self-portraiture presents a problem, indeed. Aside from Klimt’s reported support of “such faces,” I have not found any recorded evidence of a public reaction to these highly unusual paintings. Additionally, neither Schiele nor his colleagues addressed them directly. Scholars have analyzed these paintings as self-portraits over the past forty years, most frequently through a psycho-biographical lens, and aside from an essay written by Reinhard Steiner in 2006, the double self-portraiture remains unaddressed as a distinct body of works with art theoretical potential.<sup>7</sup> Their status as the first group of double self-portraiture to emerge in the twentieth century as well as their distinct, unusual iconography merits a complete fleshing out of their potential sources, possible meanings, and visual impact.

*Egon Schiele’s Double Self-Portraiture* begins with the assumption that Schiele’s double self-portraiture is an independent category of self-portraiture which nevertheless shares its main ideas with his understanding of art generally. I have determined the importance of the concept of doubling through many complementary factors. The initial

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<sup>4</sup> Nebehay, *Leben, Briefe, Gedichte*, 165, #176. Egon Schiele Database, 113. “Es ist sicher, gegenwärtig, das höchste was in Wien gemalt wurde.”

<sup>5</sup> Ibid. “Das Bild is jenes, worüber G. Klimt geäußert hat, er wäre froh solch Gesichter zu sehen.”

<sup>6</sup> Ibid. “Wer darüber lacht, derjenige ist zu beachten wie er lacht, derjenige ist feindlich zu meiner Kunst, neidisch zu meiner Kunst u.s.w.”

<sup>7</sup> Reinhard Steiner, “‘Die unheimliche Gabe der Selbstverdoppelung.’ Selbst- und Doppeldarstellung um 1900,” in Victor I. Stoichita, ed., *Das Double*, (Wiesbaden: Harassowitz Verlag, 2006).

sketch including a double image was created in 1910, the same year that Schiele experienced his “Expressionistic breakthrough,” a correlation that suggests that this idea is closely related to his artistic development. Scholars agree that Schiele’s style changed dramatically in 1912 and again in 1914,<sup>8</sup> at both points becoming more tempered, and at neither stage did he abandon double self-portraiture, signifying his continued interest in its potential to express multiple meanings. Some of these paintings are large-scale in comparison to his general painting size, with the most notable example, *Transfiguration (The Blind II)* of 1915 (Figure 1), being one of his largest works created (78 ¾ x 67 ¼ inches).<sup>9</sup> This evidence, while circumstantial, augments the few things Schiele did write about his first double self-portraits and supports their significance, at least in Schiele’s oeuvre.

Pairings occur throughout Schiele’s figural work. As early as 1908, Schiele began to explore the allegorical potential of couples through his depiction of subjects such as mother and child, sexual copulation and familial or artistic kinship. As symbolic couplings, his double self-portraits relate to these other genres, yet they are distinct in their designation as self-portraits. They are likewise distinct from his occasional painting of multiples in his self-portraiture, in which he positioned as many as five of his likenesses within the same picture plane. In those, his positioning of the figures is inconsistent and experimental, and in contrast the double self-portraiture retains a consistency that remained intact, especially during his initial engagement with them.

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<sup>8</sup> These stylistic modifications are often credited to Schiele’s imprisonment and his marriage. For example, see Jane Kallir, *The Complete Works*, 1990, particularly her chapter entitled, “Coming of Age, 1913-15.”

<sup>9</sup> All titles used in this dissertation will adhere to Jane Kallir’s English titling in *The Complete Works*, 1990, and works referenced in footnotes will refer the reader to Kallir’s catalogue raisonné following the designations established therein: KP #### refers to Schiele’s paintings and KD #### refers to the works on paper.

Thus, the question arises: what do Schiele's double self-portraits reveal about his artistic mission?

As self-portraits, they present an interpretive challenge, for they are very different from the self-portraiture that Schiele produced in 1910 and beyond. Many art historians have argued that Schiele's self-portraiture serves a revelatory function, an exposure of a grotesque reality located beneath a polished social veneer, similar to what one might see in his 1910 *Seated Male Nude (Self-Portrait)* (Figure 2) with its stripped portrayal of the nude body exposing flayed musculature and severed extremities. Others locate an active, performative aspect in his self-portraiture that masks any indication of personal identity and instead explores various roles.<sup>10</sup> In the case of the double self-portrait painted the same year, the exposed body is instead clothed in allegory in *Self-Seers I* (Figure 3). In spite of the figures' nudity, the ostensible immediacy of the distorted figure that floats in a void is absent, and instead we are confronted with a conceptual image of what appears to be a divided self that is engrossed in the act of seeing, according to the title.

These inconsistencies are congruent with Schiele's understanding of art. In spite of his stalwart resistance to bourgeois norms of behavior and his own subscription to the notion of the heroic artist, Schiele was not seeking to overthrow artistic tradition; in fact, he selected from art history almost according to whim. "I know that there is no modern art, but rather there is only one art that is eternal," Schiele wrote in a letter to his uncle in 1911, a statement that supports his borrowing from a diverse list of visual sources.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> For a brief, but concise analysis of the performative aspect of Schiele's self-portraiture, see Jane Kallir, "Egon Schieles Porträts: Eine Erforschung der Identität," in *Egon Schiele*. Rudy Chiappini, ed. Milan: Museo d'Arte Moderna della Città di Lugano, 2003. P. 35-54.

<sup>11</sup> Nebehay, *Leben, Briefe, Gedichte*, 182, #251. Egon Schiele Database, 375. "Ich weiß daß es keine moderne Kunst gibt, sondern nur eine, - die immerwährend ist." All translations are mine unless otherwise noted.

While his production may be contrasted with the *Jugendstil* aesthetic to exemplify his break from the recent past, his engagement with other artists, both contemporary and historical, always included a high level of respect. This is best demonstrated by his relationship with Gustav Klimt, his stated admiration of Mantegna and Signorelli, as well as Ferdinand Hodler,<sup>12</sup> and his attempt to affiliate himself with the Blaue Reiter group in Munich. Instead of abandoning or rebelling against historical constraints, Schiele selected images and themes from previous artists and reinvented them according to his own terms, in dialogue with modern problems and conditions.<sup>13</sup>

Since the publication of Carl Schorske's watershed book, *Fin-de-Siècle Vienna* in 1980, scholars have regarded the art and culture of "Vienna 1900" as distinct from those in Western Europe, suggesting a very particular strand of Modernism. "Traditional liberal culture had centered upon rational man, whose scientific domination of nature and whose moral control of himself were expected to create the good society. In our century, rational man has had to give place to that richer but more dangerous and mercurial creature, psychological man," Schorske argues.<sup>14</sup> The failure of Austrian liberalism, late to emerge and short-lived in its tenure, left the intellectual class struggling to make sense of what they viewed as a collapsing social order. Likewise, a collective, familiar sense of mores and values came under threat by a new Nietzschean individualism.

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<sup>12</sup> Alessandra Comini, *Egon Schiele's Portraits*, (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1974), 53.

<sup>13</sup> Schiele painted several homages to contemporary artists, including his 1911, *The Artist's Room in Neulengbach (My Living Room)* (KP 220), which is a close rendition of Vincent van Gogh's 1888 painting, *Bedroom in Arles* and his 1912 *Self-Portrait with Chinese Lantern Plant* (KP 233), which closely paraphrases Paul Gauguin's *Portrait of the Artist with the Yellow Christ* of 1890. Schiele also incorporated visual elements from various styles and periods in his works. See Johann Thomas Ambrózy, "Das Geheimnis der 'Eremiten': Die Entschlüsselung einer Privat-Ikonographie und die Klärung des Ursprungs der V-Geste von Egon Schiele," in *Egon Schiele Jahrbuch* (Band I, Vol. I), Wien: REMAprint, Druck- und Verlagsgesellschaft m.b.H., 2011.

<sup>14</sup> Carl E. Schorske, *Fin-de-Siècle Vienna: Politics and Culture*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1980), 4.

The result, Schorske argues, was that the intelligentsia declared its independence from the past, retreated from the social realm into the private sphere, and fractured. “European high culture entered a whirl of infinite innovation, with each field proclaiming independence of the whole, each part in turn falling to pieces.”<sup>15</sup> This assessment reflects the textbook definition of European Modernism, that modernism represents a complete rejection or, at the very least, an undermining of past traditions, with Paris, London, and Berlin considered the epicenters of modernism in art, urban development, and industrialization. Vienna’s uniqueness in terms of its Modernism lies in its rapid transformation, its insularity, and its inward focus. Schorske’s implication that Vienna was isolated from these other centers culturally yet that it followed their lead in its own unique manner is only partially the case in the visual arts.

The inward focus espoused by Schorske and subsequent scholars, such as Jacques le Rider, obscures the Secession’s engagement with a variety of cultural centers and the influence that those interactions had upon artists like Schiele. On one hand, there exists an indisputable Viennese tendency to delve beneath what Oskar Kokoschka called “the semblance of things” in search of a more stable truth through their work. On the other hand, accepting Schorske’s evaluation of Viennese culture as definitive only affords a partial understanding of the creative climate in pre-Great-War Vienna. Far from claiming an ahistorical or even revolutionary perspective, the post-Secession generation of artists worked closely with their predecessors and reaped the benefits of the Secession’s (and later the Klimt Group’s) efforts to exhibit with a broad network of international artists and to bring international Modernism to Vienna. In other words, Vienna was far from a “hothouse,” isolated, provincial culture in terms of the visual arts.

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid., xix.

The double self-portrait emerged in Vienna 1910 under a Secessionist influence that was in dialogue with Paris, Zurich, Munich, and Berlin, in addition to drawing from rich resources in Prague and Budapest. Therefore, while minor, Vienna might be considered an artistic center in its own right, with Klimt receiving commissions as far away as Belgium and traveling to London in dialogue with artists there, as well as Schiele himself exhibiting throughout Europe in cities such as Amsterdam, Brussels, and Rome, for example.<sup>16</sup> Within Vienna, scholars have long accepted that Schiele's generation, which included such *Bürgerschrecke* as Oskar Kokoschka, Max Oppenheimer, and Richard Gerstl, were reacting against the previous generation, and accordingly they have ignored the commercial potential that their innovation afforded within a society that possessed a far more sophisticated visual vocabulary and taste in art than is often ascribed to it. Such reductive perspectives obscure the rich variety of sources employed by this generation and the general tendency throughout Europe toward self-examination during the early decades of the twentieth century.

Double self-portraiture emerged in Europe during a time in which the artist was not merely painting likenesses, but rather attempting to portray the soul. The results were often far from realistic. Vincent van Gogh's post-Impressionist portraits are clear and directly influential examples, given the fact that his work was included in Secessionist exhibitions. The impulse is evident even in Pablo Picasso's well-known *Portrait of Gertrude Stein* of 1905 in which, sensing that he could not properly depict her essential qualities, Picasso painted a mask-like visage from memory over his previous attempt which reportedly had been the result of over 80 sittings. The desire to delve beneath the

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<sup>16</sup> For a list of Schiele's exhibitions as of 1917, see Egon Schiele, "Maschinenschriftliche Liste von Egon Schiele mit einer Auflistung von Ausstellungen 1909-1916 mit handschriftlichen Ergänzungen von Egon Schiele und Anton Peschka," Egon Schiele Database, 2645.

surface, to uncover the essential qualities of the sitter, is a Modernist quality, not exclusively a Viennese Modernist quality.

Picasso splintered representation into pieces by painting the same subject from multiple vantage points within the same pictorial frame beginning around 1907. Within years, 1250 kilometers away, Egon Schiele painted not one, but two images of himself on one canvas, with both likenesses staring directly at the viewer, united in their confrontational stance. His splintering of his own individual self into two exhibits a similar engagement with the new social, philosophical, and industrial components of society that coalesced in the early 1900s. The distinction that emerges between the two is that Schiele's is an ethical, rather than a critical engagement with art, and therefore proceeds in a very different direction.

The themes with which Schiele engaged might be more fittingly called ahistorical as his demonstrated concern regarded paired and often binary concepts such as sex and love, life and death or sight and blindness. Schiele often expressed that the artist holds the responsibility for revealing eternal truths and that as a spiritual leader he was burdened by his talent to produce art that would awaken spiritual insight. He understood art as *the* ideal, as a force that is beyond *requiring* ideals of beauty or conventions. When considered in the context of Wassily Kandinsky's contemporaneous 1912 essay, "Concerning the Spiritual in Art," Schiele's modernism resembles the utopian art of the Blaue Reiter group far more than the revolutionary art of the French modernist avant-garde. Schiele owned a copy of the *Blaue Reiter Almanac* and displayed it proudly amongst his most prized possessions, indicating his likeminded understanding of the nature of art.

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Including a double in his self-portraiture speaks to Schiele's concern with the spiritual and the utopian, and one of the main arguments of this dissertation will be that he used doubling to manipulate what Ernst Gombrich termed "the beholder's share," or the viewer's own emotional and perceptual contribution to the work of art.<sup>17</sup> Gombrich proposed that the work of art is indebted to the viewer's recognition of its subject and to the viewer's recall of previous experiences, both of which impart meaning to the art. When faced with a work that has no precedent, the processes of recall and recognition are interrupted. To articulate this point, I borrow the term "intersubjectivity" from the psychoanalyst Jessica Benjamin. In her 1995 book, *Like Subjects, Love Objects*,<sup>18</sup> Benjamin claims that interpersonal relations account for the existence of duality within the mind, which she calls intrapsychic subjectivity, and also interpsychic subjectivity, with each person interacting with another person as with both an internal known self and unknown other. Intersubjectivity, in Benjamin's psychic model, accounts for both of these means of interaction.

Schiele was seeking to challenge the viewer to consider his or her role in the interchange between the self and the self-portrait, which might have led him to consider intersubjectivity as a relevant concept to portraiture in general. It has long been accepted that Schiele was examining himself in terms of subject and object, as a self and an "other." Yet as Benjamin claims, the other is more than an object that I define myself against; it is an individual with whom I wish to identify, and more importantly, whom I

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<sup>17</sup> Ernst Gombrich, *Art and Illusion: A Study in the Psychology of Pictorial Representation*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1969).

<sup>18</sup> Jessica Benjamin, *Like Subjects, Love Objects: Essays on Recognition and Sexual Difference*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, c1995).

wish to identify with me.<sup>19</sup> In *The Subject in Art: Portraiture and the Birth of the Modern*, Catherine Soussloff has described a similar psychic impulse regarding the modern portrait. As the artist creates a portrait, the censorial other within not only seeks approval from the other without, but also guards against the outside other. Because this other is both the basis of and a threat to the artist's core identity, the imagined viewer is a powerful contributor to the outcome of a portrait.<sup>20</sup> Applying Benjamin's theoretical structure to Schiele's works adds a third consideration, an intersubjective space, to the paradox between the other within and the other without. This space might be seen as the space before the canvas, the shared place of the artist and viewer, separated by the differing temporality of painting and viewing. It is a space with which I argue that Schiele engaged, especially in his double self-portraiture.

While I initially found it helpful to examine Schiele's self-portraits through Benjamin's contemporary psychoanalytic framework, I will not be analyzing Schiele's work through a psychoanalytic lens. Similarly, I will be employing texts by Otto Rank and Sigmund Freud, including Rank's book, *The Double* (written 1914, published 1925) and Freud's paper, "The Uncanny" (1919) in a very particular way.<sup>21</sup> These texts are foundational to the field of psychoanalysis, and Benjamin seeks to include Freud's theoretical framework as a primary source for the subject of her book.<sup>22</sup> While I join her in acknowledging their importance in this sense, my use of these texts is primarily their consideration as historical sources. They help me to situate Schiele's paintings within

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 7.

<sup>20</sup> Catherine Soussloff, *The Subject in Art: Portraiture and the Birth of the Modern*, (Durham/London: Duke University Press, 2006) 23.

<sup>21</sup> Sigmund Freud. "The Uncanny." In *Psychological Writings and letters*, ed. Sander L. Gilman, (New York: Continuum Publishing Co., 1995), 136, and Otto Rank. *The Double: A Psychoanalytic Study*, Tr. by Harry Tucker, Jr, (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press 1971).

<sup>22</sup> Benjamin, *Like Subjects, Love Objects*, 4.

modern Viennese culture because of their concern with the *Doppelgänger* as a literary phenomenon and as a precursor to the discovery of the unconscious, theorizing what Schiele sensed when he painted his image twice. Therefore, being mindful of Benjamin and Soussloff's frameworks, I will evaluate the iconographical distinctions of Schiele's double self-portraiture through a focused historical perspective, evaluating its origination within the context of his peers with a strong focus on content and style.

I do not wish to suggest that Schiele would have considered the unknown in others solely in terms of psychic structure. Unlike Benjamin's theory, Schiele's notion of this psychic interior was likely derived from a personally developed Monism that resembles Theosophy in many aspects, even as he did not necessarily embrace Theosophy wholeheartedly. In his writings, it seems as if he was trying to address others in terms of an unknowable primal core that unites humans with nature and therefore with each other. I will address Schiele's unique belief system in the context of his work; here I must acknowledge that some inclusions of Christian iconography in his Symbolist paintings seem to contradict what he has written about his spiritual beliefs.<sup>23</sup> I suspect that he borrowed iconography familiar to him from his upbringing in the Catholic Church as a means of depicting the metaphysical. Benjamin and Schiele share an additional interest that I will not address within the scope of this dissertation; sexuality and eroticism are key concepts in *Like Subjects/Love Objects* as well as a major component in Schiele's oeuvre, and that topic warrants its own book-length engagement. As

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<sup>23</sup> One finds many parallels between Rudolf Steiner's lectures and Schiele's writings, but Schiele's ideas are generalized and incomplete within the context of Theosophy, and I suspect that they are the result of second-hand knowledge. In his paintings, especially the late-Symbolist examples, he leans heavily on Christian iconography, which is acceptable in the context of both Symbolism and Theosophy, but in certain instances, such as a secular painting entitled *Resurrection*, it would be impossible to view the painting in Theosophical terms.

disambiguation, I will enter into these areas only selectively where it relates to my dissertation's primary concerns.

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Because I have given priority to scholarship that addresses the double, I only engage with a selection of a large body of literature on Schiele. In much of Schiele scholarship, his double self-portraiture remains an acknowledged but neglected topic in spite of five decades of research. Research on Schiele's double self-portraits has been almost invariably conducted within the context of his self-portraiture and has been used to support a variety of conclusions thereof, with the result being that scholarship on the double closely follows the overarching trends in Schiele scholarship.

The conventional understanding of double self-portraiture's source is located in Schiele's biographical and psychological profile, which is an important and well-researched area, and therefore I will only refer to biography when it is necessary for understanding the context of his works. Born to a railroad stationmaster in Tulln, Austria in 1890, Schiele's childhood could have been idyllic, or at least typical and bourgeois. His father was of German heritage and came from a Lutheran family, and his mother a Bohemian, from a Franciscan Catholic family. Both heritages surface in Schiele's painting, signifying a sense of pride sourced in his familial roots. However, his relationship with his mother was often difficult, and when he was a teenager his father died after a lengthy syphilitic decline, after which Schiele enrolled in the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna as the youngest pupil at age sixteen. The next year, 1907, he approached Klimt with his drawings, gaining the older artist's support and mentorship. In

1909, frustrated with the conservative strictures of the Academy, he withdrew with a group of fellow students.

Most scholars consider 1910 to be Schiele's breakthrough year and the beginning of his mature work. In 1911, Schiele chose to leave Vienna with his lover and model Wally Neuzil, moving first to Krumau in the Czech Republic, where they were chased out of town, and then moving again to Neulengbach, Austria in 1911. There, he was imprisoned for a brief period in 1912 on charges of seducing a minor, a sentence that related to both his art production and his lifestyle. By 1915, he had decided to leave Wally and marry Edith Harms, a middle-class woman, perhaps as a response to his conscription in the Austrian military. Within a year, because he served as a military artist, he was able to return to Vienna and live in his own quarters with his wife. In October of 1918, Schiele, his wife and his unborn child died within three days of each other of the Spanish Flu. Because of the personal, expressive mood of his work and his sometimes grotesque means of depicting his subjects, it is difficult to avoid projecting his biography onto his work.

Schiele subscribed to the notion of the "artist-hero," and he seemed to believe that artists should not have to conform to social standards. The tone of self-assurance that dominates his letters and poems, along with his immense body of self-portraiture, suggests an element of narcissism that eclipses the ideas contained in both areas of production. Schiele's advocates—artists, collectors and writers— posthumously supported the notion that Schiele was not only extraordinary as an artist but also as an individual, through their own personal accounts of their experiences with the artist.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> See Roessler, Arthur, *In memoriam Egon Schiele*, Wien, Lanyi, 1921, Heinrich Benesch, *Mein Weg mit Egon Schiele*, (New York: Verlag der Johannespresse, 1965), and Anton Peschka, "Unveröffentlichtes

Their testimony is of enormous benefit to Schiele scholarship, as these efforts have maintained a rich archive of primary documents, and they have also supported his mythical standing.

These rich collections resulted in three foundational texts on Schiele's life and work. In 1979, Christian Nebehay organized and published the primary sources contained in the Max Wagner Collection housed at the Albertina Museum—over 1,800 objects—and wrote a monograph that incorporates these archival materials.<sup>25</sup> Five years earlier, Alessandra Comini had worked in the same collection to produce the first art-historical monograph on Schiele published in 1974, *Egon Schiele's Portraits*.<sup>26</sup> In this, she gathered valuable personal accounts from interviews with Schiele's relatives and patrons that supplement the information that exists through letters and documents. In 1990, Jane Kallir published a biography in conjunction with her authoritative catalogue raisonné, combining and completing the previous competing efforts of Rudolf Leopold and Otto Kallir to catalogue Schiele's work.<sup>27</sup> These three approaches to the full body of primary sources provide a lively account of the artist's biography, art, and development, and all three authors have produced numerous supplemental publications on more specific sections of Schiele's production. Their concern with establishing Schiele's biography is justified, and the overwhelming approach derived from these materials has remained psycho-biographical until recent years, to the detriment of achieving anything that resembles a complete understanding of his iconography, style, and artistic mission.

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Typoskript zum Leben Egon Schieles," in the Leopold Museum's *Egon Schiele Archive*, Vienna, Austria, accession #E2 Schiele o.J.-01/K2.

<sup>25</sup> Nebehay. *Leben, Briefe, Gedichte*, 1979.

<sup>26</sup> Comini, *Egon Schiele's Portraits*, 1974.

<sup>27</sup> Kallir, *The Complete Works*, 1990.

The early 1990s mark a turning point in Schiele scholarship, after it had become almost completely entrenched in psycho-biographical studies. In 1993, Reinhard Steiner published his book *Egon Schiele 1890-1918: The Midnight Soul of the Artist*, which rejects that Schiele's work reflects only psychological conditions. Steiner places Schiele's work within the cultural production of the era from Nietzsche to Kandinsky, examining how Schiele's work reflects the concerns of the time, including that spiritual matters—most likely Theosophy—were of more interest than psychological matters.<sup>28</sup> Because he was depicting himself, Steiner argues, he was naturally examining himself as both subject and object, and the emergence of a *Doppelgänger* in the 1910 *Self-Seers I* (Figure 3) portrait could just as well be a reference to a “spiritual aura” which becomes a figure of Death in subsequent double self-portraits. Thus, Schiele was able to depict a range of worldly experiences in terms of how he thought the world affects the self. The fragmented self, according to Steiner, is a sensory fragmentation rather than a psychological one, and the examination of this fragmentation enabled Schiele to emerge as a visionary, unified and whole.<sup>29</sup> Ultimately, Steiner is concerned with freeing Schiele from the label of pathological voyeur, and of finding alternative sources of inspiration besides the unconscious.

Steiner returned to the subject in 2006 when he wrote the first and only publication to consider Schiele's Double independently of his self-portraiture, an essay

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<sup>28</sup> Reinhard Steiner, *Egon Schiele, 1890-1918: The Midnight Soul of the Artist*, Tr. by Michael Hulse, (Cologne: Benedikt Taschen Verlag GmbH, 2000), 12-13. See also Astrid Kury, “Revelation in Crisis: Egon Schiele and the Occult around 1900,” in Helena Pereña Sáez, *Egon Schiele: “Das unrettbare ich”*: *Werke aus der Albertina*, (Cologne: Wienand, 2011).

<sup>29</sup>Steiner, *The Midnight Soul of the Artist*, 14-18. “The modern Narcissus does not create an artistic image that reproduces the real shape of things; rather, he reverses the perspective scrutiny of the world, and in this reversal the ego or subject itself becomes the horizon, as Nietzsche put it. Every object that might be the subject of a drawing or painting becomes a self-object—that is, an object experienced as a part of the artist's own self.”

contributing to Victor Stoichita's collection of essays, *Das Double*.<sup>30</sup> Steiner points to the use of doubling in *Fin-de-Siècle* Vienna as an "*Epochensignatur*," a sign of the times, something that could only have emerged in a certain place and time. Pointing to manifestations of the double in other areas of Viennese culture, he ties these instances directly to the understanding of self-portraiture in Viennese culture: "...the self-portrait is fundamentally characterized by a double structure. The model is the artist, and not a second subject, whose representation, however much it is a picture of the self, always implies otherness as well."<sup>31</sup> This idea, Steiner argues, was understood at the time and it is a fundamental aspect of Schiele's double self-portraiture, and as such, it both denies and confirms the identity of the painter.

Doubling is one response in portraiture to the modern condition, according to Steiner, the other is surpassing likeness by painting the "true person."<sup>32</sup> He traces Schiele's development in his self-portraiture, from simple portraiture to role-playing portraits to double self-portraits, and he distinguishes two sub-groups within the double self-portraiture. The first, through titling and representation, suggests visionary introspection,<sup>33</sup> the second includes multiple self-portraits or simple repetition of the figure,<sup>34</sup> with the interaction between the two figures providing the meaning and connection between the two groups. Because Schiele was one of the first to produce such self-portraiture, Steiner stresses the revolutionary and philosophical nature of the theme.

This dissertation is indebted to Steiner's scholarship, working closely with and developing the knowledge established therein. I have already acknowledged that Schiele

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<sup>30</sup>Steiner, "Die unheimliche Gabe der Selbstverdoppelung." 2006.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 235.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 237.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 238.

was considering himself in terms of subject and object as he painted his self-portraits; what this dissertation develops is that he was likely considering his viewers in similar terms, as knowable and unknowable, multi-dimensional, continuously changing selves. In terms of his own selfhood, representing himself as a visionary suggests that various types of vision should be considered, not only for Schiele, for whom vision was a key component of his profession, but also for the viewer. These points are also relevant to the cultural climate in which Schiele was working.

Very recent scholarship also examines Schiele's production according to its cultural merits. Pia Müller-Tamm argues that Schiele's self-portraiture is not at all concerned with self-revelation, but instead with mediated, distanced self-representation.<sup>35</sup> Drawing on Müller-Tamm's work, Helena Pereña Sáez argues against the prevailing thought that Schiele was viewing himself in terms of subject and object in her 2009 dissertation, *Egon Schiele: Wahrnehmung, Identität und Weltbild*.<sup>36</sup> Instead, Sáez situates Schiele's portraiture within the well-accepted context of the Viennese identity crisis—as a response to the publications of Ernst Mach, specifically his *Contributions to the Analysis of the Sensations* (1885),<sup>37</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, who likewise argued against the notion of a cohesive subject, and Charles Darwin.

Instead of originating from a cohesive center of subjectivity, Sáez argues, Schiele's portraiture explores the idea of the self as existing in a state of “perpetual

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<sup>35</sup> Pia Müller-Tamm, ed., *Egon Schiele: Inszenierung und Identität* (Köln: DuMont, c1995), 12.

<sup>36</sup> Helena Pereña Sáez. *Egon Schiele: Wahrnehmung, Identität und Weltbild* (München: Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität, Diss. 2009). See also: Sáez. *Das unrettbare ich*, 2012.

<sup>37</sup> Mach's ideas were popularized by Hermann Bahr in his 1904 essay, “Das unrettbare ich,” arguing that the self is in essence a collection of memories, moods and feelings that respond to particular stimuli. Because the self is deeply involved with its own interpretation of external stimuli, it exists in a state of constant flux.

change.”<sup>38</sup> She points to Schiele’s fragmented figures, the disjuncture between his titles and portrayals, and his perpetual role play as supporting evidence that Schiele was engaged in a “...quest for identity in multiplicity.”<sup>39</sup> Sáez maintains that Schiele engaged the dominant themes in his double self-portraiture in an attempt to come to greater self-knowledge, in the ancient Greek sense of *Ekstasis*, or “being beside oneself.”<sup>40</sup> Sight and blindness both signify introspection—distance is required to see and know oneself, and in the tradition of Tiresias, his wisdom was directly related to his blindness.<sup>41</sup> The prominent Man and Death duality in Schiele’s work, Sáez argues, is better viewed in light of self-experience; that Schiele viewed death as a state of dematerialization necessary for self-knowledge and that this point of view conforms to two systems of belief in which Schiele had expressed interest—Theosophy and Taoism.

While I will build on aspects of Sáez’s study of a broad range of Schiele’s works, I think that scholars have not sufficiently addressed Schiele’s double self-portraiture as an independent category, leaving the relationship between the double self-portraits in neglect. The consequence is that some of his double self-portraits have not been evaluated, while the more prominent works have been considered largely within the context of his portraiture. The inward focus that Schorske finds in Vienna 1900 and many scholars find in Schiele’s work is challenged by the evolution and complexity of this fascinating group of self-portraits. My dissertation does not supplant approaches focused on portraiture alone; in fact, Schiele recognized that his allegorical paintings were painted for himself. In a letter explaining his 1912 painting, *The Hermits*, he admitted, “I must

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<sup>38</sup> Sáez, *Das unrettbare ich*, 37.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 41.

<sup>40</sup> Sáez, *Identität*, 53.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 53.

paint such pictures that only have value for me.”<sup>42</sup> One cannot argue against the self-centeredness of Schiele’s self-portraiture. This dissertation does, however, seek to enhance our understanding of how his self-focus remained engaged with a perceived viewer and with a perceived higher purpose.

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The first chapter of this dissertation demonstrates that Schiele’s engagement with the *Doppelgänger* theme was embedded in a larger cultural phenomenon that used the motif as a strategy to resolve oppositional qualities and to call attention to the structure of the work in question. As I have already noted, Sigmund Freud, along with his colleague Otto Rank, analyzed the psychoanalytic implications of doubling in their respective publications “The Uncanny” and “The Double,” ultimately locating the double’s dualistic nature in the realm of subjectivity. Viennese literary authors also engaged with the *Doppelgänger* trope; Arthur Schnitzler, Hugo von Hofmannsthal, and Leopold Andrian used doubling as a means to denote antitheses in the protagonist’s characteristics, and the inclusion of the double often reflected the structure of the story. Responding to this cultural impulse in a similar manner, Schiele engaged the space before the picture plane and referred to mirroring and framing in his double self-portraiture to demonstrate a concern with antithesis and the qualities of the artistic medium, indicating that these are strategic compositions in harmony with the Viennese exploration of the *Doppelgänger* theme. These doubles seek to involve the viewer more deeply in the work through these strategies.

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<sup>42</sup> Nebehay, *Leben, Briefe, Gedichte*, 215, #320. Egon Schiele Database, 45. “...muss ich... solche Bilder malen, die nur fuer mich Wert haben.”

Chapter two examines how Schiele might have arrived at the point at which he incorporated a second likeness into his self-portraiture, examining his imitation of Northern painters such as Rembrandt van Rijn and Albrecht Dürer in his early self-portraiture to assert an identity as an artist that he had not yet established. He also answered to his detractors in a pencil drawing that depicts the biblical story of Cain and Abel in an imaginative manner that emphasizes the conflict between the twins. As he began to establish himself as an artist, he drew his inspiration from Symbolist and Post-Impressionist painters, adopting their styles and subject material as if they were his own.

I also evaluate Schiele's engagement with his mirror as a site that is pure surface and visually indicates a sense of depth. Schiele was already painting his mirror in this manner in 1907 when he painted himself from a highly unusual perspective, from a mirror placed on the floor. I argue that this curious painting was likely a response to Parmigianino's *Self-Portrait in a Convex Mirror* of 1524, as the curious perspective disavows any perceived relationship between artist and viewer. Schiele was not only imitating old masters, he was learning from them, because the perspectival singularity of this painting reappears in a drawing that Schiele created in 1910, *Schiele, Drawing a Nude Model Before a Mirror*. This, I argue, was the first time that a true Double can be located in Schiele's production. In summary, Schiele was already mapping concepts onto his image before he matured as an artist, and he embraces this practice completely in a group of quasi-allegorical paintings completed between 1910 and 1912 and his first double self-portraits are included in this group.

Chapter three argues that Schiele's allegorical paintings are better understood as late-Symbolist paintings, and I evaluate his first group of Symbolist self-portraits in these

terms. The *Great Personalities* paintings of 1910 and 1911, as I call them, are examples of the various qualities that Schiele seems to believe that a mystical leader should possess, through titles such as *Poet*, *Seers*, and *Prophets*. I argue that instead of inscribing the poses and iconography of old master painters onto his likeness, he is instead registering concepts onto his self-portraiture. The double self-portraits, first emerging in 1910, are a part of this series and as a whole, the *Great Personalities* group yields information about Schiele's mission in painting them.

A close study of the double self-portraits of 1910-1911 shows that they are highly cohesive, with minor adjustments between them. Many of the characteristics that are common to the double self-portraits from these years—frontal positioning, figures that are both unified and distinct, and one figure with a lighter tone than the other, indicate that Schiele was using doubling as a means of resolving oppositional qualities. There is not an original figure, of which one is a copy; instead, in most cases Schiele outlines one being which is also two. This stands in contrast to the *Doppelgänger* of Romantic literature, in which the main character is an intact, primary individual who must contend with a counterfeit of himself, and therefore I use the term double to describe what Schiele is presenting.

I propose that there is a creative concern behind the structure to these works, that Schiele introduces the opposing qualities of superficial viewing, (in German, *daraufsehen*) and an involved deeper type of seeing (*hineinschauen*). I argue that his double self-portraiture is designed to mediate through, or at least make reference of space before the canvas to challenge the viewer to shift from the first to the latter. I further equate these two types of viewing with terms that relate to the Romantic *Doppelgänger*,

with ecstasy, a stepping outside of the self as a means of self-evaluation, and its inverse, enstasy, which is a going within the self as a means of understanding the unity and wholeness of all things. His attention to distinct modes of viewing is a response to Nietzsche's call for a shared creative experience between art and life, artist and viewer.

The fourth and final chapter of this dissertation examines Schiele's later double self-portraits, and, drawing from the conclusions in the second chapter, argues that Schiele abandons his concern with the space before the work of art and instead retreats into the fictitious third dimension of the work of art. By doing so, he must reformulate the outwardly focused structure that is evident in his initial production of double self-portraiture, what I call the *Self-Seers* series. Whereas his *Self-Seers* works are cohesive, his forays into double self-portraiture in 1913 and beyond vary greatly in style, substance, and technique. Therefore, I identify the pivotal drawing that exhibits his inwardly focused shift and identify what it might mean within the context of his biography. This shift, I argue, was a response to his incarceration in 1912, which he felt was an injustice.

The inward shift introduces a creative problem to be solved if the double self-portraits are indeed designed to provoke an immediate viewing experience. Feeling abused, Schiele seems to be unwilling to expose himself to the same degree that he did before his incarceration. Yet his frontally positioned self-portraits, with eye contact directed toward the viewer, include a great degree of self-exposure and vulnerability. Schiele resolves this problem by redirecting his attention from before the work of art into the work of art. He creates a space that I refer to as "sacred," not wholly in a spiritual sense, but instead the opposite of the mundane world. This space, I argue, continues to unify the known with the inaccessible and in theory, the self and the other, as it represents

the unity of all things. Even when after a few years Schiele begins to open himself once again to the viewer, he continues to include an inaccessible space that relies purely upon the imagination, which suggests that he never abandoned his creative vision.

In my conclusion, I arrive at the point that the double self-portraits, evaluated as a whole, provide strong evidence that Schiele produced these works to convey his creative mission. In spite of circumstances that influenced how he presented himself, especially to what degree he exposed himself psychically, he remained true to his idea that art is eternal, and therefore should convey meaning that unifies the viewer with the painting by suggesting a common metaphysical condition. Schiele's double self-portraits are designed to be contemplated; they challenge the barrier between the self and the other and potentially, between the self and the natural world.

## CHAPTER ONE

### EGON SCHIELE'S DOUBLE SELF-PORTRAITS AND DOUBLING IN VIENNA 1900

*Alle Kunst geht so an mir vorbei, geht eigentlich nicht mich an, sondern eine dritte, imaginäre Person, die ich nicht kenne, nur ahne.*<sup>44</sup>

–Paris von Gütersloh, *Versuch einer Vorrede*, 1911.

Egon Schiele's friend and fellow artist Paris von Gütersloh (1887-1973) published an essay in 1911 appended with plates of Schiele's most recent works, including his new double self-portraits.<sup>45</sup> Rather than specifically addressing each of the paintings in his *Attempt at an Introduction*, Gütersloh concentrates on his own response to art in general, relying upon the juxtaposition of text and image to allude to his friend and introducing Schiele's oeuvre only well into the text. In the general section, he describes a discarnate effect produced by art; to Gütersloh, art does not speak directly to him but instead circumnavigates him and manifests the essence of the artist, who is made present by the work of art:

All art thus disregards me. It actually does not address me, but a third, imaginary person whom I do not know, only sense. ... And possibly to think in brief, almost startling pauses, that in the end, he who stands behind me is not a person, but instead only imaginary (which is not even

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<sup>43</sup>This chapter was presented in part at the 1<sup>st</sup> International Egon Schiele Research Symposium, in Neulengbach, Austria in June, 2012. It was subsequently published under the title of, "Doubling as a Device in Vienna 1900," *Egon Schiele Jahrbuch*, Vol. II/III (2012/2013), March, 2015. I would like to extend my deepest gratitude to the conference organizers and editors of the *Jahrbuch*, Johann Thomas Ambrózy, Carla Carmona Escalara and Eva Werth for their strong efforts to create an organization of international scholarship and dialogue, and for including my research in the conference proceedings and publication.

<sup>44</sup>Paris von Gütersloh, *Versuch einer Vorrede* (Wien: Verlag Brüder Rosenbaum, 1911), unpaginated.

<sup>45</sup>According to Diethard Leopold, this booklet was to accompany Schiele's solo exhibition at the Galerie Miethke in Vienna, 24 April- 2 May, 1911. Elisabeth Leopold and Diethard Leopold, eds. *Egon Schiele: Melancholy and Provocation* (Wien: Brandstätter Verlag, 2011), 37.

imaginable). And to think that, if I could turn around, it would continue to exist, that it would perhaps be the artist himself; not actually he himself, but instead he, brought back and reduced to the essence of his original being, a pure inspiration, a plastic moment of conception, placenta...and he, lost in the most objective contemplation of his conception...I recommend the silence again.<sup>46</sup>

Even though he does not discuss any of the art works in detail, Gütersloh might just as well be describing the contents of Schiele's *Self-Seers* of 1910 (Figure 1.1). Just as Gütersloh describes the artist as an entity existing somewhere between the imaginary and primordial, standing behind him as he views the painting, so Schiele paints his self-portrait with a second, identical figure behind the first. Might Gütersloh's words have been inspired by the iconography of this particular painting, a painting that was included in his catalogue? Or does the painting exhibit **beliefs shared** between Schiele and Gütersloh?

One fact is clear: doubling and *Doppelgänger* were of interest to Viennese Modernists, and this chapter outlines how the double was presented in Vienna 1900 to different public audiences in various forms of art. Gütersloh's recounting of this unusual doubling between the work of art and the essence of the artist reflects a Viennese variation of the classic *Doppelgänger* established in Romantic literature.<sup>47</sup> Beginning in

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<sup>46</sup> Gütersloh, *Versuch einer Vorrede*, unpaginated. "Alle Kunst geht so an mir vorbei, geht eigentlich nicht mich an, sondern eine dritte, imaginäre Person, die ich nicht kenne, nur ahne. ... Und vielleicht in kleinen, beinahe erschrockenen Pausen denken, dass der hinter mir am Ende gar keine Person ist, sondern nur imaginär (was schon nicht mehr vorstellbar ist), und wenn ich mich jetzt so umdrehen könnte, dass dieses Es vorhanden bliebe, vielleicht der Künstler selbst ist, und eigentlich nicht er selbst, sondern er, zurück geführt, komprimiert auf sein Urwesen, reiner Einfall, plastischer Moment der Konzeption, Plazenta... Und er, versunken in das objektivste Anschauen seiner Empfängnis... Ich empfehle die Stille nochmals." I would like to thank Heidi Danzl for her assistance in elucidating this lengthy and difficult quotation.

<sup>47</sup> For an introduction to the metamorphosis of the *Doppelgänger* from Romantic literature through Expressionist film, see Andrew J. Webber, *The Doppelgänger: Double Visions in German Literature* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996). Webber includes Viennese Modernist literature in his study, and he credits the popularization of hypnosis for the revival of the double in literature at this moment. As a

1895, the double began to take on new forms in all areas of Viennese cultural production, and it emerged with increasing frequency in the following fifteen years. During the latter half of this period, Schiele translated this literary theme into visual production. This new type of doubling is an important element in Schiele's work, and his employment of the double marks its earliest appearance in twentieth-century visual art.

This rich motif had developed over the course of the Romantic era. Translating literally to "double goer" or "double walker," *Doppelgänger* retains the same spelling whether it is singular or plural, thereby expressing in concrete form its linguistic ambiguity. Coined by Jean Paul (1763-1825) in his novel *Siebenkäs* (1796-1797), its role was that of an alter ego in its inception. Throughout the nineteenth century, the literary *Doppelgänger* also came to include psychological phenomena such as a split personality or the effect of a hallucinatory state, and these aspects captured the imagination of Otto Rank (1884-1939) and Sigmund Freud (1856-1939). Viennese playwrights and poets such as Arthur Schnitzler (1862-1931), Hugo von Hofmannsthal (1874-1929), and Leopold Andrian (1875-1951) also used doubling in a broader sense, through duplication of a character or a character's qualities, and it often served as a means of pointing to the structure of the narrative.<sup>48</sup> These authors did not necessarily use the term *Doppelgänger*, and although they are often used interchangeably in English, the words *Doppel* and *Doppelgänger* do not necessarily mean the same thing. This distinction is necessary to

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result, he analyzes the resurgence of doubling in Viennese Modernist literature within the context of Freud's writings.

<sup>48</sup> Richie Robertson has already identified the compositional reflexivity in Hugo von Hofmannsthal's *Reitergeschichte*. I will argue that other Viennese authors use a similar, albeit more subtle approach. See R. Robertson, "The Dual Structure of Hofmannsthal's *Reitergeschichte*," *Forum for Modern Language Studies*, 14/4 (October, 1978), 316-31.

more fully understand the shared features and characteristics between Schiele's *Doppelsebstbildnisse* and the notion of the *Doppelgänger*.

The relationship between the double self-portraits and their literary counterpart is widely accepted without question, beginning with Alessandra Comini's 1974 monograph, *Egon Schiele's Portraits*, and continuing through the present.<sup>49</sup> However, scholars have not yet investigated the congruencies and the discordant elements between these textual and visual manifestations. They are often viewed within a psychoanalytical framework, as their production occurred in the same time and place as Sigmund Freud's founding of psychoanalysis. In what follows here, I will demonstrate how the Viennese literary impulse toward doubling relates to Schiele's use of doubling in his self-portraiture, and I will establish the limited visual tradition of doubling in portraiture that was already in place at the time.

This chapter offers an account of the double's appearance in early psychoanalysis and in Viennese Modernist literature in order to distinguish the commonalities between Schiele's work and the broader cultural production of his time. Informed by but not directly engaging scholarly literature on these texts, my observations are based instead upon their close reading.<sup>50</sup> The evidence suggests that there was a keen interest in

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<sup>49</sup> Comini, *Egon Schiele's Portraits* (1974), 80. Comini also distinguished that *The Prophet* of 1911 is a double self-portrait (p. 80). Schiele never titled his double self-portraits as being such, and the designation did not become common practice until the Christian Nebehay published most of Schiele's correspondence in 1979. See Nebehay, *Leben, Briefe, Gedichte*, 155. Jane Kallir followed suit in her 1990 catalogue raisonné, a book that has become the definitive guide to Schiele's works, which solidified their status as double self-portraits. See Kallir, *The Complete Works*, 1990.

<sup>50</sup> My interest in the relationship between Viennese literature and Schiele's double self-portraiture is grounded in a seminar co-taught by Christiane Hertel and Imke Meyer, "Vienna 1900: Fractured Foundations." Certain readings from my preliminary examination, "Fin-de-siècle Viennese Literature," under Imke Meyer's direction, inform my reading of these texts; including Michael Worbs, *Nervenkunst: Literatur und Psychoanalyse im Wien der Jahrhundertwende*, (Frankfurt am Main: Europaeische Verlagsanstalt, 1983), Lorna Martens, *Shadow Lines: Austrian literature from Freud to Kafka*, (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1996), and Peter Gay, *Schnitzler's Century: The Making of Middle-Class Culture, 1815- 1914*, (New York and London: W.W. Norton and Co., 2002). For a contemporary

doubling at this time that can be found in literature as well as in film, theater, painting, and photography. While it is not possible to link definitively any of the following literary or visual sources to Schiele's introduction of the double into his work, the large number of potential sources is surprising. Additionally, strong visual parallels exist between Schiele's double self-portraits and two singular paintings, both belonging to the history of art of the Hapsburg Empire that pre-date Schiele's by centuries. It is quite possible, given the frequency with which these various sources appeared that Schiele happened across one or several of them. In any case, as cultural products that signify an aspect of the Viennese *Zeitgeist*, they provide a foundation for a close reading of Schiele's double self-portraiture.

### The Double and Early Psychoanalysis

In 1914, the Viennese psychoanalyst Otto Rank, one of Sigmund Freud's most esteemed colleagues at the time, analyzed the *Doppelgänger* in Romantic literature as a symptom of a psychic phenomenon. Concentrating almost exclusively on literature from the previous century, Rank's study, *The Double*, was prompted by the release of a German film by Hanns Heinz Ewers in 1913 titled "The Student of Prague," in which a poor student signs a contract with the devil in hopes of gaining prestige and romance. This pact emancipates his body from his mirror image, which then begins to pursue him. Rank finds that this is a common motif in Romantic literature; whether a twin, shadow, mirror reflection, or portrait, all doubles have the agency to act independently of the doubled

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psychoanalytic interpretation on the meaning of the *Doppelgänger* in German literature, see Andrew J. Webber. *The Doppelgänger: Double Visions in German Literature* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996). For a philosophical interpretation of the double's meaning, see Dimitris Vardoulakis. *The Doppelgänger: Literature's Philosophy* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2010).

individual as a “second self,” and they ultimately threaten the primary self, such that the protagonist often dies at the conclusion of his encounter with the double.

In his chapter on ethnographic, folkloric, and mythological sources, Rank turns to the field of anthropology to seek the source of belief in the *Doppelgänger*.<sup>51</sup> He locates the double’s predecessor in superstitions attached to the shadow, in which the double can be either friendly or foreboding, and claims associations with birth, death, guardian spirits and the belief in eternal life.<sup>52</sup> In this portion of his study, Rank asserts that in ancient and modern non-Western cultures, these beliefs guard against death, and thus ritual and superstition protect the subject from his demise.

The double originated in archaic belief systems that had evolved over centuries in the Western tradition, and therefore its reappearance in nineteenth-century literature is especially significant to Rank. Romantic literature retains connotations of spirituality and death in its handling of the *Doppelgänger*, and to Rank, its inclusion is more telling of the authors’ psychological condition than of the culture that produced it. Turning to the authors’ biographies, Rank finds an “identical psychic structure”<sup>53</sup> amongst the authors—vanity, egotism, mental illness or strong peculiarities—and he uses these common qualities to support his claim that the authors themselves are plagued by paranoiac delusions. By linking biography to production, Rank treats the work of art as

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<sup>51</sup> Otto Rank, *The Double: A Psychoanalytic Study*, 50-57. Even in 1914, this was a conservative point of view. See the editor’s note, xvii, “The sources which Rank cites in Chapter IV (Frazer, Tyler, Bastian, and others) represent the “armchair speculation” which characterized Old World evolutionary anthropology. By 1914 the year of the first appearance of his essay, a significant number of anthropologists, notably in England (Reginald Radcliffe Brown, Bronislaw Malinowski) and North America (Franz Boas) had moved away from the traditional view of “primitive” peoples as “fossilized” cultures (somewhat as archetypes of prehistoric man).”

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.* A well-known example of the shadow as a sign of fertility is the Virgin Mary being “overshadowed by the Spirit” (55). In folklore, the shadow might be seen as a symbolic equivalent to the human soul (57), or a harbinger of death (50).

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, 33.

symptomatic of what is happening in the author's psyche, such that ironically, the literature becomes a double of the author, a proxy "self" to be analyzed as if he were present with the psychoanalyst. These authors, Rank concludes, are all unhealthily narcissistic, and the doubling that manifests in their works reflects their own tendencies toward a split personality.<sup>54</sup>

In Romantic literary texts, Rank detects an underlying fear of death, which, as in the myth of Narcissus, is masked by self-love. He explains that narcissists, in order to preserve an unhealthy level of self-love, project their undesirable qualities onto an outside force, displacing the responsibility for their own shortcomings onto another being that could be seen as their conscience. The relationship of the double to death stems from an associated sense of thanatophobia; when protagonists engage in conflict with their double, the struggle invariably leads to death. In an act of self-deception, narcissists shift responsibility for their demise onto the murderous double, and therefore they may avoid confronting their own fears of losing the self. This fear, Rank finds, relates closely to the manifestation of pathological narcissism, and it appears in literature through the inclusion of a double.<sup>55</sup>

There is a strong subject/object relationship in Rank's conclusions, one that Freud somewhat mitigated in his 1919 paper, "The Uncanny." Rank does hint at an inner doubling that might be considered analogous to Freud's unconscious. Rank calls this a

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<sup>54</sup> Ibid., 48. "So clear is the close psychological relationship between the literary personalities whom we have sketched that...we need call special attention only to its basic structure. The pathological disposition toward psychological disturbances is conditioned to a large degree by the splitting of the personality, with special emphasis on the ego-complex, to which corresponds an abnormally strong interest in one's own person, his psychic states, and his destinies."

<sup>55</sup> It is not clear in Rank's conclusions whether he is still referring to the author, or whether he is now turning exclusively to the fictional character; due to his previous assertion that the author is synonymous with the hero, he is potentially referring to both.

“self other than his psyche” that is active when the subject is dreaming.<sup>56</sup> Freud eventually develops Rank’s ideas into his structural model of the psyche. Freud’s interpretation of Rank’s work expands Rank’s definition of the double to include what Freud eventually calls the super-ego and the ego; in other words, he re-presents the double as an additional development within the ego, a universal self-censoring mechanism that regulates the norms of behavior.<sup>57</sup> Instilled within the mind as the ego develops, it is influenced by, yet independent of, moral and social codes. Tales of *Doppelgänger* might induce an awareness of the uncanny because the double reminds the individual of a previous time in his or her self-development before the capabilities of a super-ego were established, a time when the ego was not clearly distinguished from the external world. Yet, similar to Rank’s theory, in Freud’s theory the previous reassurance found in duplicating external sources becomes a source of terror if it reappears.<sup>58</sup> It is no longer “...an insurance against the destruction of the ego,”<sup>59</sup> but rather the catalyst of self-doubt.

Freud argues that uncanny sensations arise when an infantile belief resurfaces, causing the subject to question the validity of his or her belief system due to the recurrence of external circumstances that support a repressed belief. The double re-presents a belief that has *always been there*, but that stands in opposition to the current, developed belief system. His footnotes provide a personal, contemporaneous example to his study as he relates his failure to recognize his own visage in a surprise encounter with

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<sup>56</sup> Rank, *The Double*, 60.

<sup>57</sup> Sigmund Freud, “The Uncanny,” 1995 reprint, 136. “The idea of the “double” does not necessarily disappear with the passing of primary narcissism, for it can receive fresh meaning from the later stages of the ego’s development. A special agency is slowly formed there, which is able to stand over against the rest of the ego, which has the function of observing and criticizing [sic] the self and of exercising a censorship within the mind, and which we become aware of as our “conscience.”

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 137.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 136.

a mirror, and he wonders whether his dislike of “the elderly gentleman in a dressing-gown”<sup>60</sup> might reflect his own personal experience of the uncanny. Freud’s momentary failure to recognize his image creates a scenario in which he encounters a *Doppelgänger*, and according to his theory, his disdain for the figure speaks to the innate recognition that this likeness was once a friend, and is now a foe. Opposing beliefs, one held by the super-ego (I am a unique individual and my double foretells my demise), which has concealed but has not eradicated the original belief held by the ego (I am indistinguishable from my environment and my double validates my infallibility), become mutually validated by external circumstances (the “impossible” appearance of a double).

The source of the uncanny sensation is not the external double; it arises from the implicit awareness of an internal doubling, that of the ego and super-ego. Much like Freud’s lengthy analysis of the relationship between the words *Heimlich* and *Unheimlich*, the meaning derived from each part of the psyche both negates and validates the opposite. Without evidence to support one belief over the other, they threaten the very identity of the subject.<sup>61</sup> This reaction is quite specific to a situation, and Freud does not indicate that the uncanny manifests an abnormal psyche. Quite to the contrary, by bringing the double within the realm of subjectivity, Freud mitigates the double’s pathological association put forth by Rank. While he does not discredit his colleague’s study, Freud does reinterpret the uncanny sensation produced by doubling, repetition, and the humanoid automaton as a vestige of healthy ego development, with a dually structured ego present in all

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<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 149.

<sup>61</sup> Freud’s more complicated, subjective double is a variation of the Romantic *Doppelgänger* that appears in Viennese Modernist literature. It is noteworthy that in his extensive literature review, Rank does not address examples of doubling that occur in fin-de-siècle Vienna.

developed individuals. Freud sees doubling no longer as subject/object, but instead as objective subject/subjective subject.

The parallels between the theory and insights of Viennese psychoanalysis and Schiele's double self-portraits are noteworthy. While their affinity and commonalities are of interest to me, I am not claiming that there is a direct or indirect influence between the two. Instead, I argue that Freud and Schiele's contemporaneity has influenced Schiele scholarship, and that these parallels might be better considered as two responses to a *Zeitgeist*. Not only do the paintings suggest a cognizance of the divided conscious that Rank and Freud sought to define, but as self-portraiture, Schiele's duplicated visage flaunts its narcissistic qualities, and his titling does not avoid the topic of death, which in psychoanalysis signifies the destruction of the ego. For example, Schiele's 1911 painting<sup>62</sup>, *The Self-Seers II (Man and Death)* (Figure 1.2), is commonly understood to be a Modernist reinterpretation of a *memento mori*, a genre that pictorially would often include a skull or a full skeletal figure as a symbol of human mortality. The title certainly calls to mind the double as Death and seems closely related to Rank's idea that the *Doppelgänger* is a manifestation of latent thanatophobia. For example, Alessandra Comini has pointed out the similarities between Schiele's *Man and Death* and Arnold Böcklin's *Self-Portrait with Fiddling Death* (1872) (Figure 1.3), particularly through the titling of the works and the intimate relationship between the two figures in each painting.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> Alessandra Comini was the first to make this comparison, see *Egon Schiele's Portraits* (1974), p. 81, and it has been reiterated by other scholars such as Jane Kallir, *Egon Schiele: Life and Work* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc, 2003), p. 92 and Reinhard Steiner, see "'Die unheimliche Gabe der Selbstverdoppelung.' Selbst- und Doppelsebstdarstellung um 1900," in *Das Double*. Ed. By Victor I. Stoichita, (Wiesbaden: Harassowitz Verlag, 2006), 225-247, p. 237.

<sup>63</sup> Comini, *Egon Schiele's Portraits* (1974), 81.

Superficially, these works are similar, but there is one important distinction between the two—in Schiele’s painting, the figure that stands behind is represented with lips, indicating that like its counterpart, it bears flesh. In fact, the rear figure’s features are identical to those of the front figure, though its colors are inverted. The inversion of dark and light, especially within the eye sockets, nostrils and mouth, are far more evocative of a photographic negative than of a skull, conflating the primacy of both figures and rendering the concepts of “man” and “death” nearly indistinguishable. Far from the opposite of life, Schiele represents death as the same as life, with the difference being one of perception. If the rear figure is Death, as it is traditionally interpreted, my understanding of it as a photographic negative means that it is the original and the fore figure is a copy. If the fore figure is Death, it is also the figure that is most naturalistically rendered; in other words, it most closely resembles a living subject. I will return to this photographic metaphor in chapter two; here it is sufficient to note that instead of deflecting his feelings about death onto an outside, threatening double, Schiele seems to be welcoming death as intimately related to living. In fact, the suggestion of a third face, modelled into the paint to the right of the pair, further complicates the suggestion that either figure is definitively a representation of Death.

Additionally, Schiele’s double self-portrait stands in contrast to Rank’s findings in that it presents a unified front between the subject and its double—the pair is opposed to the viewer instead of to each other. Oppositional qualities are manifest through the contrast of dark and light coloration, yet Schiele portrays a state of kinship instead of the rivalry that traditionally characterizes man and *Doppelgänger*. To paint one’s portrait in duplicate seems to be undoubtedly narcissistic, and the titling even more so as Schiele

assumes the appellation of “Man,” the designation used at the time to signify universal qualities pertaining to the entire human race. Yet he directs this flagrant display of narcissism outward; it engages the viewer in a self-conscious performance that might better be seen as a conversational provocation. In this, Schiele’s use of doubling is quite different from Rank’s pathological subject whose sole focus is the self. Instead, Schiele’s double is far more closely aligned with the double informing Freud’s structural theory. Schiele’s double might represent a relationship between multiple aspects of the self which, like the figures in Schiele’s painting, are unique but comprise a greater whole. However, their symbolic designation and iconography clearly indicate that they are not mere illustrations of the psychic structure, which leads us beyond psychoanalysis and back to the literary *Doppelgänger*.

#### Doubling as a Device in Vienna 1900

The distinctions between double self-portraiture and the literary concept of *Doppelgänger* are evident in its first appearance in Schiele’s *The Self-Seers I* of 1910 (Figure 1.1). Literary themes are often translated into the visual arts, yet the trope lingered in Romantic literature for a full century before it emerged in painting, perhaps due to the representational challenges involved in depicting a true *Doppelgänger*. In addition to challenging the limitations of painting, which cannot readily depict the progression of time and therefore cannot depict the *Doppelgänger’s* primary occupation, pursuit of the subject, Schiele pushes portraiture conventions to the limits of their capacity through his inclusion of a second self in his self-portrait. A *Doppelgänger* must look like the subject but is traditionally a foreign entity, and because portraiture captures the subject’s superficial appearance at a specific moment, the devices available to depict the

strangeness of the double are limited. The most interesting distinction between the two genres is that double self-portraiture does not offer the definitive primary subject that authors must describe in a literary narrative. Because a *Doppelgänger*, through its very existence, challenges the primacy of the subject, it evokes questions about the subject's identity and authenticity. Double self-portraiture excels in this task, as the written word cannot avoid identifying that which is being duplicated, and the silent painting holds this capacity. On one hand, these characteristics impose limitations upon double self-portraiture, but on the other hand, they introduce new possibilities for what the double can signify. This section investigates how the double functions within its various contexts in Viennese literature and what qualities might be indicated by its presence.

The Viennese literary double is similarly distinct from the Romantic *Doppelgänger*. In his 2006 essay, “‘Die unheimliche Gabe der Selbstverdoppelung.’ Selbst- und Doppelsebstdarstellung um 1900,” Reinhard Steiner identified self-doubling as an “*Epochensignatur*”<sup>64</sup> of Vienna 1900, arguing for its importance amongst the era's revolutionary developments within the genre of self-portraiture. Steiner credits the conceptual significance of Schiele's contribution to the prominence of the artist-portrait at the time, and he locates its theoretical basis within the context of Hugo von Hofmannsthal's epigram that the Viennese were “witnessing [their] own lives.”<sup>65</sup> Self-observation is indeed one aspect of doubling, and it offers far more for consideration.

Like the Romantic double, the Viennese double appeared as reflections, apparitions, and portraits, or, as in Hugo von Hofmannsthal's *Tale of the 672<sup>nd</sup> Night*, as a

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<sup>64</sup> Reinhard Steiner, “‘Die unheimliche Gabe der Selbstverdoppelung.’ Selbst- und Doppelsebstdarstellung um 1900.” In *Das Double*. Ed. By Victor I. Stoichita, (Wiesbaden: Harassowitz Verlag, 2006), 225-247, p. 234.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

series of characters who remind the protagonist of aspects of his own life. Alessandra Comini first associated the appearance of a double in Schiele's self-portraiture with the literary *Doppelgänger* in 1974, when she related Schiele's double self-portraits to Fyodor Dostoevsky's 1846 novel, *Der Doppelgänger*, of which, Comini reasons, Schiele was probably unaware.<sup>66</sup> Further research by Steiner points out, and this section elaborates, that Schiele's double manifested itself within a spate of contemporaneous cultural production that incorporated this theme. Romantic and Modernist doubling are similar in that the double retains its independent agency and it bears the weight of oppositional qualities that often hold positive and negative connotations.<sup>67</sup> However, the Viennese Modernist *Doppelgänger* was more loosely tied to the protagonist's characteristics, and its manifestation and characteristics often mirrored the structure of the plot. The distinctions between the Romantic double and Viennese doubling must be closely examined if they are to be considered in relation to Schiele's double self-portraiture.

Hugo von Hofmannsthal, Arthur Schnitzler and Leopold Andrian were affiliated with a coffeehouse group known as *Jung-Wien* (Young Vienna),<sup>68</sup> an association of critics and writers that rejected Naturalism and instead embraced a Symbolist approach to literature. This group met regularly in Café Griensteidl during the last decade of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and it was led by Hermann Bahr, who published polemics related to the views of the group in his weekly publication, *Die Zeit*. Schnitzler, Hofmannsthal, and Andrian

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<sup>66</sup>Comini, *Egon Schiele's Portraits* (1974), p. 81. Dostoevsky examined the unconscious double in his novels *The Double* (1846) and *The Brothers Karamazov* (1881) which expanded upon E.T.A. Hoffmann's *Doppelgänger* in *The Sandman* (1817).

<sup>67</sup>Lorna Martens sets forth a convincing argument that oppositional qualities were not merely explored during this time, but that the inaccessible, often negative quality in any given opposition was privileged over its positive, accessible counterpart. See Lorna Martens, *Shadow Lines: Austrian Literature from Freud to Kafka*, (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1996).

<sup>68</sup>For more on Young Vienna, see Jens Rieckmann, *Aufbruch in die Moderne*, (Königstein: Athenäum, 1986).

were all born into privileged families and each enjoyed a high level of education. Schnitzler studied medicine and trained as a physician with a special interest in psychiatry before he left his position at the *Allgemeines Krankenhaus der Stadt Wien* to pursue writing, and in keeping with his medical training and practice, his works delve into the curious workings of the psyche. Hofmannsthal was a Viennese novelist, poet, and playwright of upper class upbringing. After completing law school, he returned to writing having enjoyed success early on, with his first publication at 16 years of age. Andrian did not join the Café Griensteidl meetings, but he was closely associated with Hofmannsthal and Schnitzler. He studied law, philosophy, and German literature at the University of Vienna. He was only 19 years old when he wrote *Der Garten der Erkenntnis* (1895), which became a cult novel. This book was his only great literary success, and he later worked as a journalist and served in the Austrian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The similar educational background of these three authors is noteworthy, and their interest in and transformation of the use of doubling in literature is likewise significant.

While there is no conclusive evidence that Schiele read the following works, he did admire their authors or at the very least, felt that they shared an affinity. In a sketchbook dated 1911 on the cover, Schiele created a list of names of prominent artists, writers, and thinkers to whom he would extend an invitation to a planned *Neukunstgruppe* exhibition. Hofmannsthal and Schnitzler's names were included on his list along with many of his artist associates.<sup>69</sup> While Andrian was not on the list, his novel warrants inspection because of its popularity and because of its close association with Schnitzler and Hofmannsthal's works.

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<sup>69</sup> Christian Nebehay, *Egon Schiele: Von der Skizze zum Bild, Die Skizzenbücher*, (Wien: Christian Brandstätter Verlag, 1989), 38, fn 1.

The *Doppelgänger* featured in Hofmannsthal's "A Tale of the Cavalry" most closely resembles that from the Romantic era, yet there is also a doubling of the structure of the story with the encounter, because as Richie Robertson argues, the story hinges upon Anton Lerch's meeting with his own double.<sup>70</sup> Written in 1898, the tale is set during the March Revolution that occurred exactly fifty years earlier, in which Italian nationalist revolutionaries rebelled against Hapsburg rule. The account begins in the style of a report that describes a victorious infantry's successful campaign, which was followed by a glorious march through the abandoned streets of Milan. During this march, the first character is named, Sergeant Anton Lerch, and the objective reportage gradually morphs into a more episodic, descriptive, personal narrative as the reader discovers Lerch's desires and motives. The description of his desires to take possession of Vuic (a former acquaintance) and the accompanying material comforts of her household upon his company's return to Milan, as well as his sighting of the old man in her mirror (a potential rival or subjugate) is told in personal detail. "A thirst for unexpected windfalls had been aroused within him, for bonuses, for ducats suddenly filling his pocket. And the anticipation of his first entry into the room with the mahogany furniture was the splinter in the flesh around which all these desires and cravings swelled."<sup>71</sup>

The camaraderie of the troop disintegrates with the awakening of Lerch's individual intemperance. His subsequent ride through the next village, undertaken through his own accord and a dismal failure, is likewise relayed from a subjective point of view. At the end of this ride, or rather at the end of this trudge, he encounters his *Doppelgänger* on a bridge located furthest from his compatriots. Hofmannsthal describes

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<sup>70</sup> R. Robertson, "The Dual Structure of Hofmannsthal's *Reitergeschichte*," *Forum for Modern Language Studies*, 14/4 (October, 1978), 316-31.

<sup>71</sup> Hugo von Hofmannsthal, *Selected Tales*, Tr. J. M. Q. Davies, (London: Angel Books, 2006), 68.

the encounter at the bridge, as if Lerch were looking into a mirror; the horse is also doubled and the two approach each other with the exact same pace, even stepping onto the bridge simultaneously.<sup>72</sup>

The events in this story are mirrored, too, but with opposite moods. The victorious march through Milan is replicated by the horse and rider's uncanny trudge through the filthy village, Lerch's glimpse of the clean-shaven old man in Vuic's mirror is replicated by the full-on confrontation with his *Doppelgänger* at the bridge, and his desire to possess Vuic is replicated soon after the encounter on the bridge by his inability to release his captured horse after a final battle scene. Ultimately, while the first battle ends in victory, the second battle, during which the reportorial style is resumed, ends in Lerch's demise when his commander shoots him for insubordination. Thus, just as events double themselves, so too do the types of narration, shifting from reporting to subjective, and then back to reportorial. As an entity within the story, the *Doppelgänger* retains its characteristic as a harbinger of death; and it also takes on an additional quality, assuming the burden of oppositional qualities in the mirrored events.

Conversely, in the *Tale of the 672<sup>nd</sup> Night* (1895), Hofmannsthal uses doubling to drive the protagonist forward to his fate, and in this case, it is not through a direct double of the protagonist but instead through fragmented qualities of his character. In this short story, a merchant's son retreats into a life of aesthetic isolation accompanied by his four employees—an elderly housekeeper, who is described as having “always been there;” the housekeeper's distant relative, a young, temperamental girl around 15 years of age; his favored servant, who is attached to the merchant and seems to instinctively fulfill his wishes; and a maid, who is a young girl with beautiful features and charms that seem to

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<sup>72</sup> Ibid., 71.

emanate from a self-enclosed world. The staff reflect the merchant son's own qualities—tradition and its accompanying baggage, pleasure seeking, and the pursuit of beauty—and he feels himself to be under their constant watch as he goes about his daily life summering in the countryside. The merchant's son is so attached to his staff that he views them as if they were a part of him: "Already he could see his four servants dragged from his house and he felt as if the entire content of his life were being silently ripped out of him."<sup>73</sup> If these figures are, indeed, reflective of aspects in the protagonist's character, the doubling that occurs in the story might be seen as a conflict between present desires and inherited obligations.

The narrative is propelled into a new dimension, a dream-like dimension, when the merchant's son travels back to the city in response to anonymous accusations made against his servant, which he understands as a personal affront against himself. He finds himself alone in a city that is familiar, where he must stay overnight as a stranger because his house is closed for the summer. After assuming this role of an outsider, he allows himself to become lost in an unknown, dilapidated part of the city, essentially embracing his new identity. In this quarter, he gazes into a jeweler's window, in which he discovers a piece of jewelry that reminds him of his elderly housekeeper. When he enters to purchase the piece, the jeweler begins to pressure him to buy more, and acquiescing, he glances into a mirror and sees the shoulders and head of the maid, which awakens in him a strong desire to adorn her beautiful throat with a gold chain. "Looking absentmindedly over the jeweler's shoulder, he considered a little silver hand-mirror, so tarnished as to be half blind. Then from another mirror within him, the image of the maidservant ...

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<sup>73</sup> Ibid., 54.

advanced towards him...”<sup>74</sup> Already, a type of doubling has occurred. The jeweler leads him into a back room to show him his wares, and the transaction is closed.

While his purchases are being wrapped, the merchant’s son looks out of the rear window of the building and discovers a beautiful garden in the courtyard, which he determines to visit. Alone in the garden, he enters a greenhouse, in which, through the glass, he is confronted by the staring face of a child who is the very likeness of the housekeeper’s seething relative. Full of hatred and fury, the little girl tries to push him out, and from fear of further confrontation, the merchant’s son is forced to leave the garden by a different way, a way that ultimately leads to his death.

In this context, I use the word “propel” because each staff member has a catalytic role in the protagonist’s demise, as he himself recognizes as a dying man.<sup>75</sup> The merchant’s son takes a personal offense to the accusations and threats made against his servant, and unbeknownst to his servant, he chooses to seek out the accuser. This action drives him forward to the jewelry shop, where, reminded of his housekeeper and maid, he is drawn into the building and discovers the garden. It is only in the garden that he encounters a true *Doppelgänger*—that of the 15-year-old relative—and this is the strongest propulsion of all, this reminder drives him to his death. Hofmannsthal uses doubling to intensify the effect exponentially as the narrative progresses from incidence to co-incidence, and ultimately the double manifests as death. It pushes, and then drives

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<sup>74</sup> Hugo von Hofmannsthal, *Selected Tales*, Tr. by J. M. Q. Davies, (London: Angel Books, 2007), 56.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, 63. “Then he felt a different kind of fear, less oppressive but more pervasive, a fear which he was not feeling for the first time, but which he now experienced as something he had overcome. And he clenched his fists and cursed his servants, who had driven him to his death—his manservant to the city, the old woman into the jeweller’s shop, the girl into the back room and the child by means of her treacherous double into the greenhouse....”

the story to its conclusion, just as the tempo of the story begins in a languid, descriptive style and ends in a panic.

A similar use of doubling can be found in Andrian's novella, *The Garden of Knowledge* (1895), which follows the model of a *Bildungsroman* with one striking exception: instead of coming to some type of mature self-realization, young Erwin's life is cut short after a series of meetings with a character he calls "the Stranger." The structure of the narrative is highly episodic; it is arranged and detailed like snapshots in an album. This imparts a dream-like quality to the text as the reader follows Erwin through a series of encounters with the church, the city, military acquaintances, his boarding school, and his mother, seeking in them "the secret of life."<sup>76</sup> Each of his encounters hints at an answer, yet is ultimately fruitless.

The Stranger is ultimately revealed to be his double, and the text's episodic structure is reinforced by the seasonal appearance of this character—he appears once in spring, summer and autumn. In his first encounter, the Stranger does not seem to have anything to do with Erwin; instead, he embodies the characteristics of life, specifically its dualities. The Stranger represents life's qualities and does not reveal its meaning, as we find in his description: "In the humble face of the Stranger was gentleness and malice, timidity and threat, and the whole of life, but at the same time as *in* life."<sup>77</sup> This character does not simply embody oppositional qualities on the surface, but also represents them from without and within. This arouses Erwin's curiosity; he senses that the Stranger possesses the secret that he is seeking and that it is also a threat to him. Again, from the

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<sup>76</sup> It is interesting to note that he inherited this search from his mother, and that both, without question, simply know that it exists and seek it.

<sup>77</sup> Leopold von Andrian, *Der Garten der Erkenntnis* Ed. By Walter H. Perl., (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer Verlag GmbH, 1970), p. 35. "Im niedrigen Gesicht des Fremden war Sanftmut und Bosheit, Furchtsamkeit und Drohung und das ganze Leben, aber wie im Leben zugleich..."

first encounter, “[t]he Stranger told of his life and Erwin knew he was lying, but he also knew that somewhere in this lie was the deep, dark, multifaceted truth.”<sup>78</sup> Therefore, the truth, which might also be seen as an unattainable secret, is both desired and dangerous.

The Stranger’s physical qualities seem to conceal the secret even further, and in fact, they foretell Erwin’s demise. In each encounter, the Stranger grows thinner, more threatening, and less recognizable. The disconnection between his gestures and his expression grows so strong that in the final confrontation he is only recognizable by his gestures. He also loses his most desirable quality over the course of the meetings because in the end, he no longer exhibits the “duality of life” that Erwin initially found appealing. The Stranger seems to grow more physical and less esoteric through each encounter, yet his growing thinner reduces his physicality. Erwin’s death after the final encounter, in which he comes to the realization that the Stranger has always been with him, both thwarts and fulfills his expectation of finding the secret of life, and it suggests that his realization might truly be the secret. The reader’s expectations are similarly circumvented. This is a *Bildungsroman* with no moral lesson and no change in the main character. Therefore, it could be viewed as the inverse of its literary tradition when it calls attention to the meaninglessness of life. By doing so, it alludes to its own intrinsic meaninglessness. The Stranger, Erwin’s double, might be seen as a double of the book itself, a physical object that reveals its futility as the remaining pages of the book dwindle to nothing.

In Arthur Schnitzler’s 1903 play, *The Lonely Way*, objects are treated in an opposite manner as paintings are given the agency to reveal the truth to a bourgeois

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<sup>78</sup> Ibid. “... der Fremde erzählte sein Leben; der Erwin wusste, dass er log, aber er wusste auch, dass in dieser Lüge irgenwie die tiefe, dunkle, vielfältige Wahrheit lag.”

family. This play uses art as a means to highlight relational deception, not only within the characters' relationships with each other, but also within their relationships themselves. Memories are compared to landscape paintings in a museum through allusive references, and they are similarly venerated as precious objects placed in a privileged position. Portraits of the older characters memorialize them in their grandest days. Schnitzler uses paintings throughout the play with various themes, and it is the portrait of Mrs. Wegrat that practically speaks to her son after her death, revealing his true identity. As Felix Wegrat looks at a portrait of his young mother, he muses, "What a strange look that meets me out of those eyes... It's almost as if she were talking to me..."<sup>79</sup> Encountering his mother's portrait, Felix discerns from her eyes that she was in love with Julian Fichtner, the artist who painted her and understands implicitly that he is, in fact, Julian's son, raised by a man who is not his true father. Mrs. Wegrat could not share this secret with her son before her death; instead, she told him to seek the portrait, trusting that the portrait would reveal her son's identity to him.

Her painting becomes her double through its capacity to communicate what she, in life, could not; it contains more agency as a bearer of truth than Mrs. Wegrat did in life. Art and artifice are thusly inverted, and in the context of a play, may be regarded as presenting a parallel between the painting and the play being watched or read.<sup>80</sup> The

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<sup>79</sup>Arthur Schnitzler, *The Lonely Way: Intermezzo: Countess Mizzi: Three Plays by Arthur Schnitzler*, tr. by Edwin Björkman, (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1917), 69.

<sup>80</sup>A 2011 production of *The Lonely Way* highlighted the relationship between artifice and life in each of the characters. Representation became life in this production: for instance, in a scene with a projection of a sunset on the rear stage wall, two actors stood between the projector and the screen playing with their shadows. One of the actors stood closer to the screen than the other, making one shadow smaller than the other and beautifully highlighting the impossibility of true interaction. Portraits, shadows, mirrors, paintings and cameras were as prominently featured as the actors. For instance, in the final scene, the father spoke his closing line, and then a revolving stage brought the body of the drowned Johanna to the front. A mirror dropped from the ceiling and carried the reflected image of the girl to the ceiling. One recalls that before her death, she gazes into a pool and speaks to her reflection, thus, in this final scene, the reflection is

relationships between the characters are mediated by art, just as the audience, engrossed in the fiction taking place before them, might recognize the truth-telling subtext of what is taking place behind the fourth wall.<sup>81</sup> Yet the device of doubling within the play calls into question the authenticity of the intact individual in the audience, for if art holds a truth-bearing capacity within itself, does it not also hold the same capacity between itself and individuals?

Ultimately, Schnitzler pushed the concept of doubling to its greatest degree with his inventive novella, *Lieutenant Gustl* (1900), which he writes as a subjective stream-of-consciousness. This literary device constrains the reader within Gustl's mind and forces him or her into thinking his thoughts. In this short story, Gustl, a soldier, capitulates to a lowly baker in a subtle, yet public confrontation. Unsure if there were any witnesses, Gustl resolves that he must commit suicide that night to retain his honor. Gustl's thoughts vacillate back and forth throughout the story; he quickly squelches thoughts of survival or escape from the situation through his censorial thoughts of honor and pride, clearly exhibiting Freud's theory on the duality of the conscious mind. For example, when Gustl concludes that he needs to end his life, he thinks to himself, "...Well, something must happen....But what? ...*Nothing, nothing at all*—no one heard it. No one knows a thing. ... Perhaps I ought to visit him at his home and beg him to swear to me that he will never tell a soul.—Ah, better to put a bullet through my head at once. ... there's *just nothing else left for me*. (Emphasis added)."<sup>82</sup> The struggle within is evidenced throughout this

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granted the agency that the lifeless body now lacks. *The Lonely Way*. By Arthur Schnitzler. Directed by Alexander Nerlich. Volkstheater, Vienna, Austria, November 21, 2011.

<sup>81</sup>These words hold a similar relationship in German, with art translating to *Kunst*, artifice translating to *Kunstgriff*, and artificial translating to *künstlich*. In other words, art should be regarded as suspicious in both languages.

<sup>82</sup> Arthur Schnitzler, *Lieutenant Gustl*, tr. by Richard L. Simon, (Kobenhaven/Los Angeles: Green Integer Publishing, 2003), 21.

novella, with the survival instinct suppressed by the externalizing, objectifying super-ego that reminds Gustl of his social mores and obligations. This internal struggle is strongly evident a short time later, when he thinks to himself, “Gustl, Gustl, you’re not thinking this out properly! Come to your senses!” and then stifles these thoughts by retorting, “...There’s no way out...No matter how you torture your brain, there’s no way out!”<sup>83</sup> The ellipses locate a place between these opposing thoughts, an inaccessible point of interchange that defies the protagonist as well as the reader.

Following Gustl’s train of thought, the reader likewise thinks these thoughts through the sound of an internal “reading voice.” Yet Gustl is a problematic character with whom few would readily identify. Thus, whether or not it is desired, Gustl’s experience becomes a subjective experience to the reader, who struggles with this inner doubling as much as Gustl himself. The relief experienced at the conclusion, when Gustl discovers that the baker died from a fall the night before evidences this most dramatically and Gustl does not now have to commit suicide to retain his honor; “The main thing is he’s dead, and I can keep on living, and everything’s all right!”<sup>84</sup> As the only character, Gustl’s flagrant elitism, anti-Semitism, and misogyny are alienating, and they create an ambivalent relationship with the reader. Why, then, would the reader experience relief when he learns of the baker’s death? I would argue that it is because Schnitzler brings the duality of the subjective individual to light, he portrays what should remain hidden, and he operates within the reader to do so. On one hand, the survival instinct makes Gustl’s potential suicide a dreaded, horrifying event. Yet, on the other hand, within the mind, it is a fascinating possibility that the reader would like to see brought to a conclusion. The

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<sup>83</sup> Ibid., 27.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid., 58-59.

struggle between these two desired endings mirrors the thought process that is being portrayed; Gustl is both within and outside of the reader.

In this way, Schnitzler's *Lieutenant Gustl* becomes a double that is and is not related to the reading subject, similar to the way a viewer interacts with a self-portrait. A viewer must stand in the position of the artist when he or she beholds a self-portrait, seeing the artist as the artist saw his or her self, with the image remaining a stranger to both. While Gustl is not Schnitzler's self-portrait, his use of interior monologue creates a similar effect; the voice that Schnitzler projects through Gustl renders the reader a temporary stranger to his or her self. Thus, in this instance, doubling serves to directly mediate between the reader and the fictional character, and the double says something about the subjective state of each participant of the dialogue between art and viewer.

Beyond including a new, transgressive type of *Doppelgänger* in these texts, the rational and the irrational are explored as parallels to art and life. The Romantic *Doppelgänger* operates as a catalyst and resolution, again, almost always through death. The Viennese double does not necessarily result in the death of the protagonist, as Lt. Gustl exemplifies, but it does maintain a close association with death. Death and truth are likewise closely related; Mrs. Wegrat carried her affair to the grave and Erwin understands the Stranger's ever-presence only through death. In other words, he only gained access to the sought after "secret of life" in his death. The structural qualities of the narratives all preclude the double from being perceived as a manifestation of another realm, and instead locate doubling in the here and now, bringing the concept of death into immediate dialogue with life.

Sight, too, plays a common role in these texts, both outward and inward. The merchant's son felt that he was under the constant watch of his servants, which signifies an outside gaze, and conversely it was an "inner mirror" that saw his maid's shoulders outfitted in a chain. Similarly, the death of a witness was the singular event to prevent Gustl from committing suicide. The relationship between doubles and vision reflects an interior vision in these cases. In his 1989 essay, "The 'Uncanniness' of Freud's Hermeneutics," Richard Gray disputes Freud's analysis of the uncanny based upon his leap from literary evidence to personal experience in his private practice. Gray argues that vision is the true key to analyzing the double, that the fear of losing one's eyes is not related to castration anxiety but that it is instead related to the self-observation function of conscience.<sup>85</sup> While I do not have the interest or the expertise to contradict Freud, Gray's emphasis on vision is interesting to me in that it is a common theme in these literary works. Even in the case of Gustl, which arguably related to the physical act of witnessing, it is the baker's knowledge of Gustl's character that drives him to the brink of suicide.

These literary texts also demonstrate that the psychological effect of uncanniness that the Romantic *Doppelgänger* produces is not necessarily included in Viennese Modernist literature, yet in every case, the double bears a dual burden itself—of duplicating the protagonist and the structure of the story. The Viennese double collapses the fictive nature that is its realm by challenging the reader's expectations of the literary device, therefore operating in a multifaceted dimension. It represents and resolves oppositional qualities of the protagonist, and it also stands in opposition to the reader while simultaneously engaging him or her. It is a different kind of doubling than that

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<sup>85</sup> Richard T. Gray, "The Hermeneut(r)ic(k) of the Psychic Narrative: Freud's "Das Unheimliche" and Hofmannsthal's Reitergeschichte," *The German Quarterly*, Vol. 62, No. 4, *Focus: Literature and Psychology* (Autumn, 1989), pp. 473-488.

described in psychoanalytic literature. Whereas Rank and Freud's doubles remain within the mind, are intra-psychic, the Viennese Modernist double is furthermore inter-psychic; it calls attention to the role of literature as a mediating device between the mind of the author and the mind of the reader. Schiele's double self-portraits function in both of these ways; the interaction between the figures remains a mystery, yet they address the viewer as divided, highlighting the viewer's own dual nature. Was Schiele's double self-portraiture purely inspired by his contemporaries' writings? If so, how might he have solved the problem of painting such an interpretive structure? These questions might be effectively addressed by comparing forerunners of duplicates in portraiture with Schiele's early double self-portraits.

#### Images of Doubles in Vienna 1900

Schnitzler uses doubling to address the artistry of intra- and inter-personal interactions, and he calls attention to art as a mediating force between our past, present and future. There is a playful aspect to his references to the visual arts through repetitive references to painting as he highlights the artifice within and between the characters. That Schnitzler focused so heavily on images in his play comes as no surprise, because doubling was also incorporated in popular and fine art in Vienna 1900. In addition to the aforementioned Hanns Heinz Ewers' film of 1913, "The Student of Prague," which was known well enough to catch the attention of Otto Rank in Vienna, visual examples of doubling can be found in theater, film, trick photography, and even in the Habsburg collection of fine arts.

Between 1905 and 1910, the Theater in der Josefstadt staged two adaptations of well-known literature that included a *Doppelgänger*. The first, a rendition of Oscar Wilde's novella of the same name, *Dorian Gray*, premiered on September 20, 1907 and

ran for 15 shows.<sup>86</sup> The second, *Ein Doppelleben* (*The mysterious case of Lord Jekyll et Edward Hyde*), was a modified version of Robert Lewis Stevenson's novella, and it premiered on July 19, 1910 and enjoyed a lengthy run of 37 shows.<sup>87</sup> In cinematography, a film entitled *Die Doppelnatur* ran from October 15-22, 1913<sup>88</sup>, and it used coincidence, or the doubling of circumstances as a means of thrilling the audience. In this film, an artist paints a picture, in which a baron's estate is being burglarized. When a burglary occurs shortly thereafter, the artist becomes a suspect. It is noteworthy that art, specifically painting, plays a role in two of these popular examples.

Trick photography likewise provided a popular source for double images. Production of composite photographs, which are the combination of two or more photographs, began as early as 1857, with Oscar Rejlander's ambitious photomontage, *The Two Ways of Life*. Double exposure, which superimposes two images onto a single plate, is a technique that was probably discovered in the early 1860s by William H. Mumler, a Boston engraver. Mumler subsequently changed careers to become a "spirit photographer," selling his photographs of the sitter with a second "ghostly" figure to unwitting customers, his most famous being his photograph of Mary Todd Lincoln with the ghost of her husband. Before long, Mumler was charged with fraud<sup>89</sup>, and photographers adopted the technique of double exposure and used it in a more honest, but playful manner.

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<sup>86</sup> Anton Bauer and Gustav Kropatschek, *200 Jahre Theater in der Josefstadt: 1788-1988*, (Wien: Verlag Anton Schroll & Co., 1988), 287.

<sup>87</sup>*Ibid.*, 288.

<sup>88</sup> *Österreichische Filmographie: Band 1, 1906-1918*. (Wien: Verlag Filmarchiv Austria, 2010) 108-110.

<sup>89</sup> On Mumler's photography and the ensuing trial, see Louis Kaplan, *The Strange Case of William Mumler, Spirit Photographer*, (Minneapolis : University of Minnesota Press, 2008).

Most surviving double self-portraits were produced in American studios, but examples of double exposures can also be found in Europe. Ignác Šechtl (1840-1911), an itinerant photographer trained in Kladno, Czech Republic<sup>90</sup>, learned his trade when *cartes de visite* were highly fashionable, and he eventually established a successful commercial studio in Tábor, Czech Republic. His double self-portrait (Figure 1.4) from ca. 1870 shows how photographers might have used doubling as a means of highlighting their professional skills. Produced around 1870 at a time when Šechtl was working as an itinerant photographer, Šechtl shows himself as both a laboratory worker and chemist retouching a photograph.<sup>91</sup> The activities in which he is engaged clearly highlight the artistry that was required to achieve the trickery within the photograph. By showing himself as a laboratory worker, he points to the perfect clarity of the developed image, and by showing himself as a chemist in the act of retouching, he draws attention to the skill required to produce such an image. The theme of the artist displaying his skills is a traditional one, and the technical ability required to produce such an image commands attention.

While there is no evidence that Schiele was familiar with this particular image, he was certainly familiar with the process of double exposure. In 1914, in collaboration with the Viennese photographer Anton Trčka, Schiele commissioned his own doubly exposed photograph (Figure 1.5). In this photograph, Schiele's image is superimposed, one behind the other, in identical clothing and hairstyle. In a manner similar to the painted and drawn double self-portraits, the fore figure passively looks off to the side of the picture, placid and seemingly unaware that he is being studied. A second image of Schiele, located

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<sup>90</sup> Kladno is now a suburb of Prague, and was at that time a part of the Habsburg Empire.

<sup>91</sup> Jan Hubička, "Ignác Schächtl: (1840-1911)." <http://sechtl-vosecek.ucw.cz>. <http://sechtl-vosecek.ucw.cz/en/ignac.html>, accessed July 24, 2013.

behind the first, gazes intently at the fore figure, his line of sight sharply scrutinizing the side of the fore figure's head, which is unavailable to the viewer's line of sight. Conversely, the viewer sees that which is not in the sightline of the hind figure. This photograph calls attention to the act of looking, an important theme that is reflected in the titling of many of Schiele's double self-portraits, and which will be explored more thoroughly in chapter two.

The iconographic similarities between Schiele's photograph and the unusual painting by Lorenzo Lotto (c.1480- c.1556), *A Goldsmith Seen from Three Sides* (1525-1535) (Figure 1.6), are compelling. This painting has been a part of the Habsburg Imperial collection since 1733, and it was displayed in Room II of the Court Museum housing the Imperial art collections in 1907 and 1908 according to museum guides published in those years.<sup>92</sup> This sensitively rendered portrait is believed to be of a close friend of Lotto's, and it is believed that the unusual depiction could be a whimsical reference to sculpture in the round, the only medium that is capable of considering a subject from all angles. Conversely, it could be a visual pun referring to the name of the goldsmith's hometown, which is believed to be Treviso, as "three faces" would be "tre visi" in Italian. It is probable that Schiele saw this painting as a student at the Academy of Fine Arts, because students were required to study paintings in the Imperial collection.

If Schiele did, in fact, use this as a visual source for his photographic doubling, he rotated the composition 45 degrees, leaving only two of the three figures within the field of vision. By doing this, he includes the viewer as the third figure, playing with the

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<sup>92</sup> Kunsthistorische Sammlungen des Allerhöchsten Kaiserhauses, *Die Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister: Mit 200 Abbildungen*, (Wien: Adolf Holzhausen K. und K. Hof-Buchdrucker, 1907), 54. The painting is also listed as on display in 1908. Kunsthistorische Sammlungen des Allerhöchsten Kaiserhauses, *Führer durch die Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister I: Italienische, Französische und Spanische Schulen*, (Wien: Adolf Holzhausen K. und K. Hof-Buchdrucker, 1908), 76.

distinction between subject and object by including the viewer in the visual interplay. However, in contrast to Lotto's *Goldsmith*, Schiele scrutinizes the side of his own face quite closely, which emphasizes an act of looking that seems both compelling and repellent. The close proximity of the two figures reflects the relationship between a viewer and a photograph; as small, hand-held objects, photographs invite an intimate discourse with their viewer. This intimacy is enhanced by the general connotations of photography; following the mass marketing of the Kodak camera in 1888, photographs have increasingly documented our lives. The interaction of the figures is therefore *too* compelling, too personal; and the level of intimacy required to perform the act of viewing becomes potentially overwhelming. Schiele's doubles as a whole are often met with a combination of fascination and aversion, and I would argue that they are intentionally created to produce a mixed reaction.

Lotto's portrait does not include a direct line of sight between the figures, emphasizing the physical and psychological distance between them. Conversely, Schiele's sharp gaze seems to penetrate his counterpart's face, lending the effect of an intensely personal encounter. We learn from this photograph that Schiele is both placid and intrusive, unaware and yet keenly insightful. The figure in profile seems to dematerialize at the edge of the picture plane, yet a strong shadowing of the frontally-faced Schiele also seems to indicate that the fore figure is physical. In this, as in many of Schiele's doubles, he further distinguishes the two figures as dark and light. He introduces himself as personally comprised of opposing qualities, whereas Lotto's subjects seem to be a unified individual shown from various angles.

The interaction between Schiele's superimposed portraits extends beyond the photograph to the viewer through a direct reference to the frame and therefore to the medium of photography, which requires selection and framing for subject and composition. Not only does Schiele's intense gaze imitate the directed gaze of the viewer, he holds a cigarette in the lower corner of the photograph that intersects with the edge of the photograph, pointing directly to the frame, while the cigarette he holds seems to extend into the viewer's space.

A similar interplay between the viewer and the image is found in Schiele's 1911 painting, entitled *Man and Death (The Self-Seers)* (Figure 1.2). This painting is related to the 1910 *Self-Seers* through both title and pose, although Schiele does increase the allegorical quality of his 1911 rendition by subduing his likeness in the figures. In both of these paintings, the figures are shown in a unified pose, yet they are independent entities. Their positioning suggests a companionable relationship, an embrace, and they are squared off in direct opposition to the viewer.

In both paintings, the figures bear equal weight, but in the second rendition, Schiele highlights their antithetical qualities, by depicting the figures as dark and light, or as I have previously suggested, as photographic print and negative. Upon close inspection, the same dark/light quality can be found in the 1910 *Self-Seers*, with the hind figure less densely modeled in the upper chest and lower facial region. References of opposites are not limited to the depiction of the figures, because both paintings also allude to the space before the canvas, the space in which the viewer stands. In the 1910 *Self-Seers*, the space before the canvas seems to be a mirror in which the doubles are viewing themselves in an act of deep introspection and self-discovery. In the 1911

variation of the *Self-Seers*, Schiele uses a dismembered hand to include the space before the picture plane. This hand, which is shown from the back, cannot originate from either of the figures. Extending from the bottom of the picture plane, it clearly originates from the space before the image. In both of these paintings, Schiele works to resolve the antithetical qualities of within and without, and much like Lotto's reference to sculpture in the round, he challenges the limitations of painting.

Compositionally, Schiele's early double self-portraits are exceptionally similar to a curious double self-portrait created by Hans von Aachen in ca. 1574, entitled *Two Laughing Young Men (Double Self-Portrait)* (Figure 1.7). In 1910, when Schiele painted his first double self-portrait, this painting was part of Rudolf II's collection in what is now Olomouc, Czech Republic,<sup>93</sup> a small town within the former Habsburg Empire located approximately 200 kilometers from Vienna. While there is no documentation that Schiele saw this painting<sup>94</sup>, the similarities between, for example<sup>95</sup>, Schiele's 1910 *Self-Seers* and the von Aachen are compelling. In both, the two figures are positioned with one directly behind the other in an embrace, and in each, one of the heads is tilted to a similar degree. Schiele includes the same self-referential gesturing of the von Aachen pair, but unlike Aachen, he positions both of his figures frontally. Schiele's painting is opened to the viewer, while the von Aachen painting suggests a closed-off circle or an

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<sup>93</sup> Paul Berger-Bergner, *Rudolf II: Eine Ausstellung von Werken seiner Hofkünstler und Bildnissen von Persönlichkeiten an dessen Hof*, (Prag: Kunsthaus Rudolfinum, 1912). This painting was included in a 1912 exhibition of Rudolf II's collection in Prague, and the exhibition catalogue lists the city of origin as Olomouc, where it remains today. This catalogue is not illustrated and it is unclear how great a role this painting played in this exhibition; therefore, it is uncertain whether Schiele viewed it or not.

<sup>94</sup> Given Schiele's penchant for spontaneously boarding trains with no particular destination in mind, it is entirely possible that he encountered this painting. Unfortunately, there are no records available of when and where he traveled. A postcard addressed to his sister, Gertrude, proves that he did travel to Prague in 1908 and his *Neukunstgruppe* exhibited there in 1910, so he was familiar with the region. See Nebehay, *Leben, Briefe, Gedichte*, 91, #83. Egon Schiele Database, 221.

<sup>95</sup> Schiele did not deviate from positioning one figure behind or beside the other in his oil paintings until his 1915 painting, *Transfiguration* (KP288), in which one of the figures is shown above the other.

inside joke. This joke, confirmed by the smiling faces, is supported by a playful distinction between the two figures. The fore figure is stunningly executed, with naturalistic features and rich fabrics presented in perfect detail, while the rear figure is composed of a far cruder application of paint with eyes slightly askew and nose and mouth somewhat disfigured. Aachen seems to be contrasting the natural world with representational likeness in this painting, as it is difficult to distinguish whether this second figure might simply be a painted self-portrait in the background. The riddle is intensified by the coloration and positioning of the hands, especially the hand of the fore figure, as it matches the crude execution and coloration of the rear figure, and the lively hand tugging on the fore figure's ear must be the hand of the hind figure. Because of the hands, the viewer must conclude that the hind figure is not a self-portrait in the background, in spite of the visual cues to the contrary. Schiele would have appreciated an example of visual confusion such as this, and he includes similar trickery in his *Self-Seers* through his inclusion of the space before the canvas in both of these paintings. However, while von Aachen seems to have been playfully alluding to the artifice of portraits, Schiele seems to have been aiming for a more complex theme, as evidenced by his titling and somber colors.

These two paintings do not have the same effect as Schiele's double self-portraits, and it seems clear that their purposes are quite different. Each of the forerunners is a singular foray into double self-portraiture. While Schiele's double compositions are far from anomalous examples, they are unique in that he returned to the theme of double

self-portraiture regularly, and he counted them among his most important works.<sup>96</sup> His regular production on this theme is clearly in harmony with contemporary Viennese interests, as evidenced by the range and quantity of doubles produced in other cultural arenas, from theater and literature to film to photography. Given that the theme was an integral part of the *Zeitgeist*, in hindsight it is perhaps not surprising that double self-portraiture was established at this time. In addition to the popularity of the *Doppelgänger* theme, the similarities between the two forerunners and Schiele's double self-portraits provide compelling evidence that Schiele encountered and modified an existing double self-portrait, taking up the theme and reworking it throughout his career. While it is important to establish these sources, it remains the case that no other visual artist of Schiele's generation engaged with doubling in the ways that he did.

These examples demonstrate that the inclusion of a double in Schiele's self-portraiture was not a strategic means to convey a singular idea; rather, it was a response to a greater cultural interest in doubling that arose around 1900 in Vienna. At the very least, his inclusion of a double in his work suggests that he was in dialogue with his contemporaries, and not merely duplicating his image for self-gratification. Viennese authors were similarly responding to their predecessors, but modifying the theme of the *Doppelgänger* to reflect Viennese concerns, and I will address these concerns specifically in chapter three through the lens of Schiele's initial foray into double self-portraiture. The consistent inclusion of concepts such as death and sight in the disciplines of art, literature, and psychoanalysis are congruent with the common understanding that sight is not merely a physical act, and similarly, death is not merely a physical end. Because

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<sup>96</sup> Schiele wrote a letter to Arthur Roessler in December of 1910 inquiring who had bought *Self-Seers*, because he believed that only certain collectors should have access to it. See Nebehay, *Leben, Briefe, Gedichte*, 140, #151. Egon Schiele Database, 288.

Viennese authors used doubling as a means of setting opposite concepts into play and of highlighting the structure of the literary composition, they challenged the boundaries between audience and author, making the concept of doubling, which is derived from the *Doppelgänger*, more immediate, tangible, and personal.

## CHAPTER TWO

### ARTISTIC IDENTITY AND THE YOUNG ARTIST

The consistencies between Schiele's cultural milieu and his double self-portraits help to elucidate how they might convey meaning, especially within the context of Vienna in 1910. Schiele's early work also deserves consideration as developmental production, because it reveals the beginnings of his long-term concerns and creative pursuits that eventually coalesce and surface in his double self-portraits.<sup>97</sup> In other words, his early engagements are especially relevant when one seeks to understand Schiele's aims in his most enigmatic works. Three relevant themes are locatable in Schiele's paintings and drawings before 1909: studied imitation of old masters' self-portraits, depictions of doubling that are not necessarily self-portraiture, and a study of the mirror as a site of creative inquiry. These disparate concerns begin to coalesce in written form in 1909, only becoming manifest together in visual form in 1910 in his self-portraiture.

Schiele's early work reveals that even as a teenager, he was turning to Renaissance master painters as a source of inspiration and as role models on which he might form his own artistic identity. Because he adopts poses, lighting, coloration and signatures from old masters, his early self-portraits might be viewed as a series, regardless whether they were intentionally created as such. Together they demonstrate that Schiele was asserting his own identity as a great artist, and that he was studying these works as intensely as he was studying his mirror image. One such self-portrait to which I will pay particular attention deviates far from his earlier, derivative renditions of his

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<sup>97</sup> For a detailed examination of Schiele's early works, see Christian Bauer, "I, Eternal Child: The early work as a harbinger of maturity," in *Egon Schiele: The Beginning* (Munich: Hirmer Publishers, 2013), 8-37.

visage. *Nude Study* of 1908 (Figure 2.14) is a faithful rendition of the mirror's image, and I argue that it is inspired by Parmigianino's *Self-Portrait in a Convex Mirror* of 1524 (Figure 2.16). His attention to the viewing public was also developed through these early exercises, demonstrating that he was likely already thinking about how his images might convey the message that he should be considered as a great artist himself. While I will continue to avoid attributing the meanings of Schiele's paintings to biography, the challenges that he was facing, whether real or perceived, must be considered. His early self-portraiture responds to them as if he were addressing his detractors visually. In other words, they argue his case not only through their status as works of art, but also through their iconography.

#### Painting the Artist: Schiele's Early Self-Portraits (1906-1909)

Schiele painted his first extant self-portrait, *Self-Portrait with Palette* (Figure 2.1), in 1905 when he was fifteen years old. With this gouache painting, the young Schiele began a small number of self-portraits depicting himself in the role of an artist, layering onto his features an increasing number of allusions to the ideal artist.<sup>98</sup> Schiele depicts himself here in a profile view against a dark, hatched background, and he focuses his full attention upon his vocation. The light tone of his face, collar, and palette contrast starkly with the background and his jacket, drawing the viewer's eye toward his brightly lit face, as strong strokes of red color direct the gaze from the lips to the necktie and the palette. This is a *Standesporträt*; rather than a translation of selfhood, it is a self-portrait intended

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<sup>98</sup> Schiele would, later in life, refer to "the artist" as an ideal figure again and again. The first example of this appears in the 1909 "Neukünstler Manifest," written by Schiele and his classmates as a withdrawal from the Academy of Fine Arts. "Viele von uns sind Künstler, ich meine unter Künstler nicht den Mensch mit Titel oder Eigenschaft sondern den Berufenen" (Many of us are artists. By artist, I do not mean people with titles or characteristics, but instead, those who are called). Nebehay, *Leben, Briefe, Gedichte*, 112, #93. Egon Schiele Database, 231.

to demonstrate his artistic talent as well as his respectable social standing. Character and disposition are deemphasized in this self-portrait, with status and mimetic qualities given the privileged role. While it may seem strange for a young artist to begin with a claim to greatness, this painting is also anticipatory, serving Schiele's desire at the time to convince his family to allow him to pursue an artistic career. What becomes clear throughout the development of his early self-portraiture is a studied incorporation of attributes that signify artistic greatness.

Two photographs taken in 1906 show the young Schiele wearing the high collar and oversized, floppy bowtie that distinguished the students the Academy of Fine Arts in public by their attire (Figures 2.2 and 2.3). In both, Schiele holds a palette and brush, further claiming his role as a painter. In fact, he would not be permitted to paint at the Academy until he mastered his drawing classes approximately two years after his entrance.<sup>99</sup> Nevertheless, with his admission to the Academy of Fine Arts in 1906, Schiele was permitted to pursue his vision and ambition, overcoming two tremendous obstacles. His guardian, his uncle Leopold Czihaczek, was vehemently opposed to Schiele attending the Academy, yet against his wishes, he was admitted as the youngest student in his class at 16 years of age. Painting tools might well be seen as props in this context, and these photographs belie Schiele's fledgling status as a formal art student. Schiele quickly abandoned the incorporation of painting tools into his self-portraiture after admittance to the Academy. The bowtie seems to have been sufficient evidence of his rank as an artist, as he rarely failed to include it in these early years, and regardless of their shortcomings, it was perhaps sufficient that these works of the unofficially-trained painter nevertheless are paintings.

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<sup>99</sup> Comini, *Egon Schiele's Portraits* (1974), 18.

Schiele's artistic training had begun in 1903 through a friendly cooperation that included instruction and support from his earliest mentor, Max Kahrer (1878-1937). Kahrer painted in the manner of Austrian *Stimmungsimpressionismus*, an impressionistic style that emphasized mood over subject matter and shunned the sobriety and technical rigor of optical impressionism. Thus, Schiele's formal training had only just begun in 1905 when Ludwig Karl Strauch (1875-1959) came to Klosterneuberg to teach freehand drawing at his *Gymnasium*. Strauch had studied at the Academy of Fine Arts, and recognizing Schiele's talent, he broadened Schiele's instruction to include painting lessons. The influence of his instructor's academic training is evident in his early paintings in his precocious employment of modeling and cross-hatching (Figure 2.1). Historical influences also surfaced in his early self-portraiture, because Schiele began appropriating the content and positioning of Northern masters such as Albrecht Dürer and Rembrandt van Rijn.

Schiele's admiration of Dürer is evident in his 1907 *Self-Portrait with Long Hair* (Figure 2.4), in which he quotes the frontal position, serious expression, and the intensely direct gaze of Albrecht Dürer's 1500 *Self-Portrait* (Figure 2.6). In this and other renditions (see also Figure 2.5), Schiele replaces Dürer's sumptuous robes with the status symbol of the Viennese academy painter's bowtie. By emulating Dürer so directly, Schiele is including himself in the tradition of Northern, here specifically German masters. His strong sense of the German tradition is established in a written account entitled *Self-Portrait* from 1910, in which Schiele outlines his German ancestry, and which he begins with the line, "In me flows old German blood..."<sup>100</sup> Here, he is referring

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<sup>100</sup> Nebehay, *Leben, Briefe, Gedichte*, 141, #155. Egon Schiele Database, 291. "In mir fließt altes deutsches Blut..."

to his paternal lineage, an inheritance and a relationship that Schiele valued highly. After his father's death in 1904, the 14-year-old Schiele systematically stamped and catalogued his father's library with his own stamp that read "Bibliothek des Schiele, Egon//Klosterneuburg Nummer" (Figure 2.7). His father's collection was very likely important to him, because he maintained it throughout his life and his sister, Gerti, inherited it when he died.

Christian Bauer discovered that one book listed in Schiele's library inventory, Adolf Föh's 1903 *Geschichte der bildenden Künste*, used Dürer's 1500 self-portrait as a frontispiece.<sup>101</sup> Bauer hypothesizes that this powerful image provided the young artist with a model of "...an artist who could be successful in his father's eyes."<sup>102</sup> This may be an overstatement, but it is at the very least a reasonable assumption that Föh's book would have been especially meaningful connection between father and son, and its acquisition may have even been an example of Adolf Schiele indulging the 13-year-old boy's ambitions. If so, Dürer's portrait would have represented a connection to his father and to his German lineage. Even more convincing of Schiele's admiration of the artist, Bauer also found that Schiele used pen and ink to recreate Dürer's monogram multiple times in 1905, demonstrating not only his deep admiration for the master, but also his desire to develop his own signature as a sign of authorship or identity.<sup>103</sup> Evidently, Schiele was exploring every aspect of becoming a master artist in his own right.

While not always warmly received, citing Northern masters allowed Schiele to explore various aspects of the painter's role while remaining within the prescribed

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<sup>101</sup> Bauer, *The Beginning*, 13.

<sup>102</sup> Christian Bauer, "Paths to Expression in Egon Schiele's Portraiture," in *Egon Schiele: Portraits*, Alessandra Comini, ed. (New York: Prestel Verlag, 2014), 43.

<sup>103</sup> Bauer, *The Beginning*, 21.

confines of the Academy.<sup>104</sup> Schiele's early self-portraits adhere to the traditional conventions of an artist's self-portrait, wherein he emphasizes his technical skills through composition, modeling, and verisimilitude, and he further asserts his status as an artist through his posture and attire. His *Self-Portrait, Facing Right* of 1907 (Figure 2.8) reveals a talented, self-confident young painter, who, through a formal three-quarter pose and loose brushwork, may have referred to Rembrandt van Rijn's self-portraiture (Figure 2.9).

Set within a dark indeterminate background, the strong chiaroscuro suggests Rembrandt's influence, while the simultaneously subdued expression and inaccessible eyes redirect the viewer's attention from seeking a "self" in the image. Instead, Schiele seems to be demonstrating his painterly skills, indicating that like Rembrandt, he also holds the ability to evoke a mood through the enhanced contrast of shadow and light. Short, evenly applied brushstrokes across the highlight on his cheek suggest the presence of the artist more than the image of his face does, for they are quite visible and densely applied, perhaps even overworked. In contrast, the brushwork that indicates the shadowed areas is almost invisible, with lyrical bluish highlights delimiting the right side of the face and bow tie. The contrast between shadow and light has a mask-like effect, subsuming any concept of selfhood under the larger concept of artistic status.

Throughout his early self-portraiture, Schiele's personal characteristics are deemphasized, a decision that is starkly contrasted with *Head of a Bearded Man I* (Figure 2.10), a painting portraying his uncle from the same year. In this painting, the attire, the facial expression and the proud, upward tilt of the head emphasizes Czihaczek's character

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<sup>104</sup> Kallir, *The Complete Works*, 38. Schiele's painting instructor, Christian Griepenkerl, almost refused to accept Schiele as a student after encountering one of his self-portraits, saying that "he looked too much like a dandy."

and status as a Viennese bourgeois.<sup>105</sup> This example establishes that Schiele was familiar with the conventions of portraiture in terms of mimesis, status, character and disposition and he largely adhered to them as a young, dependent artist. In contrast, the special status of Dürer's frontal positioning and its indication of artistic status can be seen in a partly unsuccessful attempt to apply this format to a sitter in the *Portrait of Leopold Czihaczek* of 1907 (Figure 2.11). Here, Schiele employs the same frontal position found in his 1906 and 1907 self-portraits (Figures 2.4 and 2.5), and he places his signature in the same manner as Dürer, to the left of his subject's head on the background of the image. In contrast to Schiele's 1906 and 1907 self-portraits, his guardian appears stiff and subdued. Thin, indistinct strokes of dark browns describe Czihaczek's clothing and hair, contrasting with thick layers of distinct highlighting in the center of the work, as if the modeling that describes Czihaczek's eyes, nose, moustache, and chin was applied in a sculptural manner. The effect is that Czihaczek appears to be stony, cold, and almost inhuman. Beyond exemplifying the difficulty of rendering a figure in this uncompromising pose, which Schiele had already mastered, this portrait's stony silence contrasts with the dynamic visage of the artist who stares from Schiele's 1906 and 1907 self-portraits.

That stare is at once the commanding gaze of a master painter and a reflection of Schiele's personality. Both the paintings and the photographs include it, a dead-serious, intense focus. Years later, the Viennese art critic Arthur Roessler, who was Schiele's supporter and friend, introduced Schiele in his 1922 panegyric *Erinnerungen an Egon*

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<sup>105</sup> Even in these early portraits, Schiele isolates his subject within the painting; he rarely provides a context regardless if the painting is of him or another. He focuses instead upon representing character through expression and pose. What later becomes "the void" might well be a development of this tendency.

*Schiele*: “He was the shyest man I have ever met. ...He was as shy as a wild forest whose astonished, deep, dark eyes were completely full of questions. But his shyness was not timidity, because for him it was never fear for himself, his shyness was rather a delicate concern for the preservation of the vulnerable souls of others.”<sup>106</sup> Schiele’s penetrating stare, in Roessler’s estimation, probes its subject while likewise respecting it. Roessler’s description of Schiele conveys the artist’s self-confidence and his curiosity regarding his subjects. With the exception of the frontal self-portraits that certainly display his engagement with his mirror image, one can only speculate who or what exactly he is scrutinizing. It is sufficient to note that Schiele seems to be demonstrating his intention to capture the object of his gaze with the paint on his palette, or that he is capable of seeing more than external appearances. By bowing his head slightly, he emphasizes his line of sight, opening the eyes to look upward. A bowed head might also imply humility, suggesting that he was cognizant of his neophyte status, but his devotion to his mission is foremost on display.

Before 1908, Schiele carefully crafted an image of a master artist, inscribing the styles, poses, coloration and even signatures of the old masters onto his own likeness. Schiele’s precocious talent was not only demonstrated through his artistic production and through careful allusions to old master painters; he chose to model his self-portraits after two of the most prolific painters of self-portraiture, as if their self-evaluation justified his own. His profound confidence in his artistic ability did not lie in his mimetic skills alone,

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<sup>106</sup> Arthur Roessler, *Erinnerungen an Egon Schiele: Marginalien zur Geschichte des Menschentums eines Künstlers*, (Wien/Leipzig: Richard Lanyi, 1921), 7. “Er war der scheueste Mensch, der mir bisher begegnete. Der scheueste, stillste und innerlich einer der vornehmsten. Er war so scheu wie ein Waldwild und hatte dessen grosse, staunende, von Fragen ganz angefüllt tiefdunkle Augen. Seine Scheu war aber nicht Ängstlichekeit, denn es war ihm nie um sich selber bange, seine Scheu war vielmehr zarte Sorge um die Bewahrung der leicht verletzlichen Seelen anderer.”

which especially in painting remained in development, but also in his keen ability to observe and analyze each of these elements, and in his indefatigable commitment to emulate those he admired until he achieved the result he desired. When seen in isolation, each of Schiele's approaches to his self-presentation might be seen as a childish attempt to aggrandize himself, but in aggregate, they suggest that Schiele was thinking about his artistic identity as malleable and promotable. In other words, Schiele seems to have understood that beyond creating landscapes, portraits and historical works, creating self-portraiture that represents his ambition to be a great artist might persuade those who were impeding his desire to become one.

### Doubles and Opposites

Schiele's double self-portraiture should be understood through the development of his early self-portraiture and through his engagement with his mirror, and it is also supported by a second theme that Schiele addressed in his early works, that of doubling. Double images manifested themselves in his portraiture early on, as well as in subjects that he selected to portray such as the biblical story of Cain and Abel. One early example is his 1908 drawing, *Professor Strauch at His Easel* (Figure 2.12), in which he depicts his mentor in the act of creating a self-portrait. This is an important predecessor to Schiele's double self-portraits.<sup>107</sup>

In his drawing of his Professor, Schiele turns the easel on which Strauch is working to display the faintly delineated self-portrait in its creation, and what it shows is a second profile view, a duplication of what Schiele sees instead of what Strauch would be seeing as he painted himself. In fact, the artist Strauch is shown facing a tall, angular

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<sup>107</sup> This was first noted by Alessandra Comini and has been further explored by Christian Bauer. See Comini, *Egon Schiele's Portraits* (1974), 12 and Bauer in Comini, *Egon Schiele: Portraits* (2014), 45.

form that resembles the side of an easel, and its extension from the top of the sheet to the bottom creates a visual barrier between Strauch and his second likeness. It is not only Strauch that is duplicated in this drawing, but also his self-portrait. Naturalistic, one-point perspective is thus discarded in exchange for satisfying the curious and dominating eye of the viewer as Schiele privileges the knowledge of the viewer over that of his subject.

The diminished scale of Strauch's self-portrait precludes it being regarded as a true *Doppelgänger* of Strauch, and because there is no indication that the senior artist knows of its revelation, there is also an impression of being shown too much. That sense is emphasized by the impossibility of the lighting in this portrait, with Strauch's figure encased in shadow, as if lit from a window behind, and his self-portrait flatly and clearly illustrated. The dark/light contrast that I described in chapter one is also a component of this earlier example of doubling. As a precursor to Schiele's double self-portraiture, a certain understanding of doubling's conceptual advantages is already evident in this early drawing.

The doubling that occurs in some of his early portraiture is found also in Schiele's selection of biblical imagery from this time, namely that of Cain and Abel.<sup>108</sup> Schiele would have understood Cain and Abel to be twins.<sup>109</sup> Abel, the first born, was a shepherd and his brother Cain a farmer. Their complementary vocations did not yield equal sacrifices in God's eyes. God rejected Cain's sacrifice, which was his harvest, and

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<sup>108</sup> Christian Bauer also regards as a double portrait *Two Portraits of Leopold Czihaczek* from 1906, which shows two pencil drawings of his uncle on the same sheet of paper. His claim, that the sketches "provide the first evidence of Schiele's calling into question the validity of a single snapshot in time" is unconvincing given their enclosure within two squares of hatching that isolates each as independent sketches. See Bauer in Comini, *Egon Schiele: Portraits* (2014), p. 44.

<sup>109</sup> Genesis 4: 1-2 does not specify that Cain and Abel were twins, only that Cain was the first-born. Christian tradition, with which Schiele was most familiar, views them as twins. The Old Testament is used in Judaism and Islam as well; I do not believe that those traditions would have been relevant to Schiele's view of Cain and Abel at the age of seventeen.

accepted Abel's, a lamb, leading to the first murder and to Cain's curse. Cain would not yield fruit from the earth after slaying his brother; instead, he was cursed to wander the earth. Eventually, Cain did settle down and he built the first city, Enoch. Abel, the first murder victim, might be seen as a precursor to Christ.

The story of Cain and Abel could be understood as *Doppelgänger* in the traditional, Romantic sense of the word. As twins, they shared the same womb, and as children experienced similar upbringings. Cain's murder of his brother after an invitation to take a walk in the fields recalls the murderous stalking of the *Doppelgänger* in literature. Cain's curse to wander the earth as a vagabond suggests the disembodied wanderings of a lost spirit. In addition to their commonalities with the *Doppelgänger*, the biblical figures also reveal their antithetical qualities. Their adult vocations were complementary to each other, opposite and working in harmony with the other. What is said of their temperaments is also opposite, and certainly not complementary. Cain's fury at God's rejection of his sacrifice is the inverse of Abel's obedience. Schiele's choice of this topic could have had many different results.

Schiele's detailed 1907 pencil drawing entitled *Cain Slaying Abel* (Figure 2.13) shows the twins at their most tense moment, in the moment of jealousy and rejection in which Cain, in Schiele's interpretation, raises a club to commit the first murder. His decision to depict the confrontation between the brothers is unusual, in that Schiele chose the moment that Abel is still standing and his raised hand mirrors his brother's raised arms. He looks toward his face, as if seeking understanding, and shrinks back to avoid the impending blow. In spite of his flinching, he is shown standing his ground with his mouth agape, perhaps from astonishment or perhaps arguing against Cain's impending sin and

consequential curse. What matters here is that Abel is depicted in a moment when Cain still has the agency to change the situation, and the clash between his righteousness and his brother's envy and rage are the most visible.

Schiele focuses on the sacrificial element of the story, with both brothers' sacrificial pyres carefully rendered in addition to Abel's recoil from his brother's deadly blow. Apparently, Schiele carefully considered how to depict the twins' oppositional qualities as well. His staff and the drape that should presumably be made of sheepskin indicate Abel's identity as a shepherd, and his clothing also indicates his righteousness when contrasted with Cain's shaved head and brutish posture that emphasizes his nakedness. Schiele's selection and interpretation of this particular narrative might also have been personal; he may have already been identifying himself as a sacrificial victim.

Schiele depicts a completely imaginary moment. The biblical narrative only conveys that the brothers were in the fields when the murder occurred. His image of what happened in that field, in which Abel was on Cain's turf (literally and figuratively), is telling. Schiele emphasizes Cain's brutishness, jealousy, and rage, just as he emphasizes Abel's inner strength through his ability to look his murderer in the face. Years later, Schiele would write a script entitled "Visions," which seems to correspond closely with his imagined encounter between the brothers. "Everything that was dear to me," Schiele wrote in 1910, "I wanted to tenderly face the wrathful people so that their eyes must counter mine and I wanted to present this to the envious. And say to them that I am worthless."<sup>110</sup> Schiele wrote these words in the past tense, he could have been describing the desire behind this scene. Abel's last moment of strength, in which he looks his

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<sup>110</sup> Nebehay, *Leben, Briefe, Gedichte*, 348, #652 f. Egon Schiele Database: #1923. "Alles was mir Lieb war, ich wollte die zornigen Menschen lieb ansehen, damit ihre Augen gegentun müssen, und die Neidigen wollt' ich beschenken und ihnen sagen, dass ich wertlos bin."

brother in the eyes, corresponds with Schiele's self-description of his personal struggle. *Cain Slaying Abel*, then, may well be an allegorical self-portrait of the young artist.

Reconciliation between these first doubles is impossible, not only throughout Cain's life, but also throughout future generations because of God's curse upon him. They are reciprocal opposites, which highlights their propinquity. Cain, the first man to be born is twinned with Abel, the first man to die, providing a historical template for depicting the interdependence between the two conditions. Therefore, the story that Schiele selected to depict exemplifies the oppositional and interdependent nature of life and death. Additionally, Schiele's representation of the twins carefully includes their respective sacrifices, rendering one as still burning while the other smolders and smokes. In this, Schiele emphasizes the opposition between their personalities, sacrificial choices, and God's response to each of them, in spite of the twinning of the men and the method of their offerings. Schiele seems to have been formulating an understanding that the same action can yield opposing results, an important distinction that he will later apply to the act of viewing. It seems that reconciliation between opposing forces remains possible to Schiele through vision.

#### *Nude Study: A Fresh Perspective in the Mirror*

Schiele was growing increasingly frustrated with the Academy in 1908; the instruction that he received there was too conservative and his studies too ponderous for his liking. His disenchantment with the institution did not fully erase the Academy's influence, but his exposure to a wide variety of art began to manifest itself in his artwork that year. The Secession, visible across the street from the Academy of Fine Arts, was one noteworthy influence. Schiele had already approached Gustav Klimt in 1907 seeking mentorship

from the prominent artist, who generously introduced him to his colleagues in the *Wiener Werkstätte*. In 1909, Schiele exhibited in the Vienna *Kunstschau* by invitation of the Secession group. The Secession's, and namely Klimt's influence is evident in a remarkable departure from Schiele's previous self-portraiture, his *Nude Study* of 1908 (Figure 2.14).

Kallir tentatively identifies *Nude Study* as a self-portrait standing above a mirror.<sup>111</sup> While it is difficult to identify Schiele definitively from the sparsely defined facial features, the figure's physical stature, hairstyle, and youthful appearance matches Schiele's at that time. Further, the painting's perspective strongly suggests that it was created over a mirror, and while it is possible to position a model in a pose that would allow for such strong foreshortening, it would be an awkward pose and difficult to maintain. Schiele would need to have painted a model from below, when in fact; his preferred position was to paint his subjects from above them. By using a mirror and painting his own image from this unusual angle, he would have had the advantage of painting himself from a birds-eye view, and it would appear as if he were painting himself from below. For these reasons, I believe that *Nude Study* is a self-portrait and will treat it as such.

This painting shows a marked shift in the way that Schiele depicts himself as an artist, and it is possible that the perspective and nude figure were inspired by the female figure in Klimt's controversial *Medicine* of 1901 (Figure 2.15). Isolated on the left side of the painting, Klimt's nude is shown from an extremely low perspective, with her left arm forming one of two bridges with the pillar of human activity on the right-hand side.

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<sup>111</sup> Kallir, *The Complete Works*, 281. Jane Kallir notes that Rudolf Leopold observed the perspectival similarity between this self-portrait and the female figure in Gustav Klimt's controversial *Medicine*.

Schiele certainly included the similar low perspective, and as this is his first nude self-portrait, may well have been loosely citing Klimt's painting. Yet this is again a self-portrayal as an artist! Indeed, he appears to be painting a picture that is located beyond the outer edge of the self-portrait, and he is deeply immersed in the act of viewing his reflection. That may be because this perspective would have made viewing his face far more difficult than an ordinary angle would be, as the visual distance between his face and reflection would be twice as far, and it is also a likely reason for the spare depiction of Schiele's facial features.

As a self-portrait, Parmigianino's *Self-Portrait in a Convex Mirror* of 1524 (Figure 2.16) is another likely source to consider, for it has been hanging in Vienna's Kunsthistorisches Museum since well before Schiele's school years. Parmigianino's self-reflexive depiction of his visage on a rounded wooden surface is a direct, literal translation of the distorted image he sees in his convex mirror, and the painting's frame, identical to the gilded frame of a mirror, collapses the distinction between the artist's mirror and painting surface by serving as an indication of both. The split that the artist enacts while painting a self-portrait as observer and observed is likewise called forth through the dual meaning of Parmigianino's frame. These ideas would have appealed to the young Schiele, because his intimate relationship with his mirror was already well established at this time, and even as a child Schiele did not walk past a mirror without pausing to closely examine himself.<sup>112</sup>

Schiele's relationship to his mirror will be examined more closely in chapter four, but here I intend to focus on this first faithful rendition of a mirror image. Schiele's conscientious reproduction of his likeness within the mirror in his *Nude Study* translates

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<sup>112</sup> Comini, *Egon Schiele's Portraits* (1974), 11.

Parmigianino's effect and theoretical framework without directly citing the painting or including a distortion. However, the viewing experience could not be more disturbed. Whereas Parmigianino's careful rendition of the image in his convex mirror emphasizes that the viewer stands in the artist's place, Schiele's placement of his mirror makes that type of identification nearly impossible. He is certainly distinguishing himself in this painting, aligning himself with Parmigianino while simultaneously developing his painting's key theoretical concept through its negation. Is Schiele conveying that he is better than Parmigianino, better than the viewer? That is indeterminable, because his image seems to stand above the viewer, while it is in fact below him or her. Regardless of Schiele's level of hubris in painting this image, his engagement with the uncertainty of doubling and his understanding of the viewer's position before the painting are stunningly clear.

Schiele's nudity, the first nude self-portrait to emerge, and the unusual perspective are indeed likely to be inspired by Klimt's *Medicine*, and the results are vastly different. In contrast to the slack, passive comportment of the nude in *Medicine*, Schiele's figure is active. The distinctions between Schiele's *Nude Study* and Klimt's figure in *Medicine* indicate that Schiele was beginning to gravitate toward Symbolism, and that he was not abandoning his admiration for the old masters. His frustration with the Academy was palpable, but he never fully rejected the historical models that he had adopted in his early years. For instance, he maintained the somber palette of the masters in many of his later Symbolic works, punctuating them with finely applied, bright colors to energize the surfaces.

The early self-portraits are quite distinct from Schiele's most well-known self-portrayals, and they establish that his understanding of self-portraiture was, at least in part, conceptual from the beginning, and his earliest influences continued to appear in his self-portraiture beyond his so-called "Expressionistic breakthrough."<sup>113</sup> His most prolific engagement with self-portraiture began in the later months of 1909, and shortly thereafter, he clarified his thoughts in writing through a series of poems and aphorisms, four of which are entitled "Self-Portrait." These were published by Arthur Roessler in 1921 under the title *Briefe und Prosa von Egon Schiele*.<sup>114</sup> Schiele produced comparatively few self-portraits before 1909 and he did not use his body as an object of interrogation to the same degree or effect as in his self-portraiture after 1909. While most scholars agree that Schiele engaged with self-portraiture as a means of exploring the concept of selfhood, that is, of himself as either an artist or as a psychological subject, it has been largely overlooked that he mapped ideas onto his physical form through his self-portraiture. He would continue to do so as he directed his work in a Symbolist direction.

#### Modern and Eternal: An Eclectic New Style

1909 proved to be a pivotal year for Schiele, as it was the year in which the two threads of his work began to merge. The paintings that he was creating for display remained influenced by Secession aesthetics, and the distinction between his works on paper and his paintings became greater, especially in his self-portraiture. In his paintings, he incorporated the fine, sinewy line of the *Jugendstil* artists. Highly influenced by Klimt's geometric surface, Schiele's portraits of this year have a stylized, architectural quality

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<sup>113</sup> Kallir, *The Complete Works*, 18. This is a term established by Kallir and now generally agreed upon, although she backs away from it in her latest publications.

<sup>114</sup> Arthur Roessler, *Briefe und Prosa von Egon Schiele*, (Wien: Buchhandlung Richard Lányi, 1921), 17-25.

that relish in their own design. Conversely, Schiele's figural works on paper were beginning to exhibit a greater experimentation with gesture and facial expression. The gulf widened after Schiele was invited to exhibit in the 1909 *Wiener Kunstschau*. Before this, it is possible that Schiele incorporated a more conservative portraiture style because he was painting and drawing family members who held his future in their hands. After his uncle Czihaczek broke ties with him in 1910, Schiele painted much fewer portraits of family members, with the exception of his favorite sister, Gerti. Instead, he gravitated first toward friends and then street children as models instead of his uncle, mother and sister, Melanie. Additionally, there are other forces guiding Schiele's iconography.

In terms of biography, 1909 was a transitional year in many respects. Along with a number of fellow students, Schiele withdrew from the Academy and formed an association called the *Neukunstgruppe*, or *New-art Group*, which elected Schiele, its youngest member, as the leader of the group. Schiele's withdrawal was a response to his conservative painting instructor, Christian Griepenkerl (1839-1912), who made life at the Academy intolerable for Schiele and the others through his strict adherence to the rules of academic tradition. Schiele's decision did not only grant him the artistic independence to create art as he saw fit, it also forced him, and possibly his fellow members, to articulate an artistic philosophy in a first draft of the *Neukunstgruppe* Manifesto. "Many of us are artists," Schiele proclaimed. "By artists I mean not the person with a title or quality but a calling. Art is always the same thing: art. Therefore, there is no new art. There are *new-artists*. Even the *new-artist's* study is always a work of art; it is a piece of himself which is alive."<sup>115</sup> This first draft of the manifesto, written in Schiele's handwriting, was

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<sup>115</sup> Nebehay, *Leben, Briefe, Gedichte*, 112, #93. Egon Schiele Database, 231. "Viele von uns sind Künstler, ich meine unter Künstler nicht den Mensch mit Titel oder Eigenschaft sondern den Berufenen. Kunst bleibt

published much later in 1914, and Schiele echoed these thoughts throughout his life. While he had previously written statements to his uncle in an attempt to gain understanding and support from him, he had never before worked with others to create a public declaration of his beliefs about the role of artists in society. Two salient points can be drawn from this excerpt. Schiele believed that the artist should be visionary, that he or she is “called,” and he believed that artists bear the responsibility to contribute to humanity on a spiritual level.

A 1910 paragraph entitled “Sketch of a Self-Portrait” revisits these convictions; here he writes, “My brutish teachers were always enemies to me. They - and others - did not understand me. The highest sensation is religion and art. Nature is purpose. But therein is God, and I feel him strongly, very strongly, the strongest. I believe that there is no "modern" art; there is only one art, and it is eternal.”<sup>116</sup> These beliefs border on the prophetic, and in light of his group’s statement, “not the person with the title or quality,” it is quite possible that he considered his former instructor, Griepenkerl, a false prophet. For Schiele, a spiritual elite exists in art as in life who understands art and the common crowd who does not.<sup>117</sup>

Schiele’s maxims also seem to be in response to the anti-modernism that he had encountered in his education. His hostile relationship with Griepenkerl was not merely a reaction to the instructor’s strict teaching methods; rather it was in response to his

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immer gleich dasselbe: Kunst. Deshalb gibt es keine Neukunst. Es gibt Neukünstler. Schon die Studie des Neukünstlers ist immer ein Kunstwerk, diese ist ein Stück von ihm selbst, das lebt.”

<sup>116</sup> Ibid., 142, #155. “Meine rohen Lehrer waren mir stets Feinde. Sie - und andere - verstanden mich nicht. Die höchste Empfindung ist Religion und Kunst. Natur ist Zweck; aber dort ist Gott, und ich empfinde ihn stark, sehr stark, am stärksten. Ich glaube, daß es keine "moderne" Kunst gibt; es gibt nur eine Kunst, und die ist immerwährend.”

<sup>117</sup> Ibid., 182, #251. “Es freut mich, daß es so Wenige gibt die Kunst wittern. - das deutet immer wieder auf das Göttliche in der Kunst.”

unyielding anti-Modernist stance.<sup>118</sup> Griepenkerl's staunch historicism stood in opposition to the direction in which Viennese art was going, which was gravitating toward a subjective expressiveness, with portraiture and landscapes leading the trend. The Vienna Secession, founded in 1897 by a group of notable Viennese artists, including Gustav Klimt, Koloman Moser, Josef Hoffmann, Joseph Maria Olbrich and Max Kurzweil, was paramount to introducing international artists to the city, and their alliance with Symbolists and *plein-air* painters greatly influenced the following generation. From the first exhibition in 1898, Symbolists such as Fernand Khnopff, Giovanni Segantini and Pierre Puvis de Chavannes were consistently included in the mix, and in the 1903 exhibition, the Post-Impressionists Vincent van Gogh, Odilon Redon and Paul Gauguin were featured.<sup>119</sup> Schiele, already influenced by his early instruction by Max Kahrer, naturally gravitated toward these newer, less restrictive methods of creating art. The young Oskar Kokoschka's inclusion in the 1908 International *Kunstschau*, organized by the Klimt-Hoffmann group of artists who had withdrawn from the Secession in 1905, may have emboldened Schiele to pursue his own creative vision.

Schiele responded to the anti-Modernist stance of the Academy in words and in his private painting style; his repeated assertion that "there is no modern art, art is eternal" is a firm retort to his critics. Likewise, the transformation in his self-portraiture reflects his disagreement with such conservative viewpoints. While his self-portraiture in oil paintings was limited in 1909, what he did produce was highly influenced by Secession aesthetics. Conversely, his works on paper demonstrate an increased interest in posing, gesture, drapery and facial expression (Figures 2.17 and 2.18) that would not

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<sup>118</sup> The *Neukunstgruppe* Manifesto was addressed specifically to Professor Griepenkerl.

<sup>119</sup> Ludwig Hevesi, *Acht Jahre Secession* (Vienna: C. Konegen, 1906), ebook, [https://openlibrary.org/books/OL6315188M/Acht\\_Jahre\\_Sezession](https://openlibrary.org/books/OL6315188M/Acht_Jahre_Sezession), accessed 8/2/15.

emerge in his oil paintings until 1910.<sup>120</sup> These are not generalized figure studies (for which Schiele also used himself), and as portraits, they are rooted in identity. However, current scholarship questions whether these types of works have anything to do with Schiele's personality. In her 1995 book, *Egon Schiele: Inszenierung und Identität*, Pia Müller-Tamm argues that this body of works is grounded in performance,<sup>121</sup> and Gemma Blackshaw links them quite literally to Vienna's obsession with theater.<sup>122</sup> This engagement with theatricality may be loosely linked to Schiele's withdrawal from the Academy and his disdain for its style of art-making, but it may just as well be rooted in tradition, as a re-conception of Rembrandt's tronies.

Schiele responds here to aspects of Rembrandt's oeuvre explored in late-twentieth-century Rembrandt scholarship. According to Svetlana Alpers, Rembrandt's "Enterprise" was theatrical, and Perry Chapman has explored this dimension especially in Rembrandt's self-portraiture.<sup>123</sup> Rembrandt's *Self-Portrait with a Cap, Mouth opened wide* (Figure 2.19) is unmistakably a self-portrait in which the artist assumes the generalized role of a fool, much the same as Schiele assumes the generalized posture and expression of various identities and emotions in his works on paper. From his earliest self-portraits through his transformation to a so-called Expressionist artist, Schiele

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<sup>120</sup> Kallir notes a dichotomy between his works on paper and his oil paintings beginning in 1911 with his decisive turn to allegory, but I believe that the distinction between his experimental works on paper and his serious works on canvas is evident as early as 1909 when he gained his artistic confidence and independence. See Jane Kallir, *Egon Schiele: Drawings & Watercolors*, ed. By Ivan Vartanian, (New York: Thames & Hudson, 2003), 137.

<sup>121</sup> Müller-Tamm, ed., "Sehen zeigen – Sehen lassen: Blickinszenierung und Berachteransprache in Schieles figürlichen Darstellungen," in *Inszenierung und Identität*, 16-43.

<sup>122</sup> See Gemma Blackshaw, "On Stage: The New Viennese," in *Facing the Modern: The Portrait in Vienna 1900*, Gemma Blackshaw and Edmund de Waal, eds., (London: National Gallery Company, 2013), 14-32.

<sup>123</sup> See Svetlana Alpers, *Rembrandt's Enterprise: The Studio and the Market*, (Chicago : University of Chicago Press, 1988), and Perry Chapman, *Rembrandt's Self-Portraits: A Study in Seventeenth-Century Identity* (Princeton, N.J. : Princeton University Press, 1990).

continued to de-emphasize his own personal qualities and instead used his image to translate ideas and concepts.

Self-portraits in the so-called Expressionist style would make their way into Schiele's canvases in 1910, cementing his inclusion in the art-historical canon as an Expressionist artist. Expressionism might be defined as the manifestation of the artistic desire to make emotion meaningful, and Schiele's type of Expressionism, if one accepts that term, is found in the surface of the work; through his animated line, vibrant, often aggressive use of color, and his loose brushwork. These techniques belie the underlying strategy of the work and that they themselves are strategic. One well-acknowledged technique was his incorporation of what Comini terms "the void," or the complete absence of a setting in his work, which is overwhelmingly viewed as a response to Gustav Klimt's *Horror Vacui*. That may be the case, but Schiele was not only responding to his contemporaries in his art. He was also responding to the Renaissance masters, to his contemporaries, and to the "eternal" in art.

Schiele's early works somewhat obscure their tradition and their deliberate underpinnings, but he was deeply familiar with the heritage that he was including in his self-portraiture. These are important elements in his subsequent work, especially the double self-portraits. In the 1910 series that I will address in chapter three, Schiele's role-playing shifts to purely conceptual themes, as he assumes the roles of prophet, poet and seer. His concern with addressing the viewer likewise becomes more closely entwined with his self-identification as a visionary artist, and he develops the strategies that he had already used to defend himself as a misunderstood artist, while not completely discarding that role.

## CHAPTER THREE

### THE 1910-1911 DOUBLE SELF-PORTRAITS: “GREAT PERSONALITIES” AND “SELF-SEERS”

Double self-portraiture was almost unprecedented in 1910, and Schiele’s innovative self-duplication introduced a motif that would become important in the visual arts of the twentieth century. It is most significant in its potential to be polysemic, evading one specific meaning. Jane Kallir recognizes in Schiele’s titling of the *Self-Seers* paintings that they are “...a construct that could refer either to the artist’s visionary capabilities, or to his introspective stance, or—literally—to the act of seeing.”<sup>125</sup> These references need not be understood as pertaining to Schiele exclusively, they may also charge the viewer with the task of “seeing” instead of “looking.”

In chapter one I demonstrated that it is unlikely that Schiele developed this construct in isolation. Viennese authors used doubling as a means of resolving opposing concepts and of highlighting the structure of the literary composition. Schiele was fascinated by the complicated relationship between oppositional qualities, a traditional characteristic of the Romantic *Doppelgänger* that remained of interest to Viennese authors around 1900. Schiele developed doubling in portraiture in a manner similar to *Jung-Wien* authors, as the few visual examples of multiples in self-portraiture within the Habsburg Empire did not show the pair with opposing qualities. A comparison between these examples and Schiele’s double self-portraiture yields compelling evidence that Schiele drew from one or more of the existing visual sources.

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<sup>124</sup> This chapter was published in part under the title “Seeing *The Seers*: The Viewer’s Role in Egon Schiele’s early Double Self-Portraiture,” in *Egon Schiele: Portraits* (New York: Prestel Verlag, 2014). I would like to express my deepest gratitude to Alessandra Comini and the curatorial staff at the Neue Galerie Museum in New York for their gracious invitation to contribute to this exhibition catalogue.

<sup>125</sup> Jane Kallir, *The Complete Works*, 92.

Visual and written evidence suggests that when the double self-portraiture first appeared in his work in 1910-1911, Schiele had come to an understanding of double self-portraiture's polysemous capacity. As I argued in chapter two, he arrived at this understanding through his early engagement with old master portraits and doubling in portraits of others, and he continued to explore the conceptual potential of this motif throughout his lifetime. The initial group of double self-portraits is clearly related in title and style, with the first double self-portraits being worked out in drawings and then transferred to canvas with similar but different effect. Therefore, while Schiele's entire production of double self-portraiture totals thirteen works, this chapter considers solely the first five of them, the *Self-Seers* series.

The *Self-Seers* paintings were developed within the scope of a cycle of paintings that I will refer to as the *Great Personalities* paintings because these paintings share a resemblance and a topical kinship in their subject matter. I borrow this term from a letter written by Schiele in 1911 to a reluctant patron, his dentist Hermann Engel, who exchanged his services for Schiele's artwork. In this letter, Schiele explains the ideas expressed within one painting entitled *The Revelation*. "The revelation of a living being. A poet, an artist, a sage, a spiritualist, if you will.—Have you ever felt the impression a great personality makes on the surrounding world? That would be one."<sup>126</sup> These designations are presented visually and nominally in Schiele's 1910-1912 paintings.

Schiele painted this group between late 1910 and early 1912, the same period in which he began to paint double self-portraiture. While he did not state that these

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<sup>126</sup> Egon Schiele in Astrid Kury, "Revelation in Crisis: Egon Schiele and the Occult around 1900," in Sáez, *Das unrettbare ich*, 97. Nebehay, *Leben, Briefe, Gedichte*, 228, #397. Egon Schiele Database, 141. "'Die Offenbarung' ! - Die Offenbarung eines betreffenden Lebewesens; Ein Dichter, ein Künstler, ein Wissender, ein Spiritist kann es sein. - Haben Sie schon gespürt welchen Eindruck eine große Persönlichkeit auf die Mitwelt ausübt? Das wär eine."

paintings are related to one another, Schiele in fact rarely addressed the content of his works. Rather, I have found enough similarities between them to be convinced that they should be understood in relation to one another. They are all rather mysterious renditions of self-portrayed personas and they fall within the realm of artistic Symbolism through various allusions to the eternal that encourage a state of reflection in the viewer, but remain deeply personal and therefore arcane.

Schiele's *Great Personalities* series does not sit easily in his Expressionistic production. The colors are too somber, and the subject material is allusive and indirect. Schiele is displaying himself as a prophet, as the visionary artist who contributes to a body of "eternal art." The *Great Personalities* series may, on one hand, be seen as reflecting the vision of the artist, as his understanding and interpretation of what he understands to be the purpose of life and art. Like his Symbolist predecessors, he evokes the unknown through depicting what is known. These works may have had a specific personal meaning to Schiele when he painted them, but because he rarely explained his iconography, and when he did so then it was in the vaguest terms, any such particular meaning was not only lost with Schiele's death, but was likely never intended to be conveyed. Instead, these paintings have come to stand as evocative creations appearing autonomous from the psyche and vision of the artist, and they are examples of what one might call utopian modernist art, created with the intention of improving, or even abolishing aspects of modern life through an awakening of the primal qualities of humanity. This chapter demonstrates that Schiele's self-portraiture was conceptual from its inception, and that as he established his artistic mission, his ideas about art's purpose in society are expressed in greater degrees through his self-portraiture.

## “Great Personalities”

Schiele’s first deep engagement with Symbolism manifests itself in the *Great Personalities* series. This group of paintings, completed in 1910 and 1911, delves into various esoteric topics in a pseudo-religious manner. “The revelation of a living being. A poet, an artist, a sage, a spiritualist, if you will.—Have you ever felt the impression a great personality makes on the surrounding world?” Schiele wrote in 1911.<sup>127</sup> Similar language is used in the titles of paintings in this series, evoking various moods and roles of “great personalities.” These include *The Self-Seers I* and *Melancholia (Self-Portrait)* of 1910, and *Prophets (Double Self-Portrait)*, *The Poet (Self-Portrait)*, *The Self-Seers II (Death and Man)*, *Vision and Destiny (Self-Portrait)*, and *The Birth of Genius (Dead Mother II)* of 1911 (Figures 3.4 and 3.6- 3.11).<sup>128</sup> In addition to their congruency in mood and presumably in coloration,<sup>129</sup> the subject’s face is a stylized version of Schiele’s in all of these, including one in which he assumes a female role, and the poses and facial expressions bear a strong resemblance.<sup>130</sup>

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<sup>127</sup> Nebehay, *Leben, Briefe, Gedichte*, 228, #397. Egon Schiele Database, 141. “Die Offenbarung eines betreffenden Lebewesens; Ein Dichter, ein Künstler, ein Wissender, ein Spiritist kann es sein. - Haben Sie schon gespürt welchen Eindruck eine große Persönlichkeit auf die Mitwelt ausübt?”

<sup>128</sup> Rudolf Leopold, *Egon Schiele: The Leopold Collection* (Munich: Prestel Verlag, 2009), 12. In defining the paintings in this series, I am somewhat in agreement with Rudolf Leopold. Leopold cites the series referred to in Schiele’s 1910 letter to Reichel, and he believes that Schiele is referring to either *Delirium* or *Prophets*. The rest of the series, according to Leopold is made up of *The Poet*, *The Self-Seer II*, *the Wall and House in a Hilly Landscape with Fence*, *Vision and Destiny*. He also believes that *The Wall and House* is part of this series because of the coloration and the proximity of time in which it was created; see page 88. My opinion differs from his because of the similarity of the figures’ faces in these paintings.

<sup>129</sup> Unfortunately, *The Self-Seers I*, *Vision and Destiny*, and *The Birth of Genius* are missing, and Rudolf Leopold reports that *Melancholia* was completely painted over. Therefore, the congruencies in coloration can only truly be established between the remaining works, *Prophets*, *The Poet*, and *The Self-Seers II*.

<sup>130</sup> *Dead Mother I* and *II* are especially compelling as self-portraits when compared to *Mother with Two Infants* of 1910 (See Kallir, *The Complete Works*, KP176), which, while depicting the mother in a portrait view instead of a frontal view, bears a less masculine countenance overall. Further, a comparison between the *Dead Mothers I* and *Dead Mothers II* and 1911 paintings in which Schiele painted the very same stylized self-portrait, for example, *The Poet*, or *Vision and Destiny*, leaves little doubt that the *Dead Mother* paintings of 1910 and 1911 are, in fact, self-portraits.

Schiele was as cryptic about explaining his work as he was in his iconography. Therefore, considering this series as a group yields information about the question he never addressed, namely why he chose to paint himself twice. Examining the *Self-Seers* as a subset of a series means that the concepts introduced by any one of the paintings might relate to another. At the same time, Schiele tried his hand at aphorisms and prose, penning a series of “Self-Portraits” that help to illuminate the themes he was exploring, but which do not fully explain his aims. His letters in 1910 sometimes address his subject matter in certain paintings from the *Great Personalities* series, yielding insights that will be addressed within this chapter and in chapter four, and the importance of the prose written at this time has only recently been acknowledged.<sup>131</sup> Schiele may have intended his prose for the public, because he wrote them in a distinct, easily read block lettering, a form of penmanship that starkly contrasts with his general handwriting (Figures 3.1 and 3.2).

Scholars regard a subset of Schiele’s painting contents as allegorical, yet it is important to distinguish that these paintings are Symbolist in subject as well as ideology.<sup>132</sup> This style of painting is of considerable concern in his production between 1910 and 1912 and Schiele especially avoids the conventions of allegory in this series. Namely, he does not engage with traditional allegorical attributes, but instead he creates a new, illegible, and highly evocative visual language. Schiele’s 1907 drawing of Cain and Abel (Figure 3.3) may be a precursor to his development of his own iconography. Whether its emphasis on doubling had a personal allegorical application remains open to

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<sup>131</sup> See Eva Werth, “Stilistische Aspekte im Werk Egon Schieles,” *Egon Schiele Jahrbuch, Vol. I*, Johann Thomas Ambrózy et. al. eds., (Wien: REMAprint Druck- und Verlagsgesellschaft m.b.H., 2011), 130-183.

<sup>132</sup> Kallir views them as “allegorical symbolism,” and some subjects, such as the “mother and child” paintings do fall under this term; however, there are no clear attributes in most instances. See Kallir, *The Complete Works*, 91.

speculation, although I argue that it is likely that it did. If so, then it might be considered an example of the Symbolist practice to connect Christian iconography to a personal subject matter and to inflect both with an unaccountable sense of mystery.

Schiele's letters and poems suggest that the *Great Personalities* series shares many qualities with Symbolism and its underlying aims and ideas, and while Schiele's stylistic debt to Symbolism is well established through written documentation and his admiration of Klimt, Toorop, and Stuck, his ideological affinity with Symbolism must yet be clearly articulated. The Symbolist painters often thought in terms of the idea, according to Robert Goldwater, and painters such as Odilon Redon and Paul Gauguin were more concerned with the "exteriorization of the idea" than with "nature seen through a temperament."<sup>133</sup> Goldwater explains that while emotional expression was of concern, the aim of Symbolist artists was to "...induce a reflective mood, to indicate a wider frame of reference."<sup>134</sup>

Allegory, which uses symbols to represent greater concepts, must be based upon a tradition or story to convey meaning, and this is not present in Schiele's paintings. Like the Symbolist painters, Schiele alludes to the language of allegory in his Symbolist paintings to introduce a highly individualized iconography, with his use of setting, attire and gestures suggesting meaning but remaining opaque. For instance, Schiele's hand signals, a common inclusion in the *Great Personalities* series, could very well be adopted from Symbolism, as the "V" symbol, as it appears distinctly in *Melancholia* (Figure 3.4), was already present in Lucien Lévy-Dhurmer's *Silence* of 1895 (Figure 3.5).<sup>135</sup> Lévy-

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<sup>133</sup> Robert Goldwater, *Symbolism*, (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1979), 1.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

<sup>135</sup> Johann Thomas Ambrózy locates the source of Schiele's hand signals in Byzantium mosaics which is also a potential source, but a closer model is found in French Symbolism, as Lévy-Dhurmer's painting was

Dhurmer's moody, evocative painting exemplifies stillness, not only through its title but also through the figure's "V" gesture that enfolds her mouth. Its setting, a moonlit landscape, reinforces the silence for which the title calls. Schiele's "V" gesture may have a similar meaning in *Melancholia*, and the pulling down of one eye imparts an additional request, namely, to see.

In all of the *Great Personalities* paintings, gesture and facial expression allude to a mysterious meaning. Through the absence of a natural setting and a natural light source, robed and draped figures engaged in ambiguous activities, and the calm demeanor of the figures, Schiele includes some familiar Christian iconography, which suggests that these paintings are grounded in ideas and not emotions. While Christian iconography such as the crucifixion or the ecstasy of St. Teresa can be quite direct and passionate, Christian tradition demonstrates morality through storytelling, an exercise of the mind regardless of the accompanying emotional appeal. Schiele employs a similar device, as his decisions in the *Great Personalities* series suggest a story that is unknown, rendering the iconography opaque and illegible at first sight, which tasks the viewer with deriving meaning from it.

The aforementioned *Melancholia* exemplifies these opaque allusions, and unfortunately, it is not entirely clear what iconography certain parts of the picture contain. *Melancholia* is only known through a photograph, and it was reportedly completely painted over by the artist with a landscape painting sometime between its only exhibition at the Galerie Miethke in 1911 and February 1913, when it is recorded to have been sold.<sup>136</sup> Unfortunately, it can only be analyzed from an existing photograph,

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highly influential for Symbolist painters and I believe it to be a more likely source. See Ambrózy, *Egon Schiele Jahrbuch* Volume I, 10-57.

<sup>136</sup> Nebehay, *Leben, Briefe, Gedichte*, 302, #636. Egon Schiele Database, 88. The painting was sold to Fritz Hora in Vienna.

which does not yield all of the details in terms of its content; its seemingly dark coloration could have been comprised of reds or browns that black and white film cannot capture.<sup>137</sup> In spite of these challenges, the iconography can be interpreted as quite allusive from what remains of it.

In *Melancholia*, Schiele paints his self-portrait as if he were the Man of Sorrows himself, stripped from the waist up and with folds of drapery cascading down his right leg. His figure is relaxed into a zigzag shape, with his head tilted to the right in a gesture of resignation. In contrast, his arms are active and angular, with the left hand holding an object and the right hand performing the aforementioned “V” gesture. His opened mouth and half-closed eyes attest to his melancholy, while his raised eyebrows and the pulling down of the right eye beckon the viewer to see. Ostensibly, Schiele has painted a topic that is rooted in the German tradition through Dürer, and the townscape that he includes behind his figure introduces a second interpretive possibility to the iconography. Might this melancholy be Cain’s pain, whose curse to wander the earth led him to establish the first city? Or could it be the sacrifice of Abel, which is typologically equated with Christ’s sacrifice? This self-portrait is one of Schiele’s clearer works from this series. Yet even so, it cannot be understood as holding one specific meaning.

Schiele’s personal iconography potentially elicits a different subjective response from each individual viewer, because without a common frame of reference by which the work of art may be interpreted, the beholder, including Schiele’s contemporaries and supporters in Vienna, must rely upon memory and personal experiences to understand what is being seen. While this might be said about any painting considered to be late-

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<sup>137</sup> According to Rudolf Leopold, whose source is unknown to me, Schiele painted *The Small City IV* over *Melancholia* in 1914. The Leopold Foundation currently owns *The Small City IV*. Kallir, *The Complete Works*, 295.

Symbolist, the difficulty of the viewer's task is compounded by the fact that these paintings are self-portraits. The understanding that the portrait provides more than likeness charges the viewer to seek the essential character of the portrayed, projecting the invisible onto the visible.

Schiele seems to be well aware of the dialogical, yet open relationship between the portrait and the viewer, for his unintelligible gestures signify a fiction, because we cannot know that these gestures ever had an exact meaning. They could be included to provoke interest or interpretive attention, and they generally insist on the presence of a very particular subject. In spite of their great variation and potential sources, they serve the same function as Dürer's self-reflexive gesture, a gesture that Schiele adopted in his first rendition of *The Self-Seers I* (Figure 3.6). Schiele must have imagined and anticipated the scores of speculative reactions that these gestures would produce.

*The Self-Seers I*, completed in December 1910, was Schiele's first painted double self-portrait and it shares certain qualities with *Prophets* (Figure 3.7) and *The Self-Seers II* (Figure 3.8). I will analyze these three paintings individually and as a group in the next section; to introduce them it is important to remember their three common qualities, as I argue in chapter one. First, in all three paintings, Schiele's two self-portrayals are shown as united, standing or kneeling side-by-side in a close, congenial position. Second, while the degrees vary, one figure is depicted as light and the second is darker in either coloration or saturation. Finally, one figure is shown with open eyes and the other with half-closed eyes, suggesting differing levels of awareness.

*The Birth of Genius* of 1911 (Figure 3.9) includes a similar distinction between modes of seeing, and in this example, Schiele heightens the contrast to its greatest degree.

The title indicates that the subject of the painting is a birth, and the mother's relaxed head and closed eyes might be understood as exhaustion. The baby, in contrast, is hyper-aware, with wide, open eyes and mouth agape, as if it were in a state of alarm. It is encircled in a field of light color that emphasizes its energy and frames it within the mother's darkly colored clothing.<sup>138</sup> The child's hand gestures at the edge of its framed space have both an outward and inward effect; in fact, they are similar to the gestures in *Self-Seers II* (Figure 2.23) These too operate near the site of the frame, a point to which I will return. In *The Birth of Genius*, because the framing is within the picture, one hand is able to transcend its circular frame, while the other, partially-rendered hand remains within, emphasizing the boundary.

The mother's face strongly resembles Schiele's self-portraits in the *Great Personalities* series. A comparison with *The Poet* (Figure 3.10) reveals that Schiele depicted a similar position and similar facial features in both, including a wide forehead, strong jaw line, and pursed lips. These congruencies lead me to believe that the mother is likely a self-portrait, and while that may seem to be an odd portrayal, the child's framing, as if it were an independent work of art itself, suggests that it symbolizes Schiele's creative production. This interpretation is supported by the child's inward and outward gestures, which direct the viewer's attention into its space while simultaneously transgressing the boundary of the circular frame. As I argue in chapter one and will expand upon in this chapter, Schiele's double self-portraits operate in this manner, directing the viewer's attention into the painting while likewise attending to the space before the picture.

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<sup>138</sup> The disadvantage of black and white photography is that red would also appear to be dark, and I fully acknowledge that the contrast that I suggest in the painting might be the effect of photography.

Schiele's attention to framing is an important factor in this series, and I argue that he is referring to the frame as a means of reducing the separation between the painting and the viewer and as an instrument to encourage the viewer to self-reflect. In his book, *The Group Portraiture of Holland* (1902), the influential Viennese art historian Alois Riegl (1858-1905) argues that the portrait allows viewers, historically and presently, to see themselves. In other words, the portrait, grounded in history yet viewed in many different contexts, calls attention to the viewer's presence and place in time. To understand fully what is being seen, the viewer must be attentive and self-reflective.<sup>139</sup> What Riegl also establishes through this is that a portrait's identity is unstable and dependent upon each personal encounter, and in response, Viennese portraitists sought to portray the essence of the sitter. Schiele's iconography is not a reaction against these qualities in portraiture; instead, they call attention to them, indicating that the viewer must look inward as well as outward.

Schiele makes the frame an ambiguous site that mediates between these paintings and the space of the viewer through two iconographical devices in his *Self-Seers* paintings. In *Self-Seers I* (Figure 3.6) he alludes to a mirror before the painted subjects and in *Self-Seers II* (Figure 3.8), he includes a hand that emerges from the lower edge of the picture. In 1911, he developed a different means of attending to the painting's frame by aligning his head and neck parallel to the upper edge of the picture. He employs this device in three self-portraits; *The Poet, Vision and Destiny*, and *The Birth of Genius (Dead Mother II)* (Figures 3.9- 3.11), with *The Poet* being the only extant painting

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<sup>139</sup> See Margaret Iversen, "Dutch Group Portraits and the Art of Attention," (92-123), and "Riegl and the Role of the Spectator," (124-147), in *Alois Riegl: Art History and Theory* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, c1993).

today.<sup>140</sup> In this painting, Schiele's head parallels the upper frame, with the neck bent in a painfully sharp angle, acquiescing to the confines of the allotted space. Angular fragments of the body emerge from a dark drapery and background and the full figure is not enclosed in the space. Instead, the lower frame cuts the figure off in the middle of the pelvis. The hands cross each other in a right angle, gesturing toward the face, capping the upper limits of the body, and imitating the angular enclosure of the frame. It is impossible to ignore the frame in this composition.

In her study of Schiele's landscapes, Kimberly A. Smith finds that Schiele engages the frame, particularly through his representation of trees, and she outlines the historical and philosophical foundations of this engagement. She argues that his landscapes "call too much attention to the existence of the frame and challenge its capacity to delineate neatly between work and world, refusing the retreat into aestheticization... and insisting instead on the fluidity of the relation between painting and beholder."<sup>141</sup> Smith argues that Schiele's treescapes do not follow the traditional model of a landscape displaying a self-contained, unified composition.<sup>142</sup> Instead, they are vertically and horizontally oriented in a manner that mimics the structure of the frame and pushes the background into the foreground. The upper branches of the trees are

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<sup>140</sup> *The Birth of Genius* is presumed to be destroyed in the war. Its last known owner, Max Roden, was a Jewish collector and dealer in Vienna, who fled the Nazis in 1938. His collection, which included many works by Schiele and Kokoschka, was documented by the Nazis at the time of his exile, but has not been located since WWII. *Vision and Destiny's* whereabouts are presently unknown. Its last known owner was Siegfried Kulka and it was last exhibited at the Hagenbund/Neue Galerie in 1928. See Kallir, *The Complete Works*, 301 and Deutsches Zentrum Kulturgutverluste, *The Lost Art Internet Database*, [www.lostart.de](http://www.lostart.de), accessed 2/20/2015.

<sup>141</sup> Kimberly A. Smith, *Between Ruin and Renewal: Egon Schiele's Landscapes*, (New Haven: Yale University Books, 2004), 7.

<sup>142</sup> *Ibid.*, 39. In his *Critique of Judgment*, Immanuel Kant claimed that framing distinguishes the work of art from the outside world, setting it apart as a self-contained object of aesthetic appreciation and contemplation. However, for the frame to work in this manner it must be visible only to the extent that it directs attention to its contents; and the work of art must be self-contained and unified "link[ing] itself back to its own center."

invariably truncated by the edge of the picture plane, indicating that the picture only shows a fragment of an existing world beyond the confines of the work, pointing directly to the limits of the frame.

According to Smith, the interchange between Schiele's work and frame is closely associated to Friedrich Nietzsche's assertion in *The Birth of Tragedy* (1871) that art cannot be separated from life and that the work of art should "excite the state that creates art."<sup>143</sup> In other words, Nietzsche calls for a shared experience between viewer and creator, with the work of art functioning as an intermediary. By emphasizing the frame as a necessary part of the artwork, that is also a tangible object within the space of the viewer, Schiele renders the work itself more permeable. The that/there becomes here/now, much the same as Parmigianino's literal translation of his distorted features is a painting of himself and a painting of a mirror that, according to Riegl, would take on the additional meaning of the viewer's self-reflection.

In all three paintings, the figures' line of sight is not directed outward, and in *The Birth of Genius*, (Figure 3.9) the eyes are fully closed. *The Poet* (Figure 3.10) shows a commonality between the remainder of the paintings in the series; it includes one eye that is relaxed and lazy and the other directed out toward the viewer. Schiele addresses the concept of "seeing" more fully within the context of the *Self-Seers*; here it is salient that the figure is presenting itself to be seen. The cutting off of the lower body emphasizes the act of self-presentation; there is space available below for the lower half of the body, but there is no space above. For the head to be presented it must hold this painful position within the confines of the upper edge of the picture. In this context, the frame becomes as much a barrier between meaning and meaninglessness as it is an arbiter between art and

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<sup>143</sup> Ibid., 60.

life, for if the figure could release its position, the work's idea would disintegrate. This poet is mute; the artist only partially sees. Thick strokes of paint model the face in arbitrary colors and meandering, lyrical lines, uniting the concepts of artist and poet directly on the surface of the work. These devices, the frame and the position, the impasto and the line of vision are cues that prompt the spectator to look into the painting, inciting a shared moment in the creative act.

The unity that Schiele seems to be attempting to achieve is not exactly an interpersonal unity; he continues to layer concepts onto his self-portraits as he did in his youth. These concepts are no longer "Great Artists," as they were then; rather they are "Great Personalities," and they contain metaphysical connotations. Schiele's writings reveal that he viewed art as inextricably tied to the metaphysical, and Astrid Kury has thoroughly researched the influence of Theosophy in Schiele's oeuvre. While I disagree with her conclusion that the group I call *Great Personalities* are Expressionist works, she correctly identifies and analyzes one potential source of inspiration for Schiele's complicated imagery. In contrast to the Christian iconography that seems to permeate Schiele's work, the light that emanates from the top of the figure in *The Poet* is a concrete reference to Schiele's Monistic belief system, and in the context of these paintings, to Theosophy.<sup>144</sup>

Rudolf Steiner (1861-1925) was widely influential in the German-speaking world as a proponent of Theosophy and after 1912, Anthroposophy.<sup>145</sup> He frequently traveled to

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<sup>144</sup> Helena Pereña Sáez argues convincingly throughout her thesis, *Wahrnehmung, Identität, und Weltbild*, that Schiele dabbled in many belief systems including Taoism, Theosophy, and Pantheism. In the context of these works, it is the halo, symbolic of the Theosophical aura, which manifests most distinctly.

<sup>145</sup>I use the term Theosophy instead of Anthroposophy because I am examining a time before which Rudolf Steiner founded the Anthroposophical Society. Without question, Steiner was highly influential in German-speaking countries, and the rift between his views and the Theosophical Society had already begun to form in 1909.

Vienna to lecture; between 1908-1915 he spoke in Vienna twenty-four times. The content of his earlier lectures were parts of *Macrocosm and Microcosm*, a series of lectures that argue that human life "...alternates between the great outer macrocosm and the hidden inner microcosm." Steiner's concern and teaching were about how to transcend these boundaries, both inner and outer.<sup>146</sup> While there is no evidence that Schiele attended Steiner's lectures, he almost certainly learned parts of their content.

Astrid Kury argues that Schiele's double self-portraiture is a manifestation of the Theosophical aura, drawing upon parallels between Steiner's writings on sleep, the aura, and inner and outer vision.<sup>147</sup> It is very likely that Schiele was interested in Theosophy. This is evident in both his paintings and his writings. For example, he mentioned the aura as he explained the iconography of his painting *The Revelation* to Engel in a 1911 letter: "...that greatness which looks on with eyes closed, decaying, the astral light emanating in orange or other colors, so intensely that the bowed figure, hypnotized, flows into the great one ... (Positive and negative electricity coalesce)."<sup>148</sup> Schiele's use of the term "astral light," his concern with decay, and the coalescence of opposing forces of energy do imply that he was sympathetic to Theosophical beliefs.

Arthur Roessler subscribed to Theosophy and was likely influential in this regard. Roessler, whom Schiele met in 1909 at the Salon Pisko group exhibition of the *Neukunstgruppe*, maintained close ties with the artist, and he enlisted his connections in Viennese art circles and his work as an art critic to support Schiele throughout his life.

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<sup>146</sup> Rudolf Steiner, "Macrocosm and Microcosm," *The Rudolf Steiner Archive*, (The Rudolf Steiner Press, 1968), e-Text edition, [http://wn.rsarchive.org/Lectures/GA119/English/RSP1968/MacMic\\_index.html](http://wn.rsarchive.org/Lectures/GA119/English/RSP1968/MacMic_index.html).

<sup>147</sup> Astrid Kury, "Aurendarstellungen im Wiener Expressionismus," in *Veröffentlichungen des Tiroler Landesmuseums Ferdinandeum 79* (Innsbruck, 1999), 99-114.

<sup>148</sup> Nebehay, *Leben, Briefe, Gedichte*, 228, #264. Egon Schiele Database, 141. "... Größe die schaut ohne die Augen zu öffnen, die verwest, der das astralische Licht orange oder anders farbig ausströmt, in dem Übermaß daß der Gebeugte, hypnotisiert in den Großen fließt. ... (Positive und negative Elektrizität vereinigen sich.)"

Likewise, Schiele's friend and fellow *Neukunstgruppe* member Albert Paris Gütersloh was a member of the Theosophical Society. Yet even if one accepts the likelihood that Schiele shared the strong interest in Theosophy that was present in his social environment, the visual evidence of his paintings does not support the conclusion that Schiele's double is a definitive spiritual entity. The initial preparatory drawings, the *Self-Seers I* and *Prophets* do not distinguish between the two as one being physical and the other immaterial. Throughout the double self-portraiture, with few exceptions, their treatment is equal in weight, modeling, structure, and size. What his double self-portraits do represent is the idea of antipodes such as positive and negative that he mentions in the same letter. Schiele avoided assigning concrete meanings to his works, as he had written to his uncle in 1911: "Anyone who asks for a work of art to be explained should not be satisfied. He is too limited about it."<sup>149</sup>

Robert Goldwater describes the root feeling behind Symbolism as an anti-materialist idealism, and he outlines two trends in Symbolism, to either gravitate toward producing a psychological or idealistic effect, always going beyond realism to "establish the importance of the representation."<sup>150</sup> These tendencies are evident in Schiele's creative production, both visually and in his poetry and aphorisms. His idealism is far more directly evident in his written work than in his visual art as a whole; however, the religious iconography and visionary titles in his *Great Personalities* series illustrate that they are similarly idealistic. Like much Symbolist painting, Schiele's series of *Great Personalities* seems to be allegorical, but with an iconography that is only understood and disclosed – or not – by its creator, and therefore, the effect for each viewer is more

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<sup>149</sup> Ibid., 182.

<sup>150</sup> Goldwater, *Symbolism*, 5.

personal than guided. In other words, Symbolist paintings are personal (based in experience/emotion), and they also include “deliberately intended reflective (i.e. philosophical) overtones that go beyond the subjects represented.”<sup>151</sup>

Schiele also accomplishes this symbolic effect through the interplay of title and iconography in his *Great Personalities* series. It is primarily important to remember that these are self-portraits. Inscribed upon these self-portraits are titles such as *Poet*, *Seer*, and *Genius*. These titles are not to be understood as Schiele himself assuming those roles purely as a means of self-elevation; instead, they are qualities that art, and therefore artists, offer in their eternal state. “The revelation of a living being,” Schiele wrote. “A poet, an artist, a sage, a spiritualist, as you will.—Have you ever felt the impression a great personality makes on the surrounding world? That would be one.”<sup>152</sup> Later in the same letter, Schiele describes a communion between the “great” figure and a figure that bows before it, indicating a shared state of consciousness, even perhaps a union.<sup>153</sup> Schiele’s depictions of himself in this series all include a certain degree of somnambulism, as if a dream grants access to a greater reality. Through titling and iconography, they are evocative, stimulating the viewer’s imagination.

In essence, Schiele’s *Great Personalities* series might be best viewed as a blending of the thematic ambiguity found in the subject matter of Symbolist painting with the subdued palette found in the old masters’ paintings, finished with a technical variation

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<sup>151</sup> Ibid., 5.

<sup>152</sup> Egon Schiele in Astrid Kury, “Revelation in Crisis: Egon Schiele and the Occult around 1900,” in Sáez, *Das unrettbare ich*, 97. Nebehay, *Leben, Briefe, Gedichte*, 228, #397. Egon Schiele Database, 141. “‘Die Offenbarung’! - Die Offenbarung eines betreffenden Lebewesens; Ein Dichter, ein Künstler, ein Wissender, ein Spiritist kann es sein. - Haben Sie schon gespürt welchen Eindruck eine große Persönlichkeit auf die Mitwelt ausübt? Das wär eine.”

<sup>153</sup> Ibid. “Die eine Hälfte soll also die Vision eines so großen Menschen porträtiert zeigen, daß der, der eben beeinflußt, hingerissen sich niederkniet, sich beugt vor der Größe, die schaut, ohne die Augen zu öffnen, die verweist, der das astralische Licht orange oder andersfarbig ausströmt, in dem Übermaß, daß der Gebaute hypnotisiert in den Großen fließt.”

of the Impressionists' brushstroke. Schiele arrived at this combination through two different courses in his work. His brushwork was pseudo-Impressionistic in his early years, blended with the subject material and coloration of the old masters. In 1907, under the influence of his recent introduction to Gustav Klimt, Schiele began to create works in a Klimtian style. He reserved it for experimentation in his figural works until 1909, when he began to use it in his portraiture and self-portraiture. He only shifted to a more active line and coarser brushstroke in 1910 when he experienced his so-called "Expressionistic breakthrough."<sup>154</sup>

Schiele did find a signature style at this time, but his 1910 paintings do not exhibit a stylistic break, rather they present a stylistic culmination and a synthesis of various techniques and ideas that surfaced independently in his preceding portraiture. Throughout these shifts, his experimentation with Klimt's style of Symbolism remained largely separated from the thick impasto of the Impressionist brushstroke, and while he was producing works in both styles at the same time, he focused his attention upon the formal elements of the painting. In spite of the visual literacy of the Viennese public in Symbolist art or even the earlier *Stimmungsimpressionismus* movement, the *Great Personalities* series was his least saleable work at the time, but nevertheless what he quite rightly considered to be his most important.

The *Great Personalities* paintings' unpopularity may have been due to their jarring nature. Schiele does not aestheticize his nudity, which includes male genitalia and the appearance of flayed bodies. They are created to shock the viewer from complacency.

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<sup>154</sup> See "The Break, 1909-10" in Jane Kallir, *The Complete Works*, 55-89. Schiele's move from the *Secessionstil* to "Expressionism" is most evident in his self-portraiture works on paper throughout most of 1909, and in these, the emotionally expressive elements are limited to a variety of unusual poses, gestures and facial contortions.

Through encountering the unexpected, the viewer is brought to a heightened state of perception, and pulled closer to a self-conscious state of viewing. As closely related thematically as these works are to Symbolism, they might rather be more precisely considered “Post-Symbolist,” because in spite of their subjective nature, they integrate psychological concepts as a means of engaging the viewer more deeply, not just in the work of art, but also in him or herself. They therefore anticipate the aims of certain Surrealists in the following decade.

### The Self-Seers as a Medium to Sight

As the first visual artist to seriously grapple with the motif, Schiele seems to have understood double self-portraiture’s potential, as evidenced by an initial, deep engagement between late-1910 and early-1912 and a sporadic, yet regular return to double self-portraiture after 1913, which lasted the rest of his life. While Schiele’s production of double self-portraiture totals thirteen, his initial efforts resulted in five works that I refer to as the *Self-Seers* series; including *Two Male Figures* (Figure 3.12 #717), *Double Self-Portrait* (Figure 3.12 # 718), and *Self-Seers I* (Figure 3.6) of 1910 and *Prophets* (Figure 3.7) and *Self-Seers II (Death and Man)* (Figure 3.8) of 1911. While the drawings on paper do not yet address seeing, Schiele’s titling for two of these works, *Self-Seers*, sufficiently accounts for the group as a whole being comprised of self-portraiture, and it likewise addresses the visionary connotations of the enigmatic title of *Prophets*.

While my focus will be on the act of seeing, it is important to address the issue of selfhood. There is an interiority that is being emphasized through Schiele’s self-referential gesture in the *Self-Seers I*, suggesting a single, identifiable subject. Schiele

scholarship has been divided on the nature of this subject. Reinhard Steiner has argued that Schiele's double self-portraiture reflects the doubling that occurs in self-portraiture in general. To Steiner, self-portraiture is either a *Doppelgänger* or a duplicate, and like the mirror image, it is simultaneously a denial and an affirmation of identity. Affirmation occurs as long as enough physical attributes remain in place, yet denial also takes place because duplication can never be perfected. Modernism tried to avoid these aspects of self-portraiture by bypassing likeness and instead painting the "true" person. To Steiner, another solution is Schiele's inclusion of two self-portraits in these works.<sup>155</sup>

In painting, a *Doppelgänger* challenges the primacy of each subject through its very existence, because unlike the literary *Doppelgänger*, painting does not necessarily have to name a definitive primary and secondary character, and so it instead invites questions of the subject's identity and authenticity. Schiele's inclusion of sight in his titling and the complication of that concept through the depiction of two distinct modes of viewing reveal even further that the identity of these figures is mutable. By referencing the self and seeing in the title, the viewer's responsibility in ascribing an identity becomes apparent.

In modern Vienna, identity was called into question by the medical, scientific and philosophical milieu. Ernst Mach (1838-1916), a physicist, wrote in his 1886 *The Analysis of the Sensations* that the rational, centered idea of selfhood is a falsehood, and that, instead, the ego is in constant change, albeit a slow, almost imperceptible change, in response to what he called "elements," or colors, sounds, pressure, and time.<sup>156</sup> His conception of selfhood unifies body and mind, redefining memory and identity as a

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<sup>155</sup> Steiner, "Selbst- und Doppeldarstellung," 235.

<sup>156</sup> Ernst Mach, *The Analysis of Sensations and the Relation of the Physical to the Psychical*, (New York: Dover Publications, Inc, 1959), 7.

complex of responses to what is physically encountered. With the traditional concept of selfhood called into question, the unknown became as important as the known and extra-sensory experience as important as sensory input as a means of understanding the mutable, destabilized self. According to Helena Pereña Sáez, Mach's influence on Viennese intellectuals, in response to his now famous assertion that knowledge of the physical world is nothing more than a subjective interpretation of sensory stimulation, popularized the idea that one's subjective experience was of primary concern and undermined the rational notion of a fixed identity.<sup>157</sup> For example, the writer and critic Hermann Bahr responded to Mach in "The Unsalvageable Ego," published in Vienna in 1904, recounting his dismay after learning that selfhood is not fixed.

While revealing the true nature of the psyche is an uncontested concern to Schiele, it required an intellectual strategy to elucidate. Even recent scholarship engaged with the goal of freeing Schiele from a purely psychological framework does not fully recognize the conceptual relevance of these works. For instance, Sáez points out that the title *Self-Seers* "draws on the original sense of the concept of the 'Doppelgänger' as 'one who sees himself.'"<sup>158</sup> Again, this interpretation of doubling implies that body and spirit have been separated from each other, and Schiele does not distinguish between the two as such. It is an incomplete conclusion, because the question to ask next; which one is seeing and which one is self? The ambiguity that he presents instead takes advantage of the painting's capacity to avoid distinguishing between a primary self and its *Doppelgänger*.

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<sup>157</sup> Sáez, *Wahrnehmung, Identität, und Weltbild*, 33.

<sup>158</sup> Sáez, *Das unrettbare ich*, 44.

My argument is that they are both seeing and both are self in a complicated state of ekstasis *and* enstasis. Scholars have invariably succumbed to the temptation to designate one figure as the “real” Schiele and the other as an imagined spirit. This has yielded important conclusions about certain double self-portraits and has obscured their most important quality, their potential to convey multiple meanings. The titles *Self-Seers* and *Prophets*, both plural designations, resist any distinction between the two Schieles and the idea that either of the figures are of primary concern. Schiele’s preparatory drawings for *The Self-Seers* (Figure 3.12, #717 and #718) demonstrate his gravitation toward an equal treatment of the figures in spite of his eventual distinction between them, as he shifts them from a hierarchical, distinguished pair to a completely unified, egalitarian pose. By 1915, his treatment of the pair renders them exactly the same, for example, his *Double Self-Portrait* (Figure 3.13) shows one slightly above the other, and the physicality of the embrace negates any claim that one of these could be physical body and the other a spirit or that one is seeing and the other is being seen.

Rather, the representation of two Schieles is a strategic attempt to invoke and access the inaccessible, sometimes within the self, often between the represented selves and the viewer, and many times both. This unknown territory is what Lorna Martens refers to as the “dark area,” a place that represented the core of the human condition, and it surfaced in Viennese cultural pursuits as a positioning of unresolved opposites. “The two ‘places,’” Martens writes, “are thus both continuous and discontinuous, antithetical and one; the barrier between them is absolute, yet potentially nonexistent.”<sup>159</sup> In other words, opposites could be seen as if they were in a continuum, with varying degrees of intensity between them and no defining boundary. Sigmund Freud’s structural model of

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<sup>159</sup>Martens, *Shadow Lines*, 106.

consciousness exemplifies this cultural impulse, with dreams interceding between levels of known and unknown consciousness. The known became synonymous with a façade, and only through certain interventions could the inaccessible truth be approached. Additionally, just as the body and mind were reunified through Mach's theory, the psyche was newly regarded as divided between knowable and unknowable, especially with Freud's introduction of the conscious and unconscious mind. The *Doppelgänger*, with its inherent dualities, ambiguities and metaphysical qualities, is the perfect figure through which to conduct such an inquiry.

Schiele exhibits this impulse through a marked distinction between "seeing" and "looking." In a letter to his patron and friend Dr. Oskar Reichel in 1910, Schiele specifies the fundamental purpose behind his creation of his *Great Personalities* series: to influence the manner in which his art is viewed. In this, Schiele writes, "Without meaning to flatter you, I know of no greater Viennese art connoisseur than you. Therefore, I have chosen you to receive this picture from my newest series. –In time, you will be completely won over by it, as soon as you begin not to look at it (in German: *daraufzusehen*), but to look *into* it (*hineinzuschauen*). This is the picture of which G[ustav] Klimt remarked that he was happy to see such faces. It is *certainly* the best thing that has been painted in Vienna lately."<sup>160</sup> Kallir proposes that the picture to which Schiele is referring is his *Self-Seers I*, a likely attribution, given the date and his use of

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<sup>160</sup> Egon Schiele quoted in Kallir, *The Complete Works*, 295. The German text reads, "ich weiß, ohne Ihnen schmeicheln zu wollen, keinen Kunstwissenderen in Wien als Sie. - Darum ausgesucht hab ich Ihnen dies mein Bild aus der ganz neuen Reihe geschickt. - In gewisser Zeit werden Sie so vollständig überzeugt sein darüber, sobald Sie beginnen, nicht daraufzusehen sondern hineinzuschauen. Das Bild ist jenes, worüber G. Klimt geäußert hat, er wäre froh solch Gesichter zu sehen. - Es ist sicher, gegenwärtig, das höchste [!] was in Wien gemalt wurde." Nebehay, *Leben, Briefe, Gedichte*, 165, #176. Egon Schiele Database, 113.

the plural word “faces.”<sup>161</sup> Schiele had already incorporated the word *seers* into the title of his first double self-portrait, with the pair being shown in an act of mutual introspection. Yet to clarify even further, he specifically distinguishes between two types of spectatorship, of superficial looking (*daraufsehen*) and truly seeing by “looking into” (*hineinschauen*) the painting.

Schiele’s concern with distinguishing between two types of viewing is identifiable in his early double self-portraiture through the unity of the figures’ bodies and the opposing qualities of their heads, a formal decision that closely follows the idea that the same act of beholding can have opposing results. The two pencil drawings from 1910 (Figure 3.12, #717 and #718) show the variations in which Schiele initially worked out this new concept before committing it to canvas. In the first arrangement, *Double Self-Portrait* (Figure 3.12, #717), the figures’ bodies form a vertical mass in the center of the drawing, with the one head tossed back in a haughty gesture and the other looking plainly at the viewer, starkly contrasting the two ways of seeing. Here, Schiele retains the distinction between the figures by delineating the shoulder of the lower figure and including four hands.

By comparison, the bodies are indistinguishable in *Two Male Figures* (Figure 3.12, #718); in fact, they might just as well be one body with two heads. The center of this composition consists of two jagged lines that resemble either a fissure between the two figures or the opening of a coat that would indicate one body. Further reinforcing this ambiguity is the positioning and the number of hands that Schiele chose to include in the sketch because he only chose to show two hands, one on each side of the main form. Thus the indeterminacy of the figure’s body is not only retained, it is amplified. This

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<sup>161</sup> Ibid.

ambiguity stands in stark contrast to the *Double Self-Portrait* in which the two figures are unified formally, yet with distinct physical forms. It draws attention to the curious sight of the two heads, two renditions of Schiele's face depicted in opposite ways. The right head is darker, with more saturated color in the hair, more thickly and heavily lined eyebrows and eyes, while the left is more economically distinguished through outline instead of contour.<sup>162</sup> Both stare directly at the beholder with similar expressions, and because of the heavier saturation of the right head, the gaze is markedly more intense. "The artist can also look, but seeing is something far more,"<sup>163</sup> Schiele wrote in another aphorism, admitting his own capacity to engage in both types of viewing and distinguishing "seeing" as more desirable.

Elements from both of these sketches are included in the paintings *The Self-Seers I* of 1910 (Figure 3.6), and *The Self-Seers II (Death and Man)* (Figure 3.8) and *Prophets (Double Self-Portrait)* (Figure 3.7), both of 1911. In all of these, Schiele retains the unifying qualities that he worked out in the drawings. *The Self-Seers I*, for example, contains the vertical configuration of the drawn *Double Self-Portrait*, but absent is any allusion to a hierarchical relationship that might be construed from one figure being set in a position above the other. In fact, *The Self-Seers I* contains most of the formal qualities of *Two Male Figures* (Figure 3.12 #718), particularly in the positioning of the heads and hands. Schiele does distinguish between the bodies in his painting, modifying the

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<sup>162</sup> The opposing qualities of dark and light are likely the source of most scholars understanding these two figures as physical and spiritual, a conclusion that I find to be insufficient as an explanation for the complex inclusion of various opposing characteristics included in these works.

<sup>163</sup> Nebehay, *Leben, Briefe, Gedichte*, 141, #153. Egon Schiele Database, 134. "Schauen kann auch der Maler, sehen ist aber doch mehr." In the context of this aphorism, Schiele privileges "looking" over "seeing," but the two words are generally interchangeable in German, which is why I have translated them as "looking" and "seeing." In the context of the terms used in his 1911 letter to Reichel, "*schauen*" (looking) would be equivalent to "*daraufsehen*" (superficial looking) and "*sehen*" (seeing) would be akin to "*hineinschauen*" (looking into).

unifying factors through the repetition of the torsos and the right hands, and through the mirrored triangular forms of the grounded legs and the light source that seems to emanate from the upper right hand. All of these factors indicate that the figures are the same subject and that their relationship is congenial. Yet Schiele is just as careful to include the oppositional qualities of dark and light to distinguish between the two. In *The Self-Seers I*, the contrast is not as clear, the fore figure is only slightly more densely modeled than the hind figure, and he amplifies this contrast in his 1911 *Prophets* (Figure 3.7) through a stark inversion in tones between the figures' bodies and facial cavities. In the 1911 *The Self-Seers II*, the contrast is heightened to such a degree that one figure does appear as an apparition and the other as flesh and blood.

Additionally, Schiele depicts the pairs as engaged in distinct acts of seeing, with one figure "looking" (*schauen/daraufsehen*) and one "seeing" (*sehen/hineinschauen*). The distinction is readily apparent in *Prophets*, wherein the fore figure gazes lazily out of the canvas with one eye closed and the other relaxed as the hind figure raises its brows in recognition, and in *The Self-Seers I*, in which the fore figure squints in concentration as the rear figure sees deeply and assuredly. Like opposite sides of the same coin, Schiele uses doubling to depict contradictory concepts as being intimately related. Additionally, the two Schieles are not merely demonstrating two ways of seeing; as Schiele's letter to Reichel indicates, "...in time, *you* will be completely won over by it, as soon as *you* begin not to look at it, but to look into it [my emphasis, L.F.]."<sup>164</sup> His true concern here is to coax the beholder from a state of "looking" to a state of "seeing." The oppositional union of the two modes of viewing is strategic, as is Schiele's allusion to the space that lies between the viewer and the work of art. Doubling the subject serves as a reflexive

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<sup>164</sup> Kallir, *The Complete Works*, 295.

strategy that calls attention to the inherent conventions of portraiture, challenging the assumptions with which the viewer approaches the painting.

It is important to remember that these are self-portraits. As in his early self-portraiture, Schiele is layering concepts onto his likeness, namely that of a prophet, seer and spiritual leader. In other words, just as Schiele included indications of artistic status in his early self-portraiture, in 1910 and 1911 he is employing a similar strategy to stake his claim as a visionary artist. By doing so, Schiele seems to contradict his own request for his viewer to look *into* the painting. This may be the case. Conversely, Schiele may be seeking to awaken a type of inner seeing through these optical cues.

After Schiele's death, Roessler claimed that Schiele once speculated, "If I were not a painter, which I am with every fiber of my being, I would want best of all to be an architect. But as it is, I construct my paintings. Everything in them is, correctly regarded, actually constructed. To compose a picture means to construct it. A painting that is not structured like a piece of architecture never amounts to much..."<sup>165</sup> Admittedly, scholars have pointed out that Roessler tended to attribute his own ideas to Schiele; nevertheless Roessler wrote this in 1922, meaning at the very least that he recognized early on the constructed nature of Schiele's work. Schiele is famous for his attention to negative space within his art, which contains an intentionality that is belied by his jagged line and arbitrary colors. Schiele's concern with painting the invisible conforms to his reported enthusiasm for architecture. According to art historian Albert Elsen, "...for Schiele, the

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<sup>165</sup> Arthur Roessler, "Erinnerungen an Egon Schiele," (Wien and Leipzig: Verlag Carl Konegen, 1922), page 65. "Wenn ich nicht Maler wäre, was ich mit jeder Faser meines Leibes und aller Kraft meiner Seele bin, würde ich wohl noch am liebsten Baumeister sein wollen. -- Aber ich baue ja auch so -- -- eben meine Bilder. Alles darin is ja, recht betrachtet, eigentlich gebaut. Bildmäßig komponieren ist ja bauen. Ein Bildwerk, in dem die Teile nicht architektonisch behandelt werden, das nicht gefügt gebaut ist (nicht ohne tieferen Sinn, nennt der Spachgebrauch es so), taugt nie recht, kann trotz schöner Farben und sonstiger Vorzüge, keinen rechten Halt in sich haben." Translation from Franz E. Wischin, et al., *Schiele and Krumlov* (Český Krumlov: Egon Schiele Art Centrum, 2010), 75.

blank sheet of paper was to be visualized as a cube of space that began or extended into depth from where the artist was, and into which the figure and its volume would be located without even a groundline.”<sup>166</sup> With the exception of Elsen’s observation, Schiele’s inclusion of the space before the canvas in his pictorial composition has not been addressed. Schiele activates this space most effectively through his use of doubling.

The constructed nature of the *Self-Seers* series functions the most effectively to engage the viewer through the inclusion of oppositional qualities between the doubles, a frontal pose, and denaturalization of the space before the painting. Through these devices, the active viewer may experience a state of active viewing. Additionally, the “self” who is “seeing” becomes the beholder who, jolted into awareness through a heightened awareness of the work of art, is inclined toward self-contemplation. As one of Schiele’s fundamental concerns, the distinction between superficial looking (*daraufsehen*) and looking into (*hineinschauen*) is also the difference between confusion and understanding.

Schiele differentiates between “superficial looking” at a painting and “looking into” it, a distinction between two points of focus, of which one falls short of the painting and the other falls within it. The boundary to be transcended is the physical surface of the

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<sup>166</sup> Albert Elsen, “Drawing and a New Sexual Intimacy: Rodin and Schiele,” in Patrick Werkner, ed., *Egon Schiele: Art, Sexuality, and Viennese Modernism* (Palo Alto: Society for the Promotion of Science and Scholarship, 1994), 18. Elsen, an expert on Rodin, explores how Rodin’s techniques surfaced in Schiele’s art in this essay, and his insight regarding Schiele’s spatial composition seem to be a result of his admitted unfamiliarity with the details of Schiele’s biography and working techniques. He focuses, I believe advantageously, on synthesizing what Schiele learned in the academy with Rodin’s style, demonstrating how Schiele might have engaged with Rodin to develop his own style. According to Elsen, qualities such as the “character” in ugliness and the partial rendition of Rodin’s figures in sculpture and drawing surface in Schiele’s works and demonstrate Rodin’s influence. It is a speculative essay in many regards, consisting only of astute observations that are supported by certain compositional affinities between the artists. For instance, Elsen writes that, “...Schiele would have learned that there are parts of the human body that are dispensable for art, and that well-made parts can stand for the whole, having a beauty and expressiveness of their own. (Conversely, in his paintings, Schiele would restore limbs missing in the drawing of the same subject, as in his self-portraits.)” (p. 20). Schiele scholars have been assigning psychoanalytic meanings to the missing limbs in Schiele’s paintings since the 1970s, arriving at increasingly speculative conclusions. The value of Elsen’s essay lies in his fresh look at Schiele’s work through a formalist approach.

painting, yet the transcendence itself is psychological, occurring within the viewer's mind. To prompt such a manner of viewing, Schiele specifically includes the space before the canvas in his double self-portraits to render the surface more permeable. As addressed in chapter one, by referring to the framing of their work, Viennese intellectuals were seeking a means of approaching their audience more immediately through the antithetical inclusion of self and other, thereby creating a doubling that not only exists within the work, but also between the work and its users. In Schiele's art, doubling calls attention to the "beholder's share" in the work of art, as the artist mediates between the mirror image, his or her personal desires, and the work of art, and traditional portraiture conventions such as the portrait serving as a proxy for the individual.

Dmitris Vardoulakis writes of the literary double: "Far from essentializing the limit, the doppelgänger is an interrogation of the limit and on the limit—its interruptive power consists in the necessity of the limit as well as its equally necessary delimitation or transgression."<sup>167</sup> The double self-portrait can function in a similar manner, I would argue, because the opposing positions of viewer and portrait encapsulate a space between, and the beholder's awareness of that place is activated by Schiele's double self-portraiture through pictorial devices that emphasize that space, engage with portraiture's characteristics, and invoke antithetical qualities.

In addition, there is also a metaphysical aspect to Schiele's distinction between "sehen" and "schauen." We must return to Gütersloh's essay describing the effect of the work of art:<sup>168</sup>

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<sup>167</sup>Vardoulakis, *Literature's Philosophy*, 10.

<sup>168</sup>Gütersloh, *Versuch einer Vorrede*, unpaginated. "Alle Kunst geht so an mir vorbei, geht eigentlich nicht mich an, sondern eine dritte, imaginäre Person, die ich nicht kenne, nur ahne. ... Und vielleicht in kleinen, beinahe erschrockenen Pause denken, dass der hinter mir am Ende gar keine Person ist, sondern

All art thus disregards me. It actually does not address me, but a third, imaginary person whom I do not know, only sense. ... And possibly to think in brief, almost startling pauses, that in the end, he who stands behind me is not a person, but instead only imaginary (which is not even imaginable). And to think that, if I could turn around, it would continue to exist, that it would perhaps be the artist himself; not actually he himself, but instead he, brought back and reduced to the essence of his original being, a pure inspiration, a plastic moment of conception, placenta...and he, lost in the most objective contemplation of his conception...Again I recommend the silence.

Gütersloh's description of the figure behind him warrants consideration, because in spite of the work of art's "disregard" for him, he is, in fact, a necessary contributor to the interaction as an intercessor between the doubling of artist and artwork. "He who stands behind him" is imaginary, attached to Gütersloh's own mental processes. He exists within the body yet is likewise independent of him, existing beyond the confines of the body and sensed by the body in his "unimaginable imaginary" presence. The artist is beyond imagination and beyond knowledge; therefore, Gütersloh is himself divided between his physical body and his imagination, between the mental process of perceiving and the physical process of sensing. It is in this state that he is able to draw closer to the art and to the essential presence of the artist. A key aim for Schiele as he painted portraiture was to unveil the psyche, to reveal the essence of the sitter, and while many scholars share Rudolf Leopold's opinion that Schiele's portraiture reflects his own troubled psyche, Schiele's interest in the viewer's role has been overlooked. To Schiele

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nur imaginär (was schon nicht mehr vorstellbar ist), und wenn ich mich jetzt so umdrehen koennte, dass dieses Es vorhanden bliebe, vielleicht der Künstler selbst ist, und eigentlich nicht er selbst, sondern er, zurück geführt, komprimiert auf sein Urwesen, reiner Einfall, plastischer Moment der Konzeption, Plazenta... Und er, versunken in das objektivste Anschauen seiner Empfängnis... Ich empfehle die Stille nochmals."

and his contemporaries, a specific mode of viewing could lead to a metaphysical state of contemplation, much the same as Nietzsche's call for a shared creative experience between the artist and the viewer.

Metaphysical allusions become more pronounced throughout the development of the *Self-Seers* series, as does the contrast between two modes of vision, seeing and looking, reflecting Schiele's concern with seeing as an introspective act that leads to spiritual understanding. *The Prophets* (Figure 3.7) and *The Self-Seers II (Death and Man)* (Figure 3.8), both of 1911, do not include the same scrutinizing gaze of the initial *Self-Seers I* (Figure 3.6). Instead, Schiele increases the contrast between the two figure's modes of viewing, because to him, looking was a superficial act and seeing was a superior process that induces a state of contemplation.

Andreas Thom, a member of Schiele's *Neukunstgruppe*, which Gütersloh joined in 1911, articulated this distinction.<sup>169</sup> Thom characterizes seeing as a preferred mode of viewing in an essay published in 1918 entitled, "Schauer und Seher." Like Gütersloh, he describes seeing as a participatory act, in which the true seer approaches the image in a manner that yields an extra-sensory result. "I look," Thom writes, "means that I subject the ostensible impressions to my social world, without the intentionality to search, without the hope to find something special... I look without doing more."<sup>170</sup> "Seeing is apprehension of a visible scene," he continues, "it is participation and not a condition, it

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<sup>169</sup> Sáez, *Wahrnehmung, Identität, und Weltbild*, 205. Sáez claims that the essay was written in 1910, but its date of publication was in October, 1918.

<sup>170</sup> Andreas Thom, "Schauer und Seher: Zur Kunstbetrachtung," in *Der Anbruch*, (Nendeln/Liechtenstein: Kraus-Thomson Organization Limited, 1978) 24. Oktober, 1918, 7. "Ich schaue, heisst, ich setze mich den augenscheinlichen Eindrücken meiner Mitwelt aus, ohne die Absichtlichkeit zu suchen, ohne Hoffnung auch Besonderes zu finden... Ich schaue, ohne mehr zu tun."

is consciousness and not opinion, seeing is experience in the sense of a spiritual involvement.<sup>171</sup>

Schiele's concern with this distinction is evident through his particular choice of titles and his emphasis on the eyes, and while these artists did not share their ideas in letters, the similarity of their production testifies of their agreement. Just as Gütersloh stands before the work and senses the essence of the artist beyond the painting and behind the viewer, so stands the artist before his work, challenged with creating a work that speaks to the essence of its viewer. "The painter, too, can look, but seeing is rather something more," Schiele wrote in a 1910 aphorism.<sup>172</sup> He claims in it status as a visionary artist. Here, seeing reaches for something beyond processing visual stimulus. In this it is comparable to Gütersloh's act of seeing and sensing the presence and the essence of the other.

Thus, in Schiele's *Prophets* (Figure 3.7) of 1911, it seems evident that the figures are depicted in the states of ecstasy and enstasy. Ecstasy requires a separation of body and spirit, a stepping outside of the self as a means of self-examination, and scholars such as Steiner and Sáez argue that this is the case in Schiele's double self-portraiture.<sup>173</sup> While I do not disagree with this argument, I do find that it insufficiently explains what Schiele's double self-portraiture can mean within the context of his statements. Of course, the literary tradition of the *Doppelgänger* implies a sense of ecstasy, that the extracorporeal double sees those qualities in the primary subject that he cannot. Beyond

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<sup>171</sup> Ibid. "Sehen ist Erfassung eines sichtbaren Vorganges, ist Teilnahme und nicht Zustand, ist Bewusstheit und nicht Befinden; Sehen ist Erleben im Sinne einer geistigen Mittäterschaft."

<sup>172</sup> Nebehay, *Leben, Briefe, Gedichte*, 141, #153. Egon Schiele Database, 134. "Schauen kann auch der Maler, Sehen ist aber doch mehr."

<sup>173</sup> See, for example, Steiner, "Selbst- und Doppelselbstdarstellung," 225-247, and Helena Pereña, "How One Becomes What One Is: Schiele's Self-Representation," in *Das unrettbare ich*, Helena Pereña, ed., 36-96.

the literary tradition of the *Doppelgänger* being “one who sees himself,” ecstasy’s meaning implies an element of euphoria, abandon, and loss of self-consciousness in the presence of an outside force. Enstasy, a term coined in 1958 by the scholar of religion and myth Mircea Eliade, is the opposite experience, an inward self-reflection, a meditative means of self-examination. It is a type of mystical experience that requires an inward focus, resulting in the dissolution of the self that allows an awareness of the unity and wholeness of all things.

As here I introduce a third theoretical model, I will pause to clarify its usefulness. In chapter one I began with Lorna Marten’s literary model from *Shadow Lines*, which she defines as unresolvable dualities being set into play in order to gain access to their unknowable “dark side.” It is a linear model with the end points being the pure quality, and therefore no true end points exist because of the opposing quality’s presence. Points along this line function like marks on a horizon line, allowing the seeker to arrive at what seemed originally to be the destination, only to find that the destination is not available. This “dark area”, I believe, is the primordial essence of the artist to which Gütersloh is referring, and likewise the self-professed aim of Schiele’s work to invoke the essential and the eternal. The ideal viewer or reader would be the seeker who understands the importance of searching within the work of art for the inaccessible.

Schiele’s distinction between *daraufsehen* and *hineinschauen* demonstrates a similar type of engagement with opposing qualities, but this aim no longer fits into a linear model. Schiele’s statement to Reichel, that “...you will be completely won over by it, as soon as you begin not to look at it, but to look *into* it”<sup>174</sup> establishes an interpersonal concern. In other words, Schiele is seeking a specific response from the viewer which

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<sup>174</sup> Kallir, *The Complete Works*, 295.

manifests itself visually in the double self-portraiture. The qualities of dark/light, attentive/inattentive found in Schiele's doubles are punctuated by their facing outward, opposing the viewer, which corresponds with a three-dimensional architectural-style model that provides for knowable and unknowable aspects of selfhood, both within and between individuals. A three-dimensional model accounts for the frontal positioning of both figures and their materiality, because unknowable does not necessarily mean immaterial and the ambiguities presented by the figures depends in part upon their immateriality.

*Daraufsehen* and *hineinschauen* are Schiele's terms; terms that I believe can be represented by both of these models through their desire to access the unknown and through their three-dimensional relational implications. The ecstatic point of view that is associated with the *Doppelgänger* and accepted by Schiele scholars does fit into Marten's model, if one considers the soul to be endless and if one believes that stepping outside of the self allows this point of view. But by distinguishing between "daraufsehen" and "hineinschauen," Schiele is addressing a process that should not only occur within the artist, but also within the viewer, and he addresses this same concern visually through his self-duplication. I accept the ecstatic point of view that the *Doppelgänger* implies, but I believe that it should be tempered with—or even complicated by—its opposite, the enstatic point of view.

The correspondence between the terms ecstasy and enstasy and *daraufsehen* and *hineinschauen* is not exact, but within the context of this analysis, it is the best approximation. Both sets of terms account for an outer and an inner eye. It is my belief that Schiele did not have the idea of the literary *Doppelgänger* in mind when he painted

his first double self-portraits, but at least in part, they correspond closely enough to it that the qualities of the Romantic *Doppelgänger* should be reconsidered here. If one must go outside of the self to properly understand the true nature of the self in ecstasy, one must also go within and unify that self with the oneness of all things in ecstasy. This yields self-understanding in a holistic manner. I propose, therefore, that *hineinschauen* applies to both the painting and the self, that a deep engagement with a work of art should also include an element of ecstasy and a subsequent dissolution of the oppositional qualities of subject and object.

The oppositional qualities within the painting extend beyond these different modes of self-understanding, the contrast of dark and light with awareness and passivity between the two emphasizes that the purpose of the doubling is to present antipodes. The dark figure on the right is depicted with darkened flesh tones and white patches of paint delineating his eye sockets, nostrils and mouth. This is not a true opposite of the naturalistically colored right figure; it is rather like a photographic negative of him. In other words, they are the same entity inverted, and their conjoining emphasizes their unity. Because prophesy is the gift of spiritual sight, the title provides the understanding that these doubles are engaged in two very different means of viewing, and that the same act can have very different outcomes. The facial expression of wonder and astonishment of the right figure is directed outward to engage the viewer directly, while the languid passivity of the right figure stimulates further investigation, rendering a passive viewing of this painting almost impossible.

I argue in chapter one that the double self-portraits reflect Schiele's concern with engaging the viewer on a deeper level by referring to the space before the canvas, the

space between the opposition of viewer and artwork. For instance, in *Self-Seers I* (Figure 3.6) he depicts the pair looking together toward the space before the painting, and their self-referential gestures indicate that they are mutually regarding themselves in a mirror. Unlike in Johannes Fischer's 1915 trick photograph of Schiele (Figure 3.14), in Schiele's paintings the figures almost never regard each other, are almost always frontally positioned, and in the *Self-Seers* series, are always conjoined. This pose draws attention to the oppositional stance between the viewer and the pair, and the effect on the viewer when encountering a double disrupts what might otherwise have been a superficial viewing experience. Schiele's use of antipodal qualities within the painting alludes to the oppositional positioning of the viewer and painting that encapsulates the space before it. Here, in the context of *sehen* and *schauen*, it becomes clear how this space is a necessary component of these paintings. By referring to this space, Schiele further underscores the unifying quality of an encompassing space, one that is shared between the doubles and the viewer. This tendency is most apparent within the *Self-Seers* group, and it is a fundamental idea in the *Self-Seers* paintings and drawings.

The physical structure that occupies this space is the frame, and nowhere is the frame of the work more decisively called forth than in Schiele's 1911 *Self-Seers II (Death and Man)* (Figure 3.8), in which Schiele paints a hand that extends forth from the lower edge of the picture. This hand, held in place by the forearm of one of the figures, intertwines the physical space before the canvas with the composition within. The composition of the painting is similar to *Prophets* (Figure 3.7), with the light, diaphanous figure appearing as a photographic negative of the more naturalistically depicted fore figure, and a similar contrast between the two facial expressions. Additionally, a third,

oversized, partially revealed facial structure is modeled into the paint to the right of the figures, seeming to emerge from the darkness behind the figures. The imagery seems to burst forth into the space before it and these pictorial devices form a reciprocal relationship between the reality depicted within the canvas and the physical world of the viewer, with the physically real frame tasked with keeping the contents of the picture contained.

Schiele's inclusion of the word "death" in the title recalls the literary *Doppelgänger* as a harbinger of death, an obvious consideration; but the diaphanous rear figure is not necessarily the image of death. Instead, death may very well be the partially revealed face to the right side, which would maintain the formal elements of the two "selves" found in the *Self-Seers* series. The form to the right is an eerie presence, larger and greater than the two figures, and truly nebulous in its depiction, representing an understanding of death that represents a widely held view. Just as the rational understanding of body and mind was challenged by Ernst Mach at this time, Georg Simmel's 1910 essay, "The Metaphysics of Death" articulated a common point of view on the nature of death held by artists and writers that can also be found in Schiele's painting. Georg Simmel (1858-1918) was a German sociologist whose publications were well known throughout Europe, because he wrote for a general audience. His position on death was that it forms a mutable boundary around the living being, one that grows from within, and rather than death being a final point, separate or beyond living, it

accompanies the development of the living such that the living being cannot reach its full expression without being closer to death.<sup>175</sup>

While it is unknown whether Schiele was familiar with Simmel's essay, a connection to a similar view of death can be established through Rainer Maria Rilke. Simmel's point of view about the relationship between man and death is congruent with Rilke's description of death in *The Notebooks of Malte Laurids Brigge* (1910), a book that Schiele owned,<sup>176</sup> and in which Rilke described death as a "stone inside of a fruit," growing inside of everyone. "Children had a small one in them and grown-ups a big one. Women had it in their womb and men in their chest," Rilke writes, "They had it and it gave them a particular dignity and quiet pride."<sup>177</sup> Death, in this understanding, forms life as much as life forms death, an inversion likewise espoused by Rilke when he summarizes, "They've all had a death of their own."<sup>178</sup> Here, a death of one's own corresponds with living a life of one's own. In the context of Simmel and Rilke, Schiele's understanding of life and death becomes clearer.

His understanding appears in his titles and aphorisms that concern death as a concept. "I am human," Schiele wrote, "I love death and I love life,"<sup>179</sup> and Schiele's titling of *The Self-Seers II (Death and Man)* visually describes his personal understanding of the relationship between death and life, in that order. It also most clearly engages the viewer in an act of seeing instead of looking as the complicated imagery requests

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<sup>175</sup> Georg Simmel, "The Metaphysics of Death," translated by Ulrich Teucher and Thomas M. Kemple, in *Theory, Culture & Society* 2007 (SAGE, Los Angeles, London, New Delhi, and Singapore), Vol. 24 (7–8): 72–77.

<sup>176</sup> Comini, *Egon Schiele's Portraits* (1974), 80.

<sup>177</sup> Rainer Maria Rilke, *The Notebooks of Malte Laurids Brigge*, tr. by William Needham, (<https://archive.org/details/TheNotebooksOfMalteLauridsBrigge>, accessed 7/16/14), Kindle edition.

<sup>178</sup> Ibid.

<sup>179</sup> Nebehay, *Leben, Briefe, Gedichte*, 142, #157. Egon Schiele Database, 139. "Ich bin Mensch, ich liebe den Tod und liebe das Leben."

reconciliation with its titling. The *Self-Seers*, the two figures conjoined in the painting, are engaged in *seeing*, a complicated act of ecstasy and enstasy that Gütersloh describes as conjuring forth the essence of the artist, and that Nietzsche calls for when he mandates a “shared experience with the artist.”

The doubles, at once united and divided, can be understood as a self-portrait of their creator, Schiele, and their qualities also invoke a sense of self-consciousness in their beholders, a reminder that the self is not a stable entity, but instead is comprised of known and unknown psychic structures. Confronted not only by this dual self and by the eye of death, the viewer is further absorbed into the painting through the inclusion of the hand in the center of the painting, a hand that leads the eye from the space before the picture into the center and imitates a gesture made from the space before the painting. Death, as represented by the painting, is tempered by the life that stands before it. Its impermanence, a tenet of Theosophical belief in reincarnation, is grounded in its interaction with its opposite. Conversely, life renews itself twofold, as the viewer standing before the painting conjures forth the essence of the absent artist and also recalls that death enhances life.

The *Self-Seers* series is an exploration and a development of the nuances of viewing, of oppositional qualities endemic to the human condition, of metaphysical potential in the physical world, and of the limitations of painting, especially self-portraiture. These ideas are manifest in a letter written to Engel in 1912, in which Schiele explained: “The picture must emanate light. Bodies have their own light that they

consume through living. They burn, they are no longer lit.”<sup>180</sup> To Schiele, his work was imbued with the same metaphysical energy that is required for life, and it is intended to excite the viewer’s primal core as much as it manifests the essence of the artist. Between 1910 and 1911, Schiele developed the means of conveying this idea in part by working through the *Self-Seers* series. *Self-Seers II (Death and Man)* includes all of these potential meanings, and Schiele’s return to this compositional format within this series suggests that he was satisfied with its results.

### Conclusion

Far from an artistic break, Schiele’s 1910 style of Expressionism, a term that I do not agree applies to these works, is rather a culmination of various developments of his earlier practice and training, and in Modernist terms, it could be more precisely labeled as post-Symbolic and proto-Surrealist, engaging with the concerns of both of these movements. I call these works Symbolist throughout this chapter because they fit most closely with the content and aim of Swiss and Belgian Symbolist artists, but the newly understood “crisis of identity” endemic to Viennese culture and beyond imbues these works with a methodical, psychological structure that is missing from the works of Schiele’s predecessors. That psychological concern is found in the subsequent Surrealist movement, which, with many of its contributors having been familiar with Freud’s writings, attempted to access the unknown unconscious through deliberate strategies. As a contemporary of Freud and an admirer of Symbolism, Schiele’s works lie somewhere between the two movements. This does not mean that Schiele’s work is a bridge between

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<sup>180</sup> Nebehay, *Leben, Briefe, Gedichte*, 228, #397. Egon Schiele Database, 141. “Das Bild muß von sich Licht geben, die Körper haben ihr eigenes Licht, das sie beim Leben verbrauchen; sie verbrennen, sie sind unbeleuchtet...”

the two movements, but rather that he shares certain impulses with each of these that are reflected in these paintings.

To claim that Schiele was a consistent, analytical thinker would be misleading; still, it is possible to identify recognizable themes, strategies and influences that surface throughout his early work, and they culminate in a group of the most fascinating self-portraits of the twentieth century. Schiele's self-portraiture as a youth demonstrates that even in his early work, Schiele was inscribing ideas and concepts onto his likeness, continuing this through his performative works on paper and then fully embraced it in the *Great Personalities* series. In the *Self-Seers* series, he developed this strategy to an unprecedented degree, creating self-portraiture that is highly effective at capturing and keeping the viewer's attention. Engaging the viewer through line of sight, through the frame and through the doubling of the self, these paintings are structured to induce an intellectual and a visceral reaction.

The *Self-Seers* series informs us as much about the *Great Personalities* paintings as the inverse does. Paintings such as *The Poet* (Figure 3.10) do not appear to be doubled selves, and in fact, they are not necessarily Schiele himself in duplicate. If one were to accept that this particular painting conveys one concrete meaning, it could be argued that the white light above the poet's head is an astral body, and therefore a double of the physical body. That would greatly limit this painting's potential, and those like it in his series.

In chapter one I argue that Schiele's *Doppelgänger* was embedded in a larger cultural practice of using the motif as a strategy to evoke oppositional qualities and to call attention to the structure of the work in question. Now, when seen in the context of the

*Great Personalities* Series, it is evident that Schiele's strategy was designed to elicit a meaningful response. In this chapter I have demonstrated how a discussion of the *Great Personalities* and *Self-Seers*, in context with each other, extends Schiele's thoughts on the insufficiency of seeing versus looking and on art's timelessness to both groups of works. Schiele's ideal viewer would see "into" the work of art, while simultaneously directing his or her vision inward, regardless whether the painting's subject depicts Schiele in a theatrical role, such as that of a prophet, or Schiele seeing and encountering himself. I argue that a reciprocity exists between the two; the deeper the one act, the deeper the other. Such seeing gives the ideal viewer access to something primal and thus not individual. It also presupposes Schiele's ability and ambition to allude to this invisible ground in what iconographically always remains identifiable as a self-portrait with or without "great personality."

In other words, whether or not one understands this ambition to be hubris, the *Self-Seers* paintings are first and foremost an exploration of the nuances of viewing, designed to encourage and even challenge the viewer to see more deeply and holistically, to see a unity where certainly at first there appears to be none. At the same time, they reveal the oppositional qualities endemic to the human condition, metaphysical potential in the physical world, and yet the limitations of painting, especially self-portraiture. Schiele's shift from this compositional strategy in 1912 to other modes of depicting doubles suggests that he recognized the contradiction and irony, or even tragedy, of his endeavor to create a deep, invisible unity in the *Great Personalities* (between him and them) and *Self-Seers* (between him and the viewer).

The compositional strategy that I will describe in chapter four is very similar to the one that I have proposed for the *Self-Seers* group. Therefore, the terms that guide this chapter are parallel to the ones that I have already established. The *Self-Seers* are very likely psychological and related to identity, but their fundamental quality is the engagement of the viewer and therefore, they can be somewhat freely interpreted. In spite of this quality, they generally present, albeit to varying degrees, four main problems: seeing and looking, selfhood and death, the indeterminacy that is located in the frame of the work, and the natural world's relationship to the spiritual realm. Schiele intended these paintings to be "Art," with the temporal contributing to the eternal, the self becoming art, and art becoming the self. In other words, they demonstrate the interaction between the particular and universal. The constructed nature of the *Self-Seers* series functions most effectively to engage the viewer through the inclusion of oppositional qualities between the doubles, a frontal pose, and overt inclusion of the space before the painting. Through these devices, the active viewer may experience a state of ecstatic viewing similar to the artist.

In addition, *Self-Seers II (Death and Man)* must be considered in terms of its title, which nominally links this painting with an entrenched *Doppelgänger* concept, death. Visually, Schiele does not determine if either figure is death, and given the indeterminate setting, death is not, in fact, rendered pictorially visible according to any iconographic tradition. Instead, the viewer is tasked with imagining and identifying death within the picture. Given the absence of any further properties of the *Doppelgänger* such as pursuit or conflict between the figures, the concepts of death and the *Doppelgänger* must be

considered in new terms, which are found in the writings of the poet Rainer Maria Rilke, the sociologist Georg Simmel and the Theosophist Rudolf Steiner.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### AFTER THE *SELF-SEERS*: THE “INNER LIGHT OF THE PAINTING”

In 1913, the cohesiveness between the double self-portraits ceases to exist and the elements that I have described are not necessarily included any longer. Schiele’s shift from the at once antithetical and allusive model of self-representation discussed in chapter three to other modes of depicting doubles must have required an element of experimentation. In this chapter, I will argue that Schiele challenged himself to find ways to encourage deep viewing through very specific formal means and to suggest more determinate meaning through new pictorial devices. The most distinct modification is that he seems to include light as a metaphor for both the human spirit and what he viewed as the eternal nature of art. Illumination is most directly understood as originating from an outside source, in German this is called *Beleuchtung*. Schiele expressed, however, that his concern was to paint an inner light, what in German is referred to as *Erleuchtung*. The distinction between these two terms is similar to the ecstatic and the enstatic point of view.

Schiele’s shift in concern from looking and seeing to an outer and inner illumination is not a great leap. Both sets of concepts represent a contrast between a more desirable, not completely accessible interior state and a natural, everyday condition. In

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<sup>181</sup> This chapter was presented in part at the College Art Association annual conference in 2015. It is under final review for partial publication as, “Beyond *The Self-Seers*: Egon Schiele’s Late Double Self-Portraiture,” in *German Visual Culture Series: The Doppelgänger*, Vol. III, forthcoming in winter, 2015 and under initial review for partial publication in a planned edition, *Two for One: The Double in Western Art from 1850 to 2010: Alter-egos, Doppelgängers and Reflected Images in Paintings made in Europe and the Americas from the Late-19th to the Early 21st century*, forthcoming in 2016. I would like to extend my deepest gratitude to Deborah Ascher Barnstone for her labors to organize the GSA panel and edited volume. I am equally grateful to Mary Edwards for her hard work in organizing both the CAA conference panel and the forthcoming edited volume. Beyond their work as organizers, both have been extremely generous in editing and offering feedback as I refined my essays.

some of his later works, such as *Seers (Double Self-Portrait with Wally)* of 1913 (Figure 4.11), he follows the model that I have described in the *Self-Seers* series, and he modifies it through the inclusion of additional elements. In others, such as his 1915 *Transfiguration (The Blind II)* (Figure 4.18), he accomplished a similar effect through gesture, pose, and destabilizing pictorial devices. In all of Schiele's double self-portraiture, spiritualism and a deeper sense of knowledge remain a central focus. After the *Self-Seers* group, the presence of the doubles changes and becomes less cohesive, and I will refer to the *Self-Seers* model as a benchmark for analyzing some of his later works because of the clarity that they provide as an inaugural group.

To the best of my knowledge, so far no scholar has questioned the immateriality of one of the figures, most likely because of the following problems. Scholars have long assumed and accepted that one figure is physical and the second figure is psychological or spiritual.<sup>182</sup> Recent scholarship has not deviated from this position. The works share several formal characteristics that support it, above all the juxtaposition of a dark with a light figure. On the basis of the previous chapter, it may be argued that this juxtaposition relates to another subject with which Schiele professed that he was deeply engaged, namely, the juxtaposition of oppositional qualities. Thus, when in his painted double self-portraits Schiele distinguishes between the two figures joined together in a unified pose, he gives them light and dark selves. Therefore, one might interpret them as a physical and spiritual being, or they could be understood as embodying antithetical qualities. Rather than intending to replace the one possibility with the other, I think that it is important to

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<sup>182</sup> Some of the first to understand Schiele's double as immaterial were Werner Hofmann (1968) and Alessandra Comini (1974), but even recent scholarship that considers the double in non-biographical terms maintain that the double is represented as being non-physical; for example, Astrid Kury (2000), Reinhard Steiner (2007) and Helena Pereña Sáez (2010).

explore how they are related. Furthermore, I will argue in this chapter that Schiele's ongoing concern with distinguishing between seeing and looking also manifests in the later double self-portraits, and that these differ from the earlier ones in that here he begins to engage with space in an interior manner.

Seeing, spirituality, and selfhood remain a concern in the later double self-portraits, but the sense of space changes as Schiele's likeness retreats spatially into the picture's fictitious third dimension. In essence, what I have described in chapter three may be restated as Schiele's method to address the question of space. While his use of space is a matter of interest throughout Schiele's oeuvre, the *Self-Seers* are particularly challenging because in these paintings, he does not set his doubles in an oppressive negative space as he does in other paintings. This he does, for example, in his 1911 *Seated Male Nude* (Figure 4.1), where he isolates his figure with an unwavering contour line, denying its integration with the pictorial background. Deprived even of a resting place, Schiele's likeness floats on the surface of the work as much as it is shown to float in the air, with foreshortened limbs jutting well beyond the "fourth wall" of the pictorial stage.

Schiele's *Self-Seers* are somewhat different (Figures 4.2 and 4.3). These figures are spatially grounded; in fact, it can be difficult to determine the limitations of their forms. He layers the figures quite simply, with one clearly standing behind the other, and he does not afford them an area to inhabit. Instead, the background and the figures themselves surround each other and push each other forward. In Schiele's later double self-portraiture, he begins to incorporate the figures into a new type of space by making them appear as if they were retreating into the picture. By no means does he create

anything resembling a three-dimensional pictorial space within the work of art, instead he begins to refer to a pictorial interior that is unarticulated and perhaps even represents a sacred place.

So far, I have treated the development of Schiele's double self-portraiture as an intellectual process and I will continue to do so. Yet I also wish to acknowledge that his changing life circumstances played an important role in this new development. The change in Schiele's concept and depiction of the *Doppelgänger* is in keeping with a general stylistic shift that occurred in Schiele's portraiture after his prison sentence. In brief, Schiele was detained for 21 days in April of 1912 on charges of public immorality and seduction of a minor. He was sentenced to an additional 3 days after his May 1 trial on the charge of public immorality, as some of his nude drawings were in his studio where children could view them. When the authorities detained him, they also confiscated more than 100 of his drawings, one of which was publicly burned by the magistrate at his sentencing. In the end, his imprisonment was a judicial response to his art and Schiele recognized this.

Setting aside the question of whether he was truly misperceived, Schiele emerged from his incarceration feeling abused and misjudged, and the experience had a profound effect on his art. In a letter to his friend, Arthur Roessler, dated July 3, 1912, Schiele laments that he cannot work, and while this letter is a plea for financial support on the one hand, on the other hand his sense of indignation is clear. He writes that his "possessions and tools were fettered in the hands of Philistines," speaking of his enduring sense of indignation about how he was treated.<sup>183</sup> The strong language in this letter

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<sup>183</sup>Nebehay, *Leben, Briefe, Gedichte*, 224, #370. Egon Schiele Database, 491. "Lieber A. R.-r. [Arthur Roessler] es ist so traurig für mich; daß ich ganz abgeschnitten bin von aller Arbeit. - Große

suggests that Schiele feels more than victimized from his imprisonment; his use of this biblical metaphor suggests the martyrdom of a man with a spiritual mission. Alessandra Comini finds a rebellious streak in his production after this incident, pointing to his 1912 *Cardinal and Nun* and his 1914 *Self Portrait as St. Sebastian* (Figures 4.4 and 4.5) as two unequivocal condemnations directed toward his oppressive homeland. “Publicly disgraced as an artist,” Comini writes, “he had adopted the antisocial personation of monk or hermit, advancing himself by the end of 1914 to the status of martyred saint.”<sup>184</sup> Indeed, his 1914 *Self-Portrait as St. Sebastian* is evidently a pictorial expression of the martyrdom suggested in his 1912 letter.

Conversely, Jane Kallir notices that Schiele becomes more sympathetic to his subjects after his prison sentence, though not as a direct result of his imprisonment. Kallir argues that his sympathy was rather a result of his first truly intimate relationship with a woman, Wally Neuzil, who gained his trust and affection by loyally supporting him throughout the whole ordeal.<sup>185</sup> While it is unclear how deeply she understood his art, she did offer unwavering companionship and support, not only living with him and serving him as a model, but also collecting payments on his behalf and delivering his work to patrons. I will demonstrate that both responses, his response to the court’s ruling and his response to his first intimate relationship, manifest themselves in his double self-portraiture, first through his abandonment of the model of space used in the *Self-Seers* series and second through his inclusion of Wally in his 1913 *Seers*, respectively.

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Enttäuschungen an einem , dem ich vielleicht alles anvertraut habe, ist noch zu überwinden; zu übergehen ist alles, was man gegen mich hat; mit blinden Augen zu sehen, daß die Anderen das, was ich erkämpft habe, benützen; daß ich geldlos bin ist zu ertragen; zu wissen daß meine errungenen Gegenstände und Werkzeuge in Philisterhänden gefesselt wird [!], ist bitter zu denken, daß ich aus großer Liebe zur Natur mich innig verstrickte und grausam herausgerissen werde, ist ein noch hinnehmbares Schicksal, wenn man von sich weiß, daß Du [!] von Neuem beginnen wirst...”

<sup>184</sup> Comini, *Egon Schiele's Portraits* (1974), 112.

<sup>185</sup> Jane Kallir, *Egon Schiele's Women*, (New York: Prestel Verlag, 2012), 178.

Given the dramatic shift that occurs after his imprisonment, it is salient to question whether the model of *sehen* and *schauen* is applicable to these new double self-portraits. In addition, could Schiele's self-perception and his notion of the invisibility of truth have been altered so dramatically that his artistic vision shifted? Is his retreat into the picture a response borne of self-pity or self-scrutiny? Without becoming entrenched too deeply in his biography, this chapter will explore these questions through the lens of Schiele's post-1912 double self-portraits. Because they do not form a cohesive group, except for the obvious inclusion of multiple selves, I will group them thematically. First, I will examine a selection of his mirror images and the works that seem to examine surface and depth, then I will outline how, in terms of space, Schiele shifted certain double self-portraits from the surface of the work to a space within it in a pivotal drawing from 1913. Further, I will explain what that space might mean through an analysis of two of Schiele's 1913 watercolors. Finally, I will explain how Schiele began to engage with that space as well as the space before the work in his 1915 double self-portraits.

### The Doubled Self and the Mirror

I have discussed in chapter two Schiele's engagement with the surface of the mirror, which began with his faithful rendition in 1908 of his mirror reflection in *Nude Study* (Figure 4.6). Here we shall see how this painting becomes particularly relevant in the present context, where surface and depth are a concern. Given the relationship between mirror images and the *Doppelgänger*, Schiele's relationship with his mirror must, of course, be addressed.<sup>186</sup> Alessandra Comini was the first scholar to propose that Schiele's

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<sup>186</sup> Comini, *Egon Schiele's Portraits* (1974), 52. More recent scholarship that regards Schiele's double as a mirror image includes Wolfgang Georg Fischer, *Egon Schiele: Pantomimen der Lust; Visionen der Sterblichkeit*, (Köln: Benedikt Taschen Verlag, GmbH, 1994) and Agnes Husslein-Arco and Alfred

double was a manifestation of his mirror image, a probable assumption, and one that has not been critically parsed out. “Prolific self-portraiture before a mirror had brought a new being into existence,” Comini explains, “and Schiele now sees a second self who must also be portrayed...”<sup>187</sup> Much like the Romantic *Doppelgänger*, Comini’s interpretation proposes an image of the self that acquires a life of its own.

While I agree that the mirror did inform Schiele’s double self-portraiture, I argue that he was more likely interested in representing the tension between surface and depth presented by the mirror. Here, I must acknowledge that I will not be delving into the history of the mirror and its relationship to the self-portrait.<sup>188</sup> To the best of my knowledge, Schiele was not thinking of the mirror in historical or critical terms. As I have demonstrated in chapter two, he appears instead to have responded to Parmigianino’s representation of the entire surface and space of his self-portrait as a mirror image. His personal engagement with the mirror reflection as a surface seems to inform the development of his ideas about surface and space within and before the work of art.

The first double that Schiele depicted involves a second faithful rendering of a mirrored reflection. His 1910 drawing entitled *The Artist and His Model* (Figure 4.7) is a stunning rendition of the artist at work, here shown well within the space of the work of art. His model stands before a rather sizeable mirror, and while the economy of line suggests that it was completed fairly quickly, its “assemblage of matching points such as

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Weidinger, “Egon Schiele: Self-Portraits “An eternal dream full of life’s sweet excess,” in Agnes Husslein-Arco and Jane Kallir, ed., *Egon Schiele: Self-Portraits and Portraits* (Munich, London, New York: Prestel Verlag, 2011), 23.

<sup>187</sup> Ibid, 81.

<sup>188</sup> For a general history of the mirror, see Mark Pendergrast, *Mirror, Mirror: A History of the Human Love Affair with Reflection* (New York: Basic Books Publishing, 2003), for a cultural history see Sabine Melchior-Bonnet, *The Mirror: A History*, tr. by Katherine H. Jewett (New York and London: Routledge Publishing, 2001).

shoulder to shoulder, elbow to elbow, wrist to wrist, and knee to knee is perfect in its alignment and complicated perspective,”<sup>189</sup> indicating that it is a thoroughly thought out composition. The duplication of the model implies a mirror that Schiele carefully renders, excluding its frame. This is Schiele’s first depiction of a physical body engaged with its reflection, a true doubling in the tradition of the *Doppelgänger*, and given the drawing’s date and conceptual intricacy, it is a strong candidate as a precursor to his double self-portraiture. The doubling of his model is important, but should not be mistaken as the topic being pictorially addressed. Because his intense, penetrating gaze dominates this drawing, it is the true subject of the work.

This drawing is deceptively simple in its economy of line, yet powerful in its engagement with space. Schiele, the smallest figure in this portrayal, does not depict himself as engaged with his model; instead, he chooses to direct his stare upon his own reflection, which results in a powerful joining of the artist’s self-scrutiny with the gaze of the viewer. The strong recession of the figures punctuates his own act of looking through the strong linear diagonals forming an acute triangle and converging on Schiele’s eyes. The front and back of the nude next to the artist serves two purposes, to indicate that a mirror is present, and to impute the viewer as the one who is now engaged in the act of looking, even at the moment when the artist is not. When the viewer looks at Schiele, he or she stands in the place of Schiele’s scrutinizing figure. When the viewer looks at the model, Schiele’s image sharply observes him or her performing that act. Paraphrasing Schiele’s own words with regard to this perspectival space, the deeper one looks into it, the more involved he or she becomes.

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<sup>189</sup> Comini, *Egon Schiele’s Portraits* (1974), 65.

Schiele carefully excludes the frame of the mirror, choosing only to imply its presence by drawing its surface reflection. In other words, Schiele does not faithfully render the full scene in front of him; instead, he focuses upon what is contained within the frame, the mirror's reflection before him. The edges of the drawing dismember Schiele's model, with her left arm even missing in her reflected image. Because he privileges the reflected image above the physical presence of his model, Schiele must also truncate the model's head and legs. This decision calls attention to the close proximity of the unseen mirror. Its pictorial absence means that the physical edge of the drawing, which exists within the space of the viewer, might also be seen as the implied frame of the mirror. The within-without mutability of the frame calls forth the surface of the mirror and reminds us that the drawing being viewed is also pure surface. The frame is of absolute importance to the dual meaning of this drawing.

As discussed in chapter one, *The Self-Seers I* (Figure 4.2) also implies that it is a mirror image. There, Schiele abandons depicting the mirror realistically and instead focuses on the concept of doubling found between the physical figure and reflected image. While the source of inspiration may have been his model's body and her immaterial reflection, Schiele is now painting two reflections next to each other, or conversely two physical bodies. Their sameness is supported by their equal pictorial weight, their frontal position, and the repetition of the arms, torsos, and hands. The confrontation between the figures and the viewer, as if the painting itself were a mirror, not only puts the viewer in mind of his or her own physical presence, it also points to the surface qualities of the painting that deflects entry into the painting, especially given the lack of space behind the two figures.

Schiele engaged with the mirror image as a site of both surface and space in 1916 in a photographic collaboration with Johannes Fischer (Figure 4.8), and this photograph includes both types of treatment of depth and surface. In this photograph, Schiele stands before the studio mirror that, according to his sister Melanie, he had begged from his mother when he moved to his first studio in 1907. This photograph shows Schiele's full-length figure, turned toward his reflection with a critical expression, a clear reference to the artist scrutinizing himself, which is often a component of self-portraiture. The painting that he chose to include in the photograph was his 1915 painting entitled *Death and the Maiden* (Figure 4.9), the last double-portrait that he painted of himself with Wally, properly known as Valerie Neuzil, who was Schiele's model, partner, and muse from 1911 until 1915.

In brief, Schiele titled *Death and the Maiden* after the traditional Northern Renaissance allegory, derived from the *Totentanz*, which links eroticism, youth, and vanity with death.<sup>190</sup> Schiele's interpretation contains several important deviations from the iconographic tradition. First, instead of Death's presence catching her unaware, Wally is clinging to Death as if he were a means of salvation. Death seems to be central to her survival. Second, unlike the allegorical Death and the Maiden, both figures are clothed, yet their dress connects them to the conventional erotic nature of the allegorical theme. Wally is clothed in a short red shift with intricate edging reminiscent of a slip, and Death is wearing a similarly short monk's habit. Third, instead of standing together in a lush landscape, the figures are shown kneeling on a sheet or a shroud that echoes the form of

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<sup>190</sup> Joseph Leo Koerner, *The Moment of Self-Portraiture in German Renaissance Art* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1993), 293-298.

Wally's figure and isolates her completely from the barren terrain behind it. Finally, the bird's-eye view employed in this rendition is distinctly Schiele's.

These variations place Wally in a setting in which her vulnerability, not Schiele's, is heightened, yet her facial expression is surprisingly composed.<sup>191</sup> Wally's connection to the natural environment exists only through her embrace of Death, as his head and feet connect to the surroundings, and his coloration echoes that of the rocky terrain. This landscape is far from inviting. Death's feet are enclosed within one of the few green patches of vegetation presented in the painting, and the burgeoning life at Death's feet counters the white halo encompassing his forehead. Death is shown as the connection between the natural and the spiritual realm. Yet his own facial expression seems so completely vacant and lost, rendering the kiss that he bestows upon the Maiden's hair to be wistful, even sorrowful. It is tempting to speculate whether Schiele was displacing his own sense of vulnerability onto Wally or whether he was rather embracing it as an element of the human condition. The important point here is that he is addressing it. Neither figure is shown as stable and secure and both exhibit elements of vulnerability. They suggest that death is a common element that must be embraced to allow full exposure to nature and spirit, or even to life.

Schiele's inclusion of this particular painting in this particular photograph is just one important element of its complexity. He only incorporates a fragment of Wally's

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<sup>191</sup> Schiele's original version of Death and the Maiden depicted Wally with her buttocks exposed through her shift. The result was so audacious and stunning that Roessler reportedly urged Schiele to paint over it. Schiele's decision to portray her as clothed, with her legs and buttocks exposed, might be considered to be erotic and in concordance with the tradition of the Maiden, but then the Maiden is a female nude, not a half-naked woman. A photograph of the painting in its original state has been published in several sources and the anecdote is well known among Schiele scholars; however, I have been unable to locate the source for either of them. For the photograph, for which Lang does not offer a source, see Walther K. Lang, "Der mönchische Tod - Todesmotive bei Egon Schiele," in: Pia Müller-Tamm, ed., *Egon Schiele: Inszenierung und Identität*, (Köln: DuMont, 1995), 93-133. For the anecdote, see Kallir, *The Complete Works*, 330, #289.

figure and edits out his self-portrait as Death. His position in the photograph obscures the edge of the painting, bringing it into deeper dialogue with his physical body and with the mirror image. He turns his back to the painting, but her feet, scaled to his body as life-sized, touch his leg, retaining a connection between them. Schiele buries his fists in his pockets, pushing them forward as if he were protecting or emphasizing his genitals, with either interpretation emphasizing a sense of exposure and perhaps his own vulnerability.

Of all his works, this collaborative photograph lends itself most closely to Comini's argument that Schiele's double is a mirror image, although she does not use this photograph as evidence.<sup>192</sup> The similarities between this photograph and the *Self-Seers* images are rather clear. Schiele positions his physical body in such a manner that he stands beside his mirror reflection, and while the impossible situation of the double self-portraits' close entwinement cannot be replicated in the natural world, he is careful to avoid facing his mirror image. His decision to stand beside instead of in front of his image is further emphasized by the juxtaposition of the "light" Schiele within the mirror, with the window behind him forming a halo around his upper body and head. The size of the window indicates its distance from the site of the mirror, and it offers a sense of space that is denied in the foreground of the photograph. Additionally, he emphasizes sight through the direction of his gaze. A closer look at Schiele's eyes shows that he is directing his line of vision toward the photographer, making this ostensible act of self-regard less clear. Instead, his gaze acknowledges the space of the viewer, conflating the notions of within and without in the mirror's reflection and in the photograph itself. The deeper the viewer looks into any one of these three images – the photograph, the painting, and the mirror, the more his or her space is implicated as being a part of the composition.

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<sup>192</sup> Comini, *Egon Schiele's Portraits*, (1974), 81.

This photograph rewards careful observation with an interesting range of possible meanings. One must be able to recognize the specific, fragmented painting to understand that death and its relationship to life's vulnerabilities is a theme both excluded and included in the photograph. One must also closely scrutinize Schiele's act of viewing to recognize that the line of sight is an important indicator of the relationship between the viewer and the space within the mirror. Schiele is quite literally looking deeper within the space of the photograph to direct his gaze outside of it. Finally, one must recognize the crucial elements of the *Self-Seers* series that Schiele physically enacts before the camera to understand that the photograph shares more than a superficial relationship with the *Self-Seers* series. Yet Schiele's spatial position is very different from that which he occupied in the *Self-Seers* series.

Here Schiele has withdrawn into the space of the image and at the same time he directs the viewer's attention inward, yet he also includes oppositional qualities as a means to invert any concrete meaning for each of the individual elements. Fischer and Schiele arranged *Death and the Maiden* directly abutting the mirror, creating a juxtaposition of two types of surfaces that contain images. The painting is pure surface, and the partially seen figure within it is positioned in such a manner that she tumbles forth from the space behind her. Conversely, the mirror reflects more visual space within it than the space that Schiele physically occupies before it, treating space as a mutable limitation. Moreover, both the painted and the mirror images are emphasized as the sites of importance in the photograph; close observation yields that they are crisp and in focus, while Schiele's "physical" body is slightly out of focus, turning the concepts of physical and spectral inside out.

In general, it may be said that after the *Self-Seers* series Schiele's doubles either retreat into the pictorial plane or they float on the surface, with no space within the picture to inhabit. *Double Self-Portrait* of 1915 (Figure 4.10), in which he eliminates any marked distinction between the two figures, denies Schiele's doubles a space to inhabit save the collars from which the heads emerge. A scant four lines are sufficient to suggest bodies; instead, the focus here is on the modeling of the faces, which are wonderfully enlivened with electric blues and reds. The energy of the coloration, contrasted with the negative space from which they emerge, pushes the two heads forward into the viewer's space. Schiele uses a triangular formation to stabilize the figures somewhat off-center of the sheet, with the weight of the left figure balancing the composition. The result is simultaneously harmonious and jarring. The drawing's blank surface gives as much life to the figures as the vibrant coloration of their faces does, for it astonishingly completes an action, it expels the two heads.

The tension between the surface of the work and Schiele's likenesses negates any need for him to distinguish between the two figures, and therefore he can fully depict them both as physical and embodied. The opposing forces here are solely the viewer and the work of art, and Schiele's image mediates the space between the two. The bulging eyes of the lower face repeat the bulging quality of the composition. They furthermore compel the viewer to look and to see truly, while the more passive gaze of the upper face motion toward the sky. In this work, it is evident that the two Schieles are meant to be depictions of two physical beings. In other words, Schiele's double does not necessarily represent a mirror image, death, or aura, although they may be interpreted as any one or all of these. Conversely, as in Schiele's photograph before his mirror, which presents a

crisp mirror image beside a blurred physical body, they may both be viewed as, put in Gütersloh's words, as "...not a person, but instead only imaginary (which is not even imaginable)."

Schiele's desire to implicate the viewer through the interplay of opposites remains, yet his position has changed quite drastically. The *Self-Seers* works, as I have argued, were directed outward, with very little or no space for the pair to occupy. By 1915, he resumed that outward direction in his *Double Self-Portrait* and even developed it in a painting entitled *Transfiguration (The Blind II)* (which I will discuss in detail below), but in the years between, the focus of his double self-portraits is consistently directed inward. Yet he evidently did not deviate from desiring to express the ideals that the double represents. The concept of death being central to life is expressed, albeit quite subtly, in Schiele's collaborative photograph as is the distinction between *sehen* and *schauen*, the conflation of inner and outer, and a concern with engaging the viewer in recognizing all of these qualities. What might have happened to prompt such a dramatic shift away from his customary depiction of his doubles? Although I do not intend to analyze Schiele himself through his art, his works do require a certain degree of biographical reading to answer that question.

#### Schiele's Reinterpretation of *The Self-Seers* Concepts

In 1913, Schiele produced three double self-portraits on paper in pencil, watercolor, and gouache. Because he viewed his oil paintings as his most serious works and tended to work his ideas out on paper, his choice of materials suggests that he was reworking the

topic.<sup>193</sup> In his later double self-portraits, he softens or even eliminates the contrasting features between the pair. Additionally, the iconography shifts away from the static duo staring out of the canvas, becomes more varied and dynamic, and then settles back into a static, yet very different mood. Schiele does not entirely abolish metaphysical references to death, selfhood, and seeing, but he also does not necessarily include them. On one hand, his exclusion of oppositional qualities in his figures challenges the model that I have set forth in chapter three, which applies most readily to the *Self-Seers* images, but on the other hand, it supports my claim that the figures should be considered as physical entities. Compared as a group, among his post-1913 double self-portraiture each work has its own individual sense of meaning, with some related to the aims of the earlier *Self-Seers*, but most appearing to be completely different from those and each other. To that extent, this group cannot be considered a series or sequence, thus far my—and perhaps Schiele’s—model for organizing works that relate to his effort to engage with a particular problem or to realize a particular ambition.

As a sequel, and also a potential counterpoint to the *Self-Seers* series, *Seers (Double Self-Portrait with Wally)* (Figure 4.11) of 1913 appears to be the pivotal piece that prompted Schiele’s more experimental approach to doubling. Schiele’s relationship with Wally was his first serious love relationship, and some of Schiele’s most tender portraits are of her. Kallir points to this relationship as the catalyst for a juncture in Schiele’s figural work in general, as his portrayal of himself and others evinces a “newly humanistic orientation.”<sup>194</sup> Comini agrees that their partnership was influential on Schiele’s work; in fact, she locates Wally’s gentle nature in Schiele’s portraits of her and

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<sup>193</sup> One of these, *The Truth Unveiled*, was painted on the verso of a sketch signed by Serena Lederer, *Seated Female Nude* (KD1320) of 1913.

<sup>194</sup> Jane Kallir, *Egon Schiele’s Women*, 178.

in “dead mother” paintings created after their acquaintance began.<sup>195</sup> This new outlook also transformed his double self-portraiture.

In *Seers (Double Self-Portrait with Wally)*, Schiele’s composition is quite similar to his previous *Self-Seers*, with the two figures positioned frontally and beside each other. As in the *Self-Seers*, Schiele distinguishes between the two selves through a lighter and darker coloration, in this case, in the hair. He also includes a distinction between the pair’s modes of seeing, with the figure on the right seemingly more open and aware. His inclusion of Wally is a dramatic addition. She appears in the row between the series of four hands, which closes a seemingly pre-existing gap in the row. Her inclusion also changes the meaning of the doubles.

Indeed, with her partially hidden face and mysterious gaze, Wally challenges the two Schieles for primacy as the subject of the work. Her position is near the center of the composition, balancing one of the hands that form a visual barrier and even seem to push forward from out of the pictorial space. Her face is partially obscured, pulling her back into the composition, and her position in front of Schiele defends him from full exposure. Only an economically sketched shoulder indicates her body’s position. The pair’s gaze is also coupled in their heavy-lids stares. The orange field of color behind Schiele’s head further serves to unite the pair.

Schiele’s 1909 watercolor entitled *Couple* (Figure 4.12) includes a similar mysterious, partially hidden figure, and the result is far different. Schiele had grown a mustache in 1909, and with his upper face covered, he is almost unrecognizable in this self-portrait. He shows himself hooded, exposed, and draped in an extraordinarily large grey coat. His counterpart is shrouded in black, and is enclosed under his extended arm

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<sup>195</sup> Comini, *Egon Schiele’s Portraits* (1974), 100.

while large, flat washes of color hold the figure captive. Schiele is protective in this work, a quality which on one hand might be negated by his exposure and hooding, but which, on the other hand, he forcefully asserts by extending his arm over his companion, i.e., by his masculine dominance. *Couple* is a theatrical portrayal of the power dynamic involved in coupling, of protection, exposure, and dependence, and while his inclusion of Wally in *Seers* seems far more meaningful, similar dynamics are presented in this intimate portrayal.

*Seers* is arguably the most personal of Schiele's double self-portraits, because it seems to be a response to his imprisonment of the previous year through Wally's inclusion and through the colors included in the double self-portrait, which echo the orange and gray Schiele used in his prison series (Figures 4.13- 4.16). *Seers* is also very different from his self-portraiture from the 24-day imprisonment. In those works he appears tormented and desperate. They have little in common even with his most contorted self-portraits, such as his 1914 *Self-Portrait in Jerkin with Right Elbow Raised* (Figure 4.17). The figure that he depicts here seems to be a perhaps willing puppet under the control of an external influence. In contrast, his prison self-portrayals reveal a genuine lack of control on his part. The titles of these works are also desperate and explicit, consisting of full sentences, such as: *Hindering the Artist is a Crime, It is Murdering Life in the Bud!* (Figure 4.13) and *For my Art and for my Loved Ones I will gladly Endure* (Figure 4.14). *Hindering the Artist* shows Schiele calmly, perhaps defiantly lying on his cot, unshaven and utterly consumed by the hard, faceted structure of his orange garment.<sup>196</sup> The expression of inner strength signified by his jutting chin

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<sup>196</sup> In spite of the vertical orientation of this watercolor, Schiele is actually lying on the cot. He would sometimes sign his works with a different orientation, one that Jane Kallir argues, and with which I concur,

and pursed lips is belied by his poor physical condition, with scruffy hair and sunken, heavy-lidded eyes. His hand is subsumed by the orange garment, which seems to hold him captive both physically and creatively. *For my Art and for my Loved Ones* reveals a far less nuanced reaction; a twisted position, cramped hands and pained facial expression clearly convey his distress.

Another drawing from this confinement, *The Single Orange was the only Light* (Figure 4.16), shows an orange that Wally brought to Schiele, a small luxury in otherwise dismal conditions. In this work on paper (gouache, watercolor, and pencil), Schiele depicts his surroundings so precisely that Alessandra Comini was able to identify his exact cell with the initials “MH” carved on the door. In this sense, Schiele was documenting his surroundings. Schiele is also depicting his personal experience through his titling that the orange is “light.” I will return to this in the next section because it is important. Here I would only like to suggest that the orange represents love. Wally brought him the orange, and she was a true source of support throughout this time, visiting as often as she could and throwing small treats such as this orange through the window of his cell. Schiele praised Wally’s conduct during his imprisonment in a 1914 letter to his loyal supporter and patron, Franz Hauer, remembering, “She behaved so nobly that I felt bound to her.”<sup>197</sup>

Before his incarceration, Schiele’s doubles had been invariably rendered as bound to each other. This new binding with another person indicates a change, not just in

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are always in harmony with the altered perspective. Schiele never indicated that he preferred those works to be displayed according to his signature, and because he placed the signature last, they are usually displayed and printed with respect to its orientation. See Kallir, *The Complete Works*, 264.

<sup>197</sup> Kallir quoting Egon Schiele, *Egon Schiele’s Women*, 163. “Von meinen Nächstbekannten rührte sich niemand außer Wally die ich damals kurz kannte und die sich so edel benahm daß mich dies fesselte.” Nebehay, *Leben, Briefe, Gedichte*, 289, #633. Egon Schiele Database, 736.

Schiele's art, but perhaps also in his self-perception. Kallir speculates that Schiele may have fallen in love with Wally because of her loyalty throughout this difficult time, and if this was in fact Schiele's first intimate relationship, it could have changed the way he viewed himself. Egon and Wally did not enjoy a simple romance, in spite of professing to feeling bound to her. His use of the word *fesseln* could just as well indicate that he felt shackled to her or captivated in the relationship. In any case, he likely never viewed her as a potential long-term partner, given her position as a model. A model's status in Viennese culture was not much higher than that of a prostitute, and artists often traded models as if they were their possessions. In spite of his bohemian attitude, Schiele was from a bourgeois background, and his eventual decision to "marry advantageously, perhaps not W[ally]" reveals that he did not view her as a proper mate.<sup>198</sup>

The ambivalence that probably arose from the situation may be reflected in *Seers*, as Wally is shown in an embrace, not as an independent figure. In contrast with Schiele's 1909 *Couple*, Wally is the protector in that her face, along with the row of hands, forms a blockade behind which the *Seers* are guarded. Schiele has relocated his figures in this pivotal work; he has retreated from the surface of the work to an interior space and he will continue to depict his double self-portraits well within the confines of the work of art until his 1915 *Transfiguration* (Figure 4.18). This retreat may have initially been self-protective. An entry in his prison diary suggests that Schiele lost trust in others in this ordeal: "There is good will in me," he writes, "but what kind of will is there in others? That remains to be seen."<sup>199</sup>

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<sup>198</sup> Arthur Roessler, *Briefe und Prosa von Egon Schiele*, (Wien, Richard Lányi, 1921), 106.

<sup>199</sup> Translation by Alessandra Comini, in "Egon Schiele in Prison," *Egon Schiele: Portraits* (2014), 266. From Arthur Roessler, *Egon Schiele im Gefängnis*, (Wien and Leipzig: Verlag Carl Konegen, 1922), 37. "In mir ist ein guter Wille – welcher Wille aber ist in den andern? – Es wird sich zeigen."

If Schiele's self-portraiture and, by extension, double self-portraiture are an essentialist search for the true nature of the self, Wally's inclusion between the two figures is deeply significant, for she disrupts Schiele's relationship with himself. Her embrace of only one of the two Schieles might indicate that he feels incapable of wholly loving another person, or conversely, that she does not fully understand him. If, as I have argued, they are created to invoke unresolvable dualisms that extend beyond the realm of selfhood, her singleness (non-duplication) becomes an issue. Is she truly a seer in this drawing? She is not depicted with opened eyes; she shares the same half-lidded stare as the Schiele she embraces. Yet her very presence suggests that yes, she is, and while she has gained Schiele's respect through her support of the artist, she is not an artist herself.

By adding his partner's figure to the *Seers*, Schiele deviated from the structure of the *Self-Seers* group, and this portrait is, at the very least, a tribute to his lover's loyalty. The orange globe or aura enveloping them both on the left seems to be an enlarged reference to the orange that Schiele painted in his prison cell, the orange that Wally brought to him, and additionally the color orange is featured heavily in the prison series. Wally is shown here protected, enclosed and emerging from the space between the doubles, but she is also protective. The bodies of the three are scarcely represented. Instead, Schiele emphasizes the vertical lines of the hands and feet. In fact, these strong vertical lines repeat across the sheet with such regularity that they are reminiscent of prison bars, and they have the same effect as prison bars, creating a barrier between the figures' faces and the viewer. Schiele's deviation from his previous format seems to be a response to his imprisonment.

The distinction between the two Schieles is minimal, except for their level of awareness and the right figure's disheveled hair. Their unity is interrupted by Wally's inclusion. Schiele's "looking" self seems to require her support, although the hands that push forward in front of the group also guard the "seeing" self, whose wide eyes and wild hair seem to convey anxiety or urgency. If this is a statement about his relationship with Wally instead of a statement that addresses the viewer's mode of seeing, it seems that Schiele's notion of the "ideal" self remained strong, but his "mundane" self required emotional support. If it instead remains a statement about the viewer, both Schieles are withdrawn and inaccessible in this work. Aside from the interesting result that this is a double-self-double portrait, in terms of directly addressing the viewer, this drawing avoids it, and Wally's presence in this work outshines the doubles and challenges their capacity to convey much of the motif's previous meaning in Schiele's oeuvre. However, it does provide a wealth of information about Schiele's shift in his double self-portraiture and his recession into the space of the picture.

This work reveals much about how Schiele's endeavor was changing. He titled this work *Seers*, and that distinction must be considered. On one hand, the title relates the work to the *Self-Seers* group, with the obvious exclusion of the reference to selfhood and identity; on the other hand, it seems to take a position against this group. As Kallir points out, Schiele honors Wally as a fellow visionary in this work, she was "...more than Schiele's creative partner in the 1912-13 allegories; she was his spiritual counterpart."<sup>200</sup> Three left hands, all depicted in the same position with the thumb crooked inward, indicate that each of the figures is participating in a gesture that blocks and greets, beckons and repels, and most importantly, self-protects. Generally, Schiele's artistic

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<sup>200</sup> Jane Kallir, *Egon Schiele's Women*, 154.

vision did not change significantly as a result of his imprisonment, only the degree of risked self-exposure seems to have changed, as he is fully enclosed behind the row of hands. A supportive fellow visionary who accompanies his retreat into a second layer of the picture; she guards him and also precludes access to the space before the picture. From this position, Schiele will need to find a new creative strategy to continue engaging with double self-portraiture as a means of accessing the inaccessible.

*Kristallgestalten: The “Inner Light of the Painting”*

Schiele’s next two double self-portraits, *Devotion* (Figure 4.19) and *The Truth Unveiled* (Figure 4.20)<sup>201</sup> of 1913 are complete departures from the *Self-Seers*. Identifying these as self-portraits could be problematic because they are not facing the viewer. However, these are not generalized types, nor are they models. The thin, angular bodies, shocks of brown hair and artist’s smocks correspond with Schiele’s customary means of portraying himself. Yet likeness does not seem to be Schiele’s primary concern in these two drawings. Importantly, the figures are activated for the first time, released from their static frontal pose, and this decision seems to prompt a new visual strategy for future doubles. *The Truth Unveiled* is the last drawing by Schiele in which the doubles are shown as unified, and it is also the last work in which the doubles are distinguished from each other in any meaningful way. As he evolved toward a different understanding of the double’s potential, the distinctions between the two are all but abandoned.

The contrast between the new, dynamic doubles and the calm, static *Self-Seers* group imbues them with a different type of energy, a physical energy. The *Self-Seers* series is an exploration and a development of the nuances of viewing, of oppositional

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<sup>201</sup> *The Truth Unveiled* was painted on the verso of a sketch signed by Serena Lederer, *Seated Female Nude* (KD1320) of 1913.

qualities endemic to the human condition, of metaphysical potential in the physical world, and of the limitations of painting, especially self-portraiture. By comparison, *Devotion* and *The Truth Unveiled* show the two Schieles as active, physically engaged, and unaware of the viewer. Together, they relay the relationship between the artist and the self-portrait as he creates a work of art that is as vibrant as his physical body. In fact, the animation of his figures suggests that he was deviating from the theme of life and death. Schiele articulated this in a 1912 letter to his dentist and reluctant patron, Hermann Engel, who with enough persuasion would trade dental work for Schiele's paintings. In his letter, Schiele explains that, "The picture must emanate light. Bodies have their own light, which they consume through living. They burn, they are not illuminated."<sup>202</sup> This section will explore what Schiele's statement might mean, and the following section will examine how he began to suggest an inner light, an *Erleuchtung*, in his 1913 double self-portraits.

Here, Schiele presents a problem that he was trying to solve pictorially, and it requires fleshing out in detail. Schiele did paint landscapes, of course, but his oeuvre consists of mostly figural works. If he was not interested in the effects of an external source of light on his sitters (*Beleuchtung*), it also implies that he was also not concerned with illuminating them in his paintings by an external light source. In terms of the historical understanding of the *Doppelgänger*, Schiele's declaration that light comes from within bodies and paintings (*Erleuchtung*) eliminates the possibility that his double might

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<sup>202</sup> Nebehay, *Leben, Briefe, Gedichte*, 228, #397. Egon Schiele Database, 141. "Das Bild muß von sich Licht geben, die Körper haben ihr eigenes Licht, das sie beim Leben verbrauchen; sie verbrennen, sie sind unbeleuchtet..." This statement could be understood to be limited to the context of the letter, which is an attempt to explain the key ideas of *Offenbarung*. However, Schiele had expressed the same sentiment in a list of aphorisms that he sent to his uncle Czihachek on September 1 of 1911, in which he stated that all bodies emit light. See Nebehay, *Leben, Briefe, Gedichte*, 181, #251. Egon Schiele Database, 375.

be understood to be a shadow. In fact, the indeterminate setting in which Schiele places many of his figures precludes the necessity of depicting external illumination. How might one pictorially capture the light of the body? If light comes from within, how might that become manifest visually?

I argue that Schiele began to depict this inaccessible light in an interior place located well within the work of art. The orange mandorla that encapsulates Schiele and Wally in *Seers* might represent this type of light. Importantly, it is the only signifier of an interior space behind the three figures and it is the first time that Schiele includes such a space in a work still related to his *Self-Seers* works. He had already associated the color orange with light in his 1912 prison watercolor, *The Single Orange was the only Light*. That orange is depicted as if it were a rising sun in a dreary landscape of the blanket on his cot. Schiele created a natural setting in a harsh, unnatural environment. The orange does not only signify love and support, but also the light that signifies life itself. In *Seers*, it might represent the unity of the couple, it might demonstrate a new understanding of the sanctity of the interior space of the artwork, or it might signify both.

Taking a phenomenological approach to Schiele's figural works, Jennifer Dyer Harnish argues that external light actualizes Schiele's figures' bodies; that through the contrast of glossy paint and matte paper, when illuminated by natural light the figures themselves become light. The effect is that they are mobilized. This is more than a mere visual effect, Harnish argues, because light is also thermal; in other words, Schiele's figures are also imbued with heat: "While heat produced by light cannot be physically grasped, it can be physically felt."<sup>203</sup> For this reason, the bodies of Schiele's figures are

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<sup>203</sup> Jennifer Dyer Harnish, *Serial Images: The Modern Art of Iteration*, International Studies in Hermeneutics and Phenomenology, Vol. 4 (2011), 90. Alessandra Comini first recognized the physicality

not just actively animated by light, they are rendered physically tactile: “Viewers are made to feel Schiele’s body when they see it.”<sup>204</sup>

Following Harnish’s analysis, we can see how Schiele was engaging with natural light in a unique way. Rather than turning to abstraction as a pictorial solution, Schiele instead turned to nature, his source of inspiration throughout his life. In a manner similar to the ecstatic and enstatic viewing model, engaging both within and without, Schiele employs natural light in a tactile manner to awaken the inner light of the painting. The solution that Harnish describes is a crystalline effect, a pictorial solution to which I will return. Its result is that his work becomes imbued with the same energy that is required of all life, and unlike the physical body’s energy, it would remain. Throughout his life, Schiele insisted upon the eternal nature of art and his understanding of light and energy accords with this insistence.

Helena Pereña Sáez locates the source of Schiele’s approach to illumination in his culture and belief system.<sup>205</sup> Through his interest in Theosophy, she argues, Schiele may have come across the theories of scientists such as Franz Anton Mesmer (1734-1815) and Carl von Reichenbach (1788-1869) or Ernst Haeckel (1834-1919). Reichenbach proposed the existence of what he called an “Odic force,” consisting of a combination of electricity, magnetism and heat that permeated and also emanated from almost everything. Reichenbach expounded upon Mesmer’s theory of Odic force, which proposed a cosmic fluid in which a thin, fluid substance allows for the exchange of energy between the heavens, the earth, and all living things. Haeckel’s theories would

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of the subjects in Schiele’s paintings in 1974, albeit tied to the psyche, when, speaking of the vitalization of clothing inherent to Expressionism, she described how the technique, “heightens the psychosomatic reverberations in the sitter.” See Comini, *Egon Schiele’s Portraits*, 1974, 68.

<sup>204</sup> Ibid.

<sup>205</sup> Helena Pereña Sáez, *Wahrnehmung und Identität*, 225-228.

have been the most current and perhaps more respected, as he tried to reconcile Charles Darwin's biological theories with spiritual concerns that are quite similar to Mesmer and Reichenbach's proposals. His theory of world-ether had much in common with the notion of ether in Theosophy, which approached science through a spiritual world-view. All of these authors were widely recognized throughout the German-speaking world, and regardless of the particular source, throughout Schiele's writing he refers to light as an energizing life force, as if its nourishing effect on vegetation were the same on humankind.

For example, in a letter to Oskar Reichel dated September 1911, Schiele aligns the elements of nature with human spiritual and creative growth:

I have become aware; earth breathes, smells, listens, feels in every little part; acquires, mates, decays, and finds itself, enjoys what is a life and seeks the logical philosophy of everybody, everything in everything. Of days and years, of all impermanences as far as one can and wants to think, as far as the spirit of beings endowed with great substance extends, it [the earth, L.F.] has become through our air, our light, something or much, even become creators, who are necessary, and has in part died, burned in itself- again,- back into itself, and begins the smaller or larger cycle. Everything that I want to call divine springs forth anew and creates from the power that few see, a creature.<sup>206</sup>

Schiele's evocative language suggests that his belief system is not scientifically based, but rather that he believes in a source of creativity in nature. Schiele's use of the word

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<sup>206</sup> Nebehay, *Leben, Briefe, Gedichte*, 184, #263. Egon Schiele Database, 387. "Ich bin wissend geworden; Erde atmet, riecht, hört, fühlt in allen den kleinen Teilen; erwirbt, paart sich, zersetzt sich und findet sich, genießt, was ein Leben ist und sucht die logische Philosophie aller, alles in allem; Tage und Jahre, aller Vergänglichkeiten so weit man denken will und kann, so weit der Spiritus der Wesen mit großem Gehalt ist; sie ist durch unsere Luft, unser Licht zu Etwas oder Vielem geworden, selbst zu Schöpfern, die notwendig sind, und ist zum Teil gestorben, verbrannt in sich, wieder - in sich zurück, und beginnt den kleineren oder größeren Kreislauf, alles, was ich göttlich nennen will, keimt von neuem und bringt und erschafft aus der Gewalt, die wenige sehen, ein Geschöpf." Many thanks to Vera Pummer for her assistance with this translation.

*Gewalt* refers to nature's power, both its power for destruction and for renewal, and it respects the necessity of both. His concern with light is similar, because of its metaphysical qualities, it is both a natural source and an interior flame fueled by destruction. That destruction is the source of a unifying force between humans and nature; it is part of a circular system in which our own destruction allows something new to spring forth. In this manner, light is a powerful unifying force that humankind gives back to nature.

Returning to Schiele's aforementioned interest in rendering the surface visible through his engagement with his mirror, the analogy of the interplay between crystal and light is important. Harnish explains that bodies, like crystals, are made visible in nature through light (*Beleuchtung*). When illuminated, the surface of a crystal becomes brilliantly visible. Simultaneously, light collects within the core of the rock, resulting in an inner refraction of light (*Erleuchtung*).<sup>207</sup> Therefore, unlike most objects, crystals are both surface and core when exposed to light; much the same as Schiele's 1910 *The Artist and his Model* (Figure 4.7) depicts the mirror image as surface and core.

A book that Schiele inherited from his father, *Naturgeschichte des Mineralreiches* by Alois Pokorny of 1863, is heavily marked by someone in the Schiele family carefully working through the effects of crystalline surfaces and light (Figure 4.21).<sup>208</sup> The handwriting appears to be different from the young Egon's, and regardless of the open question of whose annotations they were, this book may very well have been a topic of discussion in the family. Schiele kept this book for the rest of his life, and one very

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<sup>207</sup> Harnish, *Serial Images*, 88.

<sup>208</sup> This book is included in the Anton Peschka estate located at the Vienna City Museum, with Schiele's possessions having been divided between his mother and two sisters at the time of his death. His youngest sister, Gerti, was married to Peschka. The photograph is courtesy of Johann Thomas Ambrózy.

important word stands out in its text: *Kristallgestalten*. Crystalline forms are present in many of Schiele's paintings, and more specifically, a similar crystalline rendering of the surface is present in some of his *Great Personalities* paintings and the Symbolist paintings. For instance, Wally's clothing in *Death and the Maiden* (Figure 4.9) is also depicted with a crystalline effect. While he engaged with light as a natural source, Schiele was more interested in depicting the light that emits from within.

To Schiele, the work of art is itself an animate being and art itself is eternal. His views on art's eternal nature stand in stark contrast to the impermanence of selfhood that scholars agree was his deepest concern, as evinced by his serial self-portraits.<sup>209</sup> In a September 1911 letter to his friend and patron Oskar Reichel, Schiele explains his view on life and death more completely:

“The impermanence of material things is definite in the sense of an existence, a certain growing and withering, coming, living, under which one must understand the endless disintegration, which however can be delayed through organic means. Yes, to a great extent [life] can become retrogressive, so that by these means there can be no complete death.”<sup>210</sup>

As I discussed in chapter three, Schiele was familiar with Theosophy through his friendship with Arthur Roessler and Paris von Gütersloh. He incorporated some of these ideas into his pre-existing Pantheistic belief system, as Sáez convincingly argues, with one of his beliefs being that death cannot be final. Instead, in the above-quoted passage

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<sup>209</sup> See, for example, Kimberly Smith, “The Melancholic Landscape: Death and the Crisis of the Subject,” in *Between Ruin and Renewal: Egon Schiele's Landscapes*, (New Haven: Yale University Books, 2004) and Helena Pereña Sáez, *Egon Schiele: Wahrnehmung, Identität, und Weltbild*, (Marburg: Tectum Verlag, 2010).

<sup>210</sup> Ibid., 184. “Die Unvergänglichkeit des Materiellen im Sinne eines Daseins ist bestimmt; ein sicheres Werden und Vergehen, Kommen; Leben, worunter man das unaufhörliche Verwittern verstehen soll, das aber durch organische Mittel zum Leben aufgehalten, ja, bis weithin rückgängig werden kann, so daß es mit diesen Mitteln keinen vollständigen Tod geben kann.”

he understands life as weathering and death as a dematerialization, actions which are very closely related. Life and death might both be understood as transformations, for during what we understand as life, the notion of a rational, centered self is constantly changing and adapting to new information, environments and roles, as much as the physical body grows, withers and returns to the natural environment in death. Schiele's view on life and death, beyond his belief in a unifying life force, was that nature is comprised of great cycles that culture does not and should not try to overcome. As I explained in chapter three, life and death support each other's existence just as much as they render each other incomplete. Here we can see why the light that emanates from bodies and art is important to Schiele. This light is evidence of the eternal within the context of the temporal.

Given Schiele's view of a unifying life force and his struggle to gain access to it, his view of art and its kinship with the viewer is similar to his view of death. After his imprisonment, engaging with unifying pictorial devices becomes a challenge, because he has retreated into the work of art and he seems less willing to expose himself to the degree to which he did in the *Self-Seers* series. Schiele did not view death as threatening, but instead celebrated its relationship to life.<sup>211</sup> "I am human," Schiele wrote in 1910, "I love death and I love life."<sup>212</sup> Four years later, he would include this very same declaration in a revision of the *Neukunstgruppe* manifesto, thereby eliciting his

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<sup>211</sup> In his 1948 book, *Erinnerungen an Egon Schiele*, Roessler gives a detailed, lengthy account of a conversation between Schiele and (presumably) Anton Hanak in which Schiele reportedly expressed his belief in the interdependent nature of Life and Death in full detail. This account was not included in Roessler's 1922 edition and it was likely written well after the fact, meaning that the details of the exchange may not be accurate, but the overall content of the conversation may be true. See Arthur Roessler, *Erinnerungen an Egon Schiele*, (Wien: Wiener Volksbuchverlag, 1948), 57-59.

<sup>212</sup> Nebehay, *Leben, Briefe, Gedichte*, 142, #157. Egon Schiele Database, 139. "Ich bin Mensch, ich liebe den Tod und liebe das Leben."

colleagues' tacit agreement with the statement.<sup>213</sup> In this aphorism, he gives privilege to death, mentioning it first and stressing its importance.

Schiele should be taken quite seriously in his statement. In his booklet published in 1922, *Erinnerungen an Egon Schiele*, Arthur Roessler recalls Schiele admitting that “sometimes it tempted me downright irresistibly to appear as an *enfant terrible*, to express something in word or deed which I know must have a disconcerting, even repulsive effect on others...”.<sup>214</sup> Schiele's inversion of death and life and his profession of love for both might at first seem to be an example of an instance in which he indeed succumbed to this temptation. Yet in Roessler's recollection Schiele was keenly aware of how he was perceived by the public. He may have struggled to keep his rebellious streak under control, reportedly admitting that he felt shame and remorse at such episodes and that he felt that they inhibited his creative instincts.<sup>215</sup> While he did occasionally act out in public, he was far more subdued than some of his contemporaries.<sup>216</sup> In this instance, Schiele wrote this strange passage twice, which strongly suggests that it was not a mere rebellious outburst.

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<sup>213</sup> Ibid, 296.

<sup>214</sup> Arthur Roessler, *Erinnerungen*, 39-40. “Manchmal lockte es mich geradezu unwiderstehlich, als Spiesserschreck aufzutreten, in Wort oder Tat etwas zu äussern, von dem ich weiss, dass es auf andere befremdend, ja sogar abstossend wirken muss.” Much of this draft seems to be embellished, with half of it dedicated to portraying Roessler as Schiele's most trusted friend. However, Alessandra Comini confirms this statement through interviews with Schiele's sisters. See Comini, *Egon Schiele's Portraits*, 217, footnote 32.

<sup>215</sup> Ibid. “Bald danach überkommt mich allerdings ein grässlicher moralischer Katzenjammer, ich fühle Scham und Reue und leide unter der Hemmung meines Schaffenstriebes.”

<sup>216</sup> Jane Kallir argues that, “...Schiele was probably the most ‘normal’ of his colleagues. Unlike Alfred Kubin, he never attempted suicide or suffered a nervous breakdown. He did not, like Kokoschka, commission an anatomically correct replica of an ex-girlfriend and then take the doll out on dates. Nor was Schiele anywhere near as promiscuous as Klimt.” See Kallir, *Schiele's Women*, 13. To these extreme examples I would add that Schiele was generally very careful to maintain an acceptable bourgeois appearance and demeanor. For example, while Oskar Kokoschka was shaving his head, which caused him to appear as if he were a prison inmate, Schiele was fashioning collars out of paper so that he could appear properly dressed in public.

Gustav Klimt's *Death and Life* of 1908- 1911 (Figure 4.22) may have inspired Schiele's aphorism. While *Death and Life* was first exhibited in 1911 in Rome, Klimt began working on this painting in 1908 and Schiele would have likely been aware of it.<sup>217</sup> Like Schiele's aphorism, Klimt's title also privileges death over life, and Schiele's admiration of his mentor might have prompted him to vocalize his agreement. Here Klimt separates death and life with a chasm between them, depicting Death as a skeletal form in a cruciform robe that stands apart from the tumble of human beings representing life. The group seems unaware of Death's presence, and they seem unaware of each other with their eyes closed and their bodies relaxed and entwined. Instead, they share a sensual pleasure that stems from their unawareness and close physical contact. Encased within a field of patterns that includes flowers and brightly colored decorative motifs, the foreshortening of the fore figures lends their area a voluptuous effect, as if they might spill forth from the canvas.

Conversely, Death is depicted in a flat field of electric blue and indigo that indicates a hooded robe, punctuated by red circles and rectangles filled with cruciform shapes. He is long, thin and still, and highly contrasted to the muscular male figure that dominates the center of Life's field. His skull is encircled by a gold halo and it is positioned as if it were bowed. He seems to exhibit an air of reverence, and of calm waiting. This is a *memento mori* in the traditional sense, a reminder that the greatest and the least of us must face our own death. The two figure fields enhance each other:

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<sup>217</sup>Klimt first exhibited *Death and Life* in 1911, but he continued to overwork the painting until 1916, and Death's appearance is dramatically different in the final version. Figure 4.23, which shows its condition in 1910-1911, is from Alfred Weidinger, et. al., *Gustav Klimt: l'oeuvre peint*, (Paris: Citadelles & Mazenod, 2008), 294. Schiele had apparently informed Roessler of the painting in 1912, because Roessler responded to Schiele in a postcard in July, 1912 that he was unaware of the painting's existence. As that is the earliest written mention of Klimt's *Death and Life*, it cannot be proven that Schiele knew of the painting in 1910, but their cordial relationship, which included reciprocal studio visits, leads me to believe that Schiele was aware of it. Nebehay, *Leben, Briefe, Gedichte*, 224, #371. Egon Schiele Database, 492.

Without Death's presence, the cocoon of human figures holds purely positive connotations, but Life's presence before Death calls to mind his power, in spite of his lean pictorial form. In other words, their opposing qualities bestow each field with relevance.

Klimt's *Death and Life* painting is congruent with what we know about Schiele's understanding of death, that its continual presence enhances life. Beyond Klimt's likely influence, scholars have traditionally engaged with Schiele's professed love of death through a Freudian lens, and have rightly focused more upon death's manifestation in his figural compositions than upon his aphorism. A psychoanalytic reading might ascribe Schiele's fascination with death to his father's death from syphilis, which potentially connected love and death in Schiele's mind. Especially within the context of Schiele having lost his father at the age of fourteen, his aphorism remains stunning in its inversion of the almost universal tendency to privilege life over death by mentioning life first in the pairing. Recent scholarship has proposed alternative meanings for Schiele's curious point of view about death. Walther K. Lang posits that his viewpoint reflects a desire to experience the full spectrum of human experiences, including the destructive elements.<sup>218</sup> Sáez argues that the inclusion of death has "...more to do with Schiele's conception of death as an identity-creating part of being than with the traditional memento mori..."<sup>219</sup> As previously discussed, both of their conclusions apply to representations of death in other creative production in Vienna 1910.

While it may seem at first inconsistent to view both light and death as elements that may be found within the physical body, Schiele views the body as consuming its

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<sup>218</sup> Walther K. Lang, "Der mönchische Tod—Todesmotive bei Egon Schiele," in *Egon Schiele: Inszenierung und Identität*, ed. Pia Müller-Tamm (Köln: Dumont, 1995), 122.

<sup>219</sup> Sáez, *Wahrnehmung, Identität, und Weltbild*, 54.

light through living, and he does not describe the picture as doing the same. “The picture must emanate light. Bodies have their own light, which they consume through living. They burn, they are not illuminated.”<sup>220</sup> This could be the basis for his conviction that art itself is eternal. Burning requires fuel, it is finite, and bodies must eventually return to the life force to be renewed. Art, on the other hand, has a direct connection to the eternal because it engages with light as an external and an internal force without any extinguishing substance. It is both a natural and conceptual force. His double self-portraits between 1913 and 1915 seem to be reoriented in such a way that Schiele is emphasizing that interiority through his doubled image.

### Unveiling the Truth

In Schiele’s 1913 renditions of double self-portraits, the modifications reflect an engagement with his understanding of light, death, and impermanence, and he creates what I will refer to as a sacred space within the physical body or the work of art, for lack of a better term. By sacred, I do not necessarily mean that it completely conforms to either the Theosophical or Christian tradition, but rather that it is a space that is set apart from the everyday world and it is therefore the opposite of mundane. As I have demonstrated, the performative measures that he incorporated to engage the ideal viewer in the *Self-Seers* changed in 1912, and his retreat into the work of art demonstrates instead an engagement with painting the light that emanates from the work of art. This concern is rather evident in *The Truth Unveiled* of 1913 (Figure 4.20). At least formally, the doubles are joining together as one, which may signify an end to his double self-

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<sup>220</sup> Nebehay, *Leben, Briefe, Gedichte*, 228, #397. Egon Schiele Database, 141. “Das Bild muß von sich Licht geben, die Körper haben ihr eigenes Licht, das sie beim Leben verbrauchen; sie verbrennen, sie sind unbeleuchtet...”

portraiture if it were, in fact, biographically based. Through the title, Schiele invokes a Baroque topos, *veritas filia temporis*, or truth is the daughter of time. Time is the benevolent father of truth, drawing her up from the depths and darkness and often accompanied by light.<sup>221</sup> She is traditionally understood to be drawn from a well and fully exposed by daylight, but in Schiele's interpretation, the opposite holds true.

Schiele portrays the figures as two distinct physical bodies, nevertheless the line of the arm of the left figure extends into the right figure's garment, and his face appears to be partially merged with the back of the right figure, as if one is climbing into the other. Three hands appear to be intertwined in front of the right figure, with two hands cupping the third. The third hand reaching through the right body is reminiscent of the disjointed hand that Schiele painted in *The Self-Seers II* (Figure 4.3), as if the flesh is rendered as permeable as the surface of the drawing. Their rendering again negates the suggestion that one of the figures is immaterial. If one is spirit and one is physical, the figure that is invading the other might be the logical spiritual entity, except that its hand is cupped between the other's two hands. Instead, it is as if Schiele painted an environment in which the physical form does not have limitations.

This double self-portrait is markedly different from Schiele's *Self-Seers*. While the distinctions between the pair remain in the color of the hair and the garments, they are not quite opposites any longer, as in the sense of the *Self-Seers*. Similarly, the ecstatic point of view is conflated with the enstatic view, instead of being juxtaposed. This conflation is reinforced by the title painted in the lower left corner, *Die Wahrheit würde*

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<sup>221</sup> Fritz Saxl's essay, "Veritas Filia Temporis" establishes how this motto was used to serve both Catholic and Protestant purposes in *Philosophy and History: Essays Presented to Ernst Cassirer*, ed. Raymond Klibansky and H. J. Paton (Oxford: Clarendon, 1936), 197–222. For a detailed account of light's affiliation with time, see Christiane Hertel, "Veritas Filia Temporis" in *Vermeer: Reception and Interpretation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 187–203.

*enthüllt*. “The truth would be unveiled” is written in a subjunctive or a conditional sense, which is an unusual choice. Is a third person claiming that the truth would be unveiled or is truth’s revealing dependent upon an occurrence? The title does not imply that the truth has yet been discovered, it is a conditional event that is presumably dependent upon the action that takes place within the work of art.

The topos to which Schiele refers in this work’s title clarifies what he is depicting. If, as Schiele writes, bodies and paintings emit light, this very same light may illuminate truth. Likewise, truth can be located within the body, if it encases truth. *Enthüllen*, to unwrap or unveil, is the opposite and undoing of *verhüllen*, to veil. Truth would be unveiled, were it possible to fully access that state within, and Schiele’s ecstatic double peers into his body in search of the truth, thus in an enstatic gesture. Truth is accessible through two means, direct experience and second-hand knowledge. In a diary entry from August of 1912, Schiele ponders the efficacy of the written word when compared with direct experience:

There are those who are to live through books and those who are to exist for themselves,” he writes. “Which are the better ones? That is clear. A few see the sun and all of the others have to have read novels and novellas to finally have understood that there is a light. Besides, there are comparatively broad gaps in age in order to be aware of the actual truth.”<sup>222</sup>

Importantly, Schiele connects truth to light in this entry, and in this case, it is the external light of the sun. He uses sunlight as a metaphor for direct knowledge, and contrasts it with the mediated experience of reading. Schiele is referring to a different

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<sup>222</sup> Egon Schiele Autograph Database, 142. “...es gibt eben solche die durch Bücher leben sollen und solche die durch sich selbst existieren; welche sind die Besseren? – das ist klar. - Wenige sehen die Sonne und alle anderen müssen Romane und Novellen gelesen haben um endlich erkannt zu haben daß es ein Licht gibt. Nebenbei sind verhältnismäßig weite Altersunterschiede um die wirkliche "Wahrheit" [sic] zu wissen.” In the original entry, Wahrheit is written without apostrophes. Many thanks to Christiane Hertel for correcting my translation of this passage.

type of knowledge, one that he privileges over the written word, and that knowledge is only available to a select group of people. Others may find it, but it is a ponderous search. Schiele's authoring of a mediated experience through painting it may be a solution, because he believes that the picture itself possesses a light, that it can be physically sensed, as Harnish explains. In other words, a work of art can be experienced directly. Thus, the revelation of truth is dependent upon the very same enstatic view found in the *Self-Seers* series, and the viewer is tasked with far greater sensory effort or even must be pre-destined to be able to sense what is being conveyed.

In *Devotion* (Figure 4.19) of 1913, arcane meaning is not found within the self, but rather within the work of art, and it is left to the viewer to decide what it is. This watercolor reveals Schiele as "the artist," with the figure's facial features subjugated to the more important motif of his action. Here, the artist is at work, so completely immersed in his work, in fact, that he does not acknowledge the viewer. Fine strokes of primary colors animate the figure, emphasizing his action. The stylus is not clearly delineated. Instead it is an extension of the hand, incorporated into its physical structure. This artist is comfortable with his tools, and above all, he is purely physical, with both bodies' skin energized by jagged contours and prismatic primary colors. In contrast, their shifts are painted in green and ochre, the colors of the "earth that breathes" in his letter to Reichel.<sup>223</sup> Both figures are destabilized, supported by the structure of their clothing, which, as the most saturated color field in the drawing, forms an activated square in the center of the visual field. The physicality of action is depicted here as is the self being seen. The work of art, in the process of becoming and presumably the object of devotion,

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<sup>223</sup> Nebehay, *Leben, Briefe, Gedichte*, 184, #264. Egon Schiele Database, 388. "Ich bin wissend geworden; Erde atmet, riecht, hört, fühlt in allen den kleinen Teilen..."

is void. In other words, the act of creation seems privileged over the created work itself, a curious contradiction from an artist who titled a 1912 drawing *Art cannot be Modern, Art is eternal*. The ostensible contradiction should be considered, because what he shows himself creating may very well be the eternal.

The void ground is especially meaningful when compared with a selection of Schiele's other works. His 1913 *Recollection* (Figure 4.24), also shows the artist creating art, and here he appears vulnerable, with his hands raised, the left holding a piece of chalk or lead and the right, his dominant hand, curling inward. The partially completed work in the background appears lifeless, domineering and cold, it has not yet been imbued with the "light" that is required of the picture. The size and position of the head suggest that Schiele is drawing a life-size figure, and in its frozen, unfinished state, with Schiele's active (perhaps even anxious?) expression being directed away from it, it takes on a zombie-like appearance. It desires to be alive, and in spite of the energy implied by Schiele's inclusion of four legs that suggest movement, by his open expression and by the frenetic contour lines of his figure, the partially sketched figure behind him demands the viewer's attention.

In contrast, the background of *Devotion* is hyper-present because it shows nothing. Throughout Schiele's mature work, he suggests, but avoids portraying supporting objects such as chairs, pillows, and even limbs.<sup>224</sup> Because there is nothing to see, no art or even artistic process to admire, art becomes an ideal space. What role does

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<sup>224</sup> Carla Carmona Escarola, examining the pictorial structure, which she calls syntax, of Schiele's figural works, argues that the absence of these supporting structures in Schiele's work is a matter of ethics. She likens their absence to "...Wittgenstein's idea that the meaning of a term is conferred by usage—that meaning is something to be filled, understanding each painting by the artist as an 'activity' or 'occasion' that confers meaning on what takes place within it." See Carla Carmona Escalera, "The Use of Structures in Egon Schiele's Syntax," in *The Egon Schiele Jahrbuch*, Vol. 1, 59-88.

the double play in *Devotion*, how does he add to the work's statement that art is an ideal space? Since Caspar David Friedrich introduced it, the *Rückenfigur* has been understood to be a mediator between the viewer and the stunning landscape before her. It draws the viewer into the work of art, providing a pictorial body to inhabit and simultaneously blocking the view of the full scene, charging the viewer with imagining what is seemingly obscured by the figure. Here, Schiele employs this device to new effect. He carefully indicates that there is a work of art before the doubles by including a stylus in one figure's hand to guide the viewer into the work. Additionally, he portrays the second figure as an active viewer. Finally, the absence of the work of art tasks the viewer with imagining what the picture might contain.

For the first time in Schiele's double self-portraiture, the two figures are completely detached from one another, unified only by the complementary shape of their garments. This detachment is a necessary separation of the artist who is performing the act of painting in the moment and the eternal nature of the ideal. "The painter is not yet the artist, it is the spirit that has created art," wrote Schiele in his journal in 1910.<sup>225</sup> The spirit to which he refers is not an outside force, but instead "...the artist himself," sensed by Gütersloh. "...[N]ot actually he himself, but instead he, brought back and reduced to the essence of his original being, a pure inspiration, a plastic moment of conception, placenta...and he, lost in the most objective contemplation of his conception..."<sup>226</sup> The second, observing double may be seen as the essence of the artist. He is an overseer, yet in a far different manner than the double standing behind the 1910 and 1912 *Self-Seers*. This double observes the act of creation, yet he is the true creator and it is his essence that

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<sup>225</sup> Nebehay, *Leben, Briefe, Gedichte*, 141, #153. Egon Schiele Database, 134. "Der Maler ist noch nicht der Künstler, es ist der Geist, der Kunst geschaffen hat."

<sup>226</sup> Gütersloh, *Versuch*, unpaginated.

will be called forth in the presence of the work. As portrayals of the essential artist, it is additionally fitting that the faces of the doubles are obscured, because their actions are the true subject, representative of how Schiele and his fellow artists viewed the relationship between art and the artist. The title of the work, *Devotion*, indicates the importance of the space within, and the Doubles' attention to this space reinforces its significance. It is an unrepresentable space because it is sacred.

Schiele's photographic collaboration with his friend Anton Trčka in 1914 (Figure 4.25) is an additional example of Schiele's engagement with the interior space of the work as a sacred space. Schiele experimented in various media after 1912, including etching, sculpture and photography. Of these forays into other media, his engagement with photography was the strongest, resulting in collaborations with Trčka, who was primarily a photographer, and with Johannes Fischer, who was a painter by profession. Schiele's collaboration with both resulted in works that emphasize doubling, opposites, and dualities, such as the clear double "self"-portrait of 1916 addressed in chapter one (Figure 4.26) and Trčka's 1914 photograph of Schiele before *Encounter*.

Similar to *Devotion*, this photograph underscores Schiele's attention to an interior site of sanctity within the work of art. Here, Schiele stands before his mural painting *Encounter (Self-Portrait with a Saint)* of 1913, which includes a self-portrait of the painter reaching toward a figure who, with his head turned away from the viewer, wearing a zucchetto, and with his head encircled with light, appears to be a generalized religious icon. Schiele's pose is identical to that in *Recollection*, and here he depicts himself as calm and composed. The implement that he held in his raised hand in the drawing has been replaced by a gesture toward the religious icon behind him. The icon is

shown looking into the background of the work. At what or into what is he looking? The background of the painting is undefined except for the disc of light that encircles the saint's head. The position of his head and the presence of a cap invert the traditional iconography of saintly halos, which are depicted as if they were crowns. Is the disk a type of aura that surrounds his entire head? Could the disk that surrounds the saint's head be the light of the painting? In either case, a light emanates from the deepest recess of the painting. In front of the saint, Schiele's self-portrait seems to be portrayed in the character of a monk or a priest. Schiele depicts himself in shortened habit, and his figure seems to act as an earthly intercessor, directing his gaze toward the viewer while gesturing toward the saintly figure.

As I explained in my introduction, for the purposes of my dissertation I wish to address the subject of Christian iconography in Schiele's oeuvre only selectively. This also applies to the prominent motif of Schiele as a Franciscan monk. While Schiele was not a practicing Catholic, he evidently maintained a certain sense of tradition and heritage from his upbringing in the *Minoritenkirche* in Tulln.<sup>227</sup> The Baroque interior with its cornucopia of statues, frescos and paintings may have impressed a visual vocabulary upon the young Schiele that he returned to in his mature years. This vocabulary is evident in *Encounter* through its iconography and layering of space. There are three levels of reality depicted within the mural – Schiele's "physical" body, the "spiritual" body of the saint, and the low horizon line that indicates an interior, sacred space. By being

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<sup>227</sup> See Johann Thomas Ambrózy, "Das Geheimnis der 'Eremiten': Die Entschlüsselung einer Privat-Ikonographie und die Klärung des Ursprungs der V-Geste von Egon Schiele," in *Egon Schiele Jahrbuch, Vol 1.*, 11-57 and "Egon Schiele und Franz von Assisi: Die Lösung des hundertjährigen Rätsels um die mönchischen Gestalten des allegorischen Werkes. 1. Teil—Die Entschlüsselung der >>Agonie<<," in *Egon Schiele Jahrbuch, Vol 2.*, Ed., Johann Thomas Ambrózy et al., (Vienna, Austria: REMAprint, Druck-und Verlagsgesellschaft m.b.H., 2015), 31-68.

photographed before it, Schiele adds a fourth level of reality to the image. Yet the fact remains that everything presented for viewing is an image, not reality.

Schiele's presence in Trčka's photograph reveals the interplay between image and reality that he pursued in his paintings. He counters the imagery in his painting by standing before it in a black suit, bowtie, and polished footwear, in other words, in bourgeois street clothing, adding a new layer of references onto the Christian references within the painting. Schiele and Trčka created a new picture in 1916, pushing the natural world of the viewer one degree further away from the innermost source of light in the painting and placing Schiele's physical body in between, therefore calling attention to it through the "light writing" of photography. By "light writing," I am referring to the photographic negative, in which Schiele's dark suit would appear to be pure white, which could be understood as an inclusion of his Theosophical understanding of his own "inner light." The placement of his feet mirrors that of the saint deep within the mural, an act that he punctuates by placing his fingers on that portion of the image. The gestures are reminiscent of the faithful touching a relic and of the imitation of saints.

While Schiele was raised in the Catholic Church, most current scholars locate his belief system in Theosophy, Monism, or a blend of the two.<sup>228</sup> Yet throughout his lifetime, Schiele adopted Christian iconography and reinterpreted it in his own terms. For instance, all scholars agree that his 1914 *Self-Portrait as St. Sebastian* (Figure 4.5) uses the analogy of martyrdom for his own plight as an artist. According to interviews between Alessandra Comini and his sisters, he espoused a pantheistic view of nature,

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<sup>228</sup> Schiele wrote in a letter to Arthur Roessler in July of 1911 that he and Wally were asked to leave Krumau "weil wir Rot sind" (because we are "Red"), a statement that meant that they did not attend church services, according Christian Nebehay. See Nebehay, *Leben, Briefe, Gedichte*, 151. Conversely, it may also refer to his close association with Arthur Roessler, who wrote for the Socialist *Arbeiter Zeitung*.

God and the universe.<sup>229</sup> His writings on nature support this; for example, one of his 1910 aphorisms reads, in block letters: “THE ULTIMATE SENSATION IS RELIGION AND ART. NATURE IS PURPOSE—BUT GOD IS THERE, AND I SENSE HIM STRONGLY, VERY STRONGLY, THE STRONGEST.”<sup>230</sup> By 1911, Schiele no longer opposes God and Nature, but instead speaks of divine forces in nature.<sup>231</sup> Given his devotion to nature as a spiritual source, I am inclined to accept Helena Pereña Saéz's conclusion that Schiele was Monistic, and that he plainly held the belief that all things originate from one primary source.<sup>232</sup> He also expressed ideas that are common with or inherent to Rudolf Steiner's version of Theosophy, including the idea of the body emitting light and his belief in a common life source or energy, which is congruent with Steiner's “world-ether.” Because he believed in one spiritual source based in nature, it is quite plausible that he freely borrowed from several types of spiritual iconography. Such eclectic iconographic borrowing from two belief systems surfaces in the photograph with *Encounter*. It is not only Trčka's, but also Schiele's art, and includes both artists' signatures. In two ways, through his signature and by touching it, Schiele is laying claim to the painting as its creator.

Schiele is furthermore identifying his physical body with the innermost level of the mural, which is also the most inaccessible. Schiele's stance before the mural flattens his body against the work as he perches on the molding between the mural and the floor. The molding is highly reminiscent of a frame and the placement of his hand on his hip

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<sup>229</sup> Comini, *Egon Schiele's Portraits* (1974), 83.

<sup>230</sup> Egon Schiele Database, 1933. “DIE HÖCHSTE EMPFINDUNG IST RELIGION UND KUNST. NATUR IST ZWECK, -ABER DORT IST GOTT, UND ICH EMPFINDE IHN, STARK, SEHR STARK, AM STÄRKSTEN.”

<sup>231</sup> Nebehay, *Leben, Briefe, Gedichte*, 184, #264. Egon Schiele Database, 388.

<sup>232</sup> See Saéz, *Wahrnehmung, Identität, und Weltbild*, 131-138.

emphasizes the permeability of the work of art as his foreshortened elbow juts out of the space of the photograph. The decision to be photographed standing before the mural changes its entire character, whereas before it was a work of art to look “into,” it is now an environment to inhabit.

Schiele imitates the saint who is deep within the mural as he tenderly touches him and imitates him. He clearly distinguishes the interior of the work as a sacred space, with his self-portrait directing the viewer’s attention inward. Schiele has transformed himself into an image twice, first through a painted self-portrait and second through being photographed. Light is also doubly referenced; first as originating from the nebulous source behind the saint, and second as the natural source necessary to create a photograph. Importantly, the physical Schiele is not the double actively engaged with the viewer, he does not look out in the same manner as his painted counterpart. Instead, he feels, and the tenderness of his gesture may be considered contemplative, for it is directly anchored to the deepest space of the mural and perhaps also to the deepest recesses of the self. His painted likeness beckons the viewer to do the same.

This collaboration in 1914 demonstrates that Schiele was reestablishing his interest in engaging the viewer more directly than in his 1913 examples of double self-portraiture. *Recollection*, with the identical self-portrait, is dated 1913, but the doubling and the return to an outward focus exist only in the 1914 photograph. As I have discussed in chapter one, Johannes Fischer’s *Trick Photograph of Schiele shown twice* from 1916 (Figure 4.26) mirrors the close inspection of the observer from the background of the work, inferring a circle of multiple selves. Yet his unwavering gaze directed toward the side of his face also implies his own interiority. We again see a distinction between the

doubles, with the likeness in the foreground bathed in light. As previously discussed, an additional example from the same year, *Egon Schiele Standing before His Mirror* (Figure 4.8) shows Schiele with his body angled in such a manner that the image appears to be beside him in a similar position to the *Self-Seers* series. The light from the window behind his mirrored image, behind the viewer, distinguishes between the two figures, again as light and dark. The interplay that I have described previously between surface and depth is important, because the light streams from both deep within and outside of the photograph with a crystalline effect. When seen in the context of *Photograph of Egon Schiele before "Encounter,"* Schiele's mirrored image in *Egon Schiele Standing before His Mirror* glows as if it were the saint depicted in *Encounter*. As in his self-portraiture, Schiele is transforming his physical likeness into an image and attempting to create parity between the image and the likeness, layering levels of reality in such a way that the photograph encapsulates an unattainable space. In his trick photograph, as in his 1913 *The Truth Would be Revealed*, that space is within himself. In his photographs before the mural and before the mirror, the space is also a source of light. It is in this space, I argue, that the light of the picture doubles the light of the body.

In 1915, Schiele returned to engaging with double self-portraiture in a full-scale oil painting entitled *Transfiguration (The Blind II)* (Figure 4.18). The English title of the painting, *Transfiguration*, may be deceiving. It implies that the painting is related to the transfiguration of Christ, which has its own traditional iconography. The English title emphasizes the painting's Christian connotations and suggests a connection with Luke 9:28-36 through the inclusion of monk's robes, hand gestures of prayer, and floating figures, but these motifs in themselves do not justify changing the title in such a high

degree. The German title of the work, *Entschwebung*, translates literally as “floating away,” which is a secular designation of the activity seen within the picture. Additionally, the German title could imply the Theosophical distinction between the physical body and the astral body, as they are viewed as separable.<sup>233</sup> Because I am focusing on the double self-portrait, and to avoid the distracting discrepancy between the German and English titles and their meanings, I will refer to the painting according to its original title in this section.

This painting has attracted the attention of a number of scholars who almost all interpret it as a death scene. Rudolf Leopold, a strong proponent of this point of view, notes also that the figures are similar in form to Schiele’s 1914 *Portrait of Friederike Beer* (Figure 4.27), a portrait that Schiele suggested be hung on the ceiling.<sup>234</sup> Such a manner of hanging imitates a ceiling fresco, and Beer’s destabilized position produced such an uncanny effect that her maid informed her that she appeared to be “in the grave.”

Schiele’s composition in *Entschwebung* is indeed destabilized. The upper figure appears at first to be completely ungrounded, folded over the lower figure in an apparently relaxed state, his hands folded in supplication. The lower figure has his feet planted firmly near the lower edge of the picture and his bent knees and skyward gesture seem to indicate the direction of his movement. Schiele appears sad and tired in a field of flowers that also seem to be void of energy, especially in comparison to Klimt’s lush flowers in *Death and Life* (Figure 4.23). He pulls his right eyelid in order to see more or

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<sup>233</sup> Rudolf Steiner gave a particularly descriptive lecture about the separation of body and astral body during sleep states in a lecture entitled “Sleeping and Waking Life in Relation to the Planets”, part of his series Macrocosm/Microcosm, in Vienna, March 1910. I have been unable to locate any evidence that Schiele, Roessler, or Gütersloh attended these lectures. See Rudolf Steiner, “Sleeping and Waking Life in Relation to the Planets,” *Rudolf Steiner Archive*, <http://wn.rsarchive.org/Lectures/Places/Vienna/19100322p01.html>, Lecture: S-2199: 22nd March, 1910.

<sup>234</sup> Rudolf Leopold, *Gemälde, Aquarelle, Zeichnungen*, (Salzburg, Residenz Verlag, 1972), 45.

better and his parallel hands gesture toward the upper edge of the canvas where an unusually high horizon line barely demarcates the edge of the landscape that encompasses the figures. If Schiele views death as dematerialization, as Sáez suggests, this may very well be a depiction of Schiele's death.

Even so, the pictorial effects draw the viewer into the scene, which is a curious result if the subject were solely Schiele's death. The high placement of the horizon line invites a paradigm shift from viewing the figures as if they were before the field to understanding that they remain standing on the earth. Schiele reinforces the figures' grounding by depicting the upper figure's head touching the horizon line and encircling the feet with patches of white. Supplication, pulling the eyelid, and pointing to the horizon are signs that orient the viewer to his or her position, floating above the two Schieles. In other words, not only are the doubles floating away, but also the viewer is above them. By providing the viewer this vantage point, Schiele induces an extra-corporeal effect in the engaged viewer. The large scale of the painting, approximately 68 x 79 inches, supports the effect. The space between the figures and the viewer is thus activated in an alternative, yet just as effective manner as the space that I argue exists in the *Self-Seers* paintings.

The curious perspective included in *Entschwebung* suggests that Schiele found a renewed interest in creating an immediate type of engagement with the viewer in 1915, perhaps designed to induce a sense of empathy toward the doubles. For the first time since 1912, Schiele challenges the boundary of the frame, enlisting the space between the painting and its beholder, and he again distinguishes between two modes of seeing, because the pulling of the eyelid and supplicating hands beseech the viewer to see. In

spite of their separation, the figures do not interact with each other; again, this is not a classic *Doppelgänger* in pursuit of or flight from its nemesis, nor is it the same as Schiele's *Self-Seers* series in which the figures themselves are depicted as opposites through differing coloration or states of awareness. Instead, they both actively address the viewer. They are posed as if they were weightless, yet grounded, as if they were physical beings, just as the viewer is grounded before the painting but may be cognizant of his or her orientation above the pair. It does not seem to be a coincidence that the painting may be viewed as if from two different perspectives.

If it is indeed a picture of Schiele's death, could this be a reinterpretation of Klimt's *Death and Life* (Figure 4.23)? Klimt had reworked his painting throughout the years and by 1915, it appeared very differently. Schiele was familiar with both versions, having visited Klimt's studio in 1911, and writing in 1916 that Klimt's *Death and Life* was completely overworked.<sup>235</sup> In Klimt's later rendition, Life appears to be more colorful and voluptuous, with several additional women accentuating its sensuality. In contrast to the subtle changes to Life, Death has been drastically altered. He has lost the halo that Klimt included in the 1911 version (Figure 4.22), and he stares at Life with a raised club. With his diminutive skull and fingers emerging from an oversized, flat field of blues and purples, Death seems almost laughably ineffective, but the glee he communicates through the oversized grin and the club reinforces his inhumane potential to do violence against any one of the sleeping figures. Death's comical appearance

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<sup>235</sup> Schiele wrote to Roessler in January, 1911 that he had visited Klimt's studio and that "...he showed me everything." While that is not necessarily true, it seems quite likely that Schiele would have seen *Death and Life* during this visit, if not before. Nebehay, *Leben, Briefe, Gedichte*, 165, #179. Egon Schiele Database, 299. His comment in 1916 was addressed to Peschka in a letter; "Mit mir stellen aus: Klimt, vier Bilder, unter diesen befindet sich das "Tod und Leben", welches ganz umgemalt ist, dieses sein größtes Bild wird meiner "Entschwebung" gegenüber hängen." Nebehay, *Leben, Briefe, Gedichte*, 413, #867. Egon Schiele Database, 951.

reinforces that reminder, for if the viewer truly laughs, he or she is aligning him or herself with the unaware tangle of sleeping humanity. One can only imagine from his writings on death that Schiele would have held more appreciation for Klimt's 1911 version of *Death and Life*. If death is present in *Entschwebung*, it need not necessarily be Schiele's personal death; it could be that Schiele's figures represent Death. If that is the case, he is once again performing an intercessory role, occupying the space before the canvas and directing attention to the most inner part of the painting above the horizon. He is possibly even correcting Klimt's comical, grotesque depiction of Death as a threatening entity and offering a more sympathetic, transitory interpretation of Death to the colorful, voluptuous, yet blind masses of Life that will stand before his "eternal" art.

*Entschwebung* is a resolution between the strategy found in the *Self-Seers* series and Schiele's 1913-14 interior-focused reworking of the Doppelgänger trope. It is important because he again confronts the viewer with the distinction between *sehen* and *schauen*, with both figures asking the viewer to see. Yet he retains the suggestion that there is an unknowable field within the work of art as well, that may well be congruent with the unknowable aspects of selfhood or conversely, as an unknowable aspect of the human condition. If that is the case, *Entschwebung* might be his most honest self-portrait, because it acknowledges that the self, like the other, is partially unknowable and inaccessible. More freely interpreted, the emptiness and weariness that the figures exhibit might represent Schiele's own ideas about what death is; that it is a "weathering away" that eventually leads to a transcendent state of being. By remaining below the horizon, Schiele acknowledges his presence in life and his own inability to access this condition. In any case, it is a surprisingly forthright painting after the psychic withdrawal found in

the 1913-14 double self-portraits, yet it is also quite mature in its representation of the inaccessible as common to everyone, including Schiele.

### Conclusion

To Schiele, every painting that is true art has an intrinsic light, so what I have argued about that light is not a phenomenon specific to his double self-portraits. Because the light that he describes is not only an inner light but also natural light, he presents an additional inner/outer duality that seems to substitute for the duality found in the *Self-Seers* series. As I have outlined in chapter two, the construction found in the *Self-Seers* series functions the most effectively to engage the viewer through the inclusion of oppositional qualities between the doubles, a frontal pose, and overt references to the space before the painting. Through these devices, the active viewer may experience a state of ecstatic viewing similar to the artist. By abandoning the format found in the *Self-Seers* series, Schiele was challenged to encourage this type of viewing through other means.

Some works, such as *Seers (Double Self-Portrait with Wally)* (Figure 4.11) appear to be very experimental works on paper, but they must be seriously considered because the fact that Schiele titled them supports that he was satisfied with them. In works such as *Seers*, *Devotion*, and *The Truth would be Unveiled*, he quite plainly positions himself between the picture plane and an indistinct interior space, a space that is either within the work of art or within his physical body, as in *The Truth would be Unveiled*. In later works, such as *Transfiguration*, gesture and physical expression both draw the viewer into the work and redirect his or her attention to an interior space in the work of art.

Throughout the double self-portraiture, spiritualism and a deeper sense of knowledge remain a central focus.

Schiele's reticence to engage the viewer in his previous, direct manner resulted in a group of double self-portraits in 1913 and 1914 that are not a cohesive group. During this time especially, he seems to be trying to find a new way to express his ideas with a lesser degree of self-exposure. The results are experimental, but certain commonalities are locatable, specifically through gestures toward interiority and the sacred. Again, this is not a Christian sacred, but the opposite of the mundane, knowable environment, and it seems therefore out of reach. Beyond this shared theme, the doubles are cloaked in themes that are not equally common to each other, as themes such as death, light, surface and depth appear in greater and lesser degrees in each. Only in his works after 1915 does he begin to engage with the viewer again in a direct manner, and he retains these themes, resulting in one of his most stunning and fascinating works, *Entschwebung*.

Schiele was, of course, the first viewer of all of these works, and his concern with engaging with the viewer may be seen as a concern with his own responses to each of the works. In chapter two I introduced one model. His distinction between "seeing" and "looking" was tied to an outward and an inward gaze, of examining the self with an ecstatic and enstatic eye. In these aspects, the double self-portraits are profoundly psychological and personal. They also speak to his concern with how the viewer interacts with art. The model that I introduced in this chapter demonstrates that Schiele's concern lies not only with the viewer, but also with alluding to an interior, sacred space within himself, within the work of art, or within the viewer. Schiele's view about the unity of all things ties the works to the physical realm as well as the metaphysical realm, through the

presentation of oppositional qualities that no longer need to be presented in the doubles themselves.

The interior space that I have described might represent the *Erleuchtung* or the inner light of the work of art, and it also refers to the inner light of the viewer. Its inclusion seems to be intended to provoke a more direct sensory experience between the physical and the metaphysical or at the very least, to call forth the idea of the inaccessibility of the spiritual realm. As I have demonstrated, light can be understood as a natural source or as a spiritual source. In Schiele's own words, light is a unifying force between man and nature, and he specifies that it unifies all things, "everybody, everything in everything."<sup>236</sup> It is therefore both concrete and symbolic. It presents the unknowable and possibly even the unrepresentable as visually accessible, if only through one's imagination.

Therefore, Schiele's artistic vision remained steadfast throughout the years, in spite of his prison term and his expression of righteous indignation that resulted from what he most certainly viewed as an impediment to his mission. He did not necessarily abandon what he viewed as the purpose of art making, but instead he altered it as a means, I would argue, of self-protection. The level of psychic exposure that is evident in the *Self-Seers* group seems to have been impossible during the years following his incarceration. Schiele seems to have resolved the conflict between exposing too much of himself and needing to express his artistic statement by altering, but not completely abandoning, the duality between inner and outer conditions. By 1915, with the painting *Entschwebung*, it appears as if he was again willing to direct his attention outward to the space before the picture and again, in his photograph before the mirror in 1916, he

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<sup>236</sup> Nebehay, *Leben, Briefe, Gedichte*, 184, #264. Egon Schiele Database, 388.

directly addresses the viewer. By creating a space deeper within the work to see into, Schiele demonstrates a greater sympathy for the viewer, while reciprocating by extending an outward gesture. In other words, his late works offer more than a theatrical extension of space or a protective withdrawal of space; they are nuanced, dialogical, masterpieces that incorporate both models of space.

## CONCLUSION

*I am human; I love death and I love life.*<sup>237</sup>

-Egon Schiele

Schiele worked with doubling until his death in 1918, when he left his painting, *Two Squatting Men*, behind unfinished (Figure 5.1). This work is believed to be heavily worked over by another, unknown person and in its present state it is not known to what extent it would have appeared as it does now.<sup>238</sup> Therefore, I am only introducing this work because it is proof that the theme of doubling remained continuously important to Schiele. The composition and the figures' poses in *Two Squatting Men* do yield a certain amount of information, whereas the coloration and brushwork cannot be properly evaluated as trustworthy information.

In this sizeable oil painting (39 ¼ x 67 ¼ in.), Schiele again positions his doubles frontally, and as in his 1915 *Transfiguration*, the figures are not in contact. Both are squatting, nude, with their hands clasped together in front of their genitals. This gesture, along with the self-protective position of the intertwining of their arms and legs, lends the figures a closed, self-encased mood. In contrast, their posture and facial expressions are relaxed and their gazes are confident, direct, and active. Both are weighty and grounded through their squatting positions and through their nakedness. They are also barely distinguishable. In this last example, Schiele seems to be trying to express something new in the double self-portrait.

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<sup>237</sup> Nebehay, *Leben, Briefe, Gedichte*, 142, #157. Egon Schiele Database, 139.

<sup>238</sup> Otto Benesch claims that Schiele abandoned it to work on *The Family*. He, along with Otto Kallir and Rudolf Leopold contend that it was heavily worked over. See Kallir, *The Complete Works*, 344, #328.

The intent for *Two Squatting Men* is telling; Schiele created it as part of a series of large-scale paintings he intended to be placed in an ambulatory space in a mausoleum.<sup>239</sup> The double again emerges as being associated with death. These paintings were to represent “earthly existence” and in them, Schiele intended to address every aspect of the human condition, including religion, passion, life’s travails, and a concept of the world.<sup>240</sup> Included in this cycle is a similar double portrait of two squatting women that some also believe was completed by another hand (Figure 5.2), and a painting that shows the man and the woman together with a child, posthumously entitled *The Family*, but entitled *kauerndes Menschenpaar* by the artist (Figure 5.3). In the latter painting, Schiele assumes the role of a father figure, the rear figure, positioned behind the woman and child in a manner similar to the *Self-Seers*. His figure is erect and attentive and he assumes a protective stance, as evidenced by the attenuated length and exaggerated gesture of the right arm.

Werner Hofmann’s 1968 publication, *Die Familie*, is the only scholarly work that thoroughly considers this painting as a double self-portrait.<sup>241</sup> In his investigation of the commonalities between *Two Squatting Men* and the *Self-Seers II* (Figure 5.4), he grounds them in their historical sources, analyzing the pictorial tradition of one figure standing behind the other. In the history of European art, this figural arrangement morphed from an iconography of guardianship, as found in the protective iconography of the Mercy Seat

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<sup>239</sup> Egon Schiele Database, 1289. There are no records that determine that a mausoleum was commissioned of Schiele, instead the paintings’ intended location can be discerned from a sketchbook with a plan for the unspecified site.

<sup>240</sup> These words come from a Sketchbook from May, 1917- 1918. On the front of the sheet, Schiele wrote “...(Irdisches Dasein) Religion, Weltbegriff, Lebensmühen” and on the back of the sheet, “...(Irdisches Dasein) Religion, Leidenschaften, Weltbegriff.” Egon Schiele Database, 1289. There are no letters of commission for a mausoleum so it is unclear for whom it was intended or where it would have been located. See also Kallir, *The Complete Works*, 343.

<sup>241</sup> Werner Hofmann, *Die Familie* (Stuttgart: Philipp Reclam Jun., 1968).

(*Gnadenstuhl*) and the Pietà, to a composition that indicates a threat, such as in the Northern *Vanitas* tradition. His focus on the psychological and historical sources of Schiele's doubling results in an analysis that gravitates toward viewing the double as a menace, congruent with the characteristics of the Romantic *Doppelgänger*.<sup>242</sup>

Hofmann's historical analysis echoes Otto Rank's psychoanalytic account of the literary *Doppelgänger* addressed in the first chapter. To recap, Rank traced the source of the *Doppelgänger* through history by means of ethnographic, folkloric, mythological, and anthropological sources, finding its origin attached to the shadow. Initially, the shadow could be understood as being both friendly and foreboding, depending upon the context, and over time it became associated with various aspects of the human condition. Through ritual and superstition, its friendly powers could be harnessed as a source of protection. Rank traces its evolution over centuries in the Western tradition until its emergence in nineteenth-century literature, where its supernatural manifestation threatens death. Rank's conclusion is that the *Doppelgänger* signifies thanatophobia, a fear of death.

Both Hofmann and Rank stop short of addressing the "present double." In other words, Rank does not include the literature being produced by his contemporaries in his study and Hofmann does not consider the double in the context of Vienna 1900. Beyond the infamous cultural obsession with death that is distinctly Viennese, there was evidently a very different understanding of death that was Modern and Germanic. Georg Simmel wrote of death as a necessary component of life. Rainer Maria Rilke described it as a

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<sup>242</sup> Hofmann's observations are useful if read against the grain of his conclusion, and his evaluation of the historical provenance of these compositions is enlightening. Subsequent scholars have argued convincingly that Schiele drew from a number of visual sources that range from medieval art up to and including his contemporaries. Schiele would have been familiar with the protective and the threatening implications of one figure positioned behind another, which suggests that Schiele might have chosen this format because of its ambiguous meaning.

seed, something individual that grows in everyone. In Vienna specifically, Gustav Klimt painted it as if it were a comical farce. And Egon Schiele professed over and over to love death, mentioning it first before its counterpart, life. Schiele did not view death as a threat, and therefore the traditional, threatening *Doppelgänger* does not apply to him personally. The *Doppelgänger's* various means of manifesting may be suggested in Schiele's works, it may even be perceived as threatening by the viewer. To Schiele himself, as the first viewer, it appears that his second self was not a threatening entity. The insufficiency of addressing these portraits solely as *Doppelgänger* should now be clear.

If Schiele's engagement with doubling began with *Cain Slaying Abel* (Figure 5.5) as I have suggested, it developed into a sophisticated artistic vision that Schiele engaged with over the course of his short lifetime. *Cain Slaying Abel* may very well have been an allegorical self-portrait in which Schiele imagined himself to be Abel reacting against the jealousy and rage of his detractors. He stands against the "other" in this scene, defending himself, and he does not depict the twins with any similar qualities. In 1910, he again faces his other, and now in duplicate. The unifying devices that he includes are an invitation to see, but they are certainly not instructive, and their ambiguity might very well be seen as repulsive. In other words, these paintings were not created to be understood by those who do not seek to understand them, and if Schiele's art were not taken seriously, they would not yield much information. Therefore, in a sense, Cain and Abel are still present in these works.

Throughout this dissertation, I have offered my argument on the presupposition that psychoanalytic interpretations of the Viennese double are important, but that they are

incomplete. One must understand the nature of the Romantic *Doppelgänger* to place Schiele's double self-portraits in a creative tradition. At the same time, if left only to that tradition, they do not fit well into the cultural climate of Vienna circa 1910-15. In chapter one, I argued that the Viennese double is a distinct variant of the Romantic *Doppelgänger*. While it shares certain characteristics with it, such as engaging with mirror images, shadows, and painted portraits, its common quality in Viennese art and literature is that it also doubles the structure that exists between the work of art and its beholder, the text and the reader. The Viennese double is immediate, personal, and open to interpretation, whereas the Romantic *Doppelgänger* is a fear-inducing entity that is distanced, an eerie story that by Freud's account operates by awakening suppressed beliefs and fears.

In chapters two and three, the importance of that immediacy found in the structure of the works and Schiele's point of view on death becomes exceedingly clear. Death plays a central role in Schiele's double self-portraiture, arising again and again. His belief system, a Monism comprised of a hybrid Pantheism and Theosophy, does not only celebrate death as central to life; it is a source of renewal. As Schiele said himself, there can be no complete death, and in the words of Helena Pereña Sáez, it is a "desirable dematerialization."<sup>243</sup> In other words, death unifies in its destruction of the individual and its renewing capacity in nature. Schiele's perspective on death is what sets his works apart from the *Doppelgänger* theme, and the iconography in this group of works supports this distinction. He does not include pursuit, adversity, or fear. Instead, Schiele's double self-portraits project calm, unified stillness.

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<sup>243</sup> Sáez, *Das unrettbare ich*, 45.

As I have demonstrated in the second and third chapters, Schiele's use of doubling is a unifying device. It harnesses what he believed to be the power of art to present that which is eternal, or even to embody it. It encourages the viewer to look deeper, to imagine the apparently unimaginable, and to seek within to find the unity throughout. The terms that are defined in these two chapters suggest that unity. *Hineinsehen* and *daraufschauen*, two actions taking place in the physical world, correlate closely to ecstasy and ecstacy, which are actions that take place in the mental or even spiritual realm. One pair, *daraufschauen* and ecstasy, is concerned with the self, with self-knowledge and understanding. *Hineinschauen* and ecstasy is concerned with a greater unity, with finding the unity within oneself between the viewer and work of art and the unity between all things that exist. So too does the inner light of the painting seek unity with the inner light of the viewer. Schiele's double self-portraits are consistent in their design to promote unity, in spite of the fact that it may not be initially apparent.

In chapter three, I argue that Schiele's use of space changed dramatically after his prison sentence, but that his artistic vision remained intact. Schiele had been exploring mirror images as surface and depth since 1907 at the latest, and he leaned on the knowledge that he had gleaned from those works to relocate the invisible space that he used as a point of reference between his figures and the viewer to a new point within the work of art. He engages with light as both a natural source and as a universal, unifying source between all things, including viewer and painting. If the always one-sided animosity between Cain and Abel is locatable in these works, it is in his retreat into the space of the work and in his reference to an interior space that is set apart from the natural world.

The double prompts us to look for opposites, for interplay between inner and outer, seeing and looking, death and life. In the case of *Two Squatting Men*, their setting may well have been a factor that influenced how they appear. In a setting such as a mausoleum, it would be the viewer who is surrounded by death and within a sacred space, regardless whether that space is secular or religious. A mausoleum's architecture creates a space that is set apart from the world, a heterotopia, to borrow Michel Foucault's term, and it is a space for the living in which death could not be nearer. Schiele professed to be creating a series that represents earthly existence. It should come as no surprise, then, that in *Two Squatting Men* the doubles are grounded, tied to the earth. Their nudity, far from sexualizing or idealizing them, suggests their unity with the earth. It is further unsurprising that their gazes are steady and unconcerned. In other words, the pictorial structure that I proposed in chapter four, in which an interior space is set apart, could be seen as inverted in the case of *Two Squatting Men*. Inverting the spaces of profane and sacred might enhance the sense of heterotopia in a mausoleum setting.

In conclusion, the double self-portraits do not necessarily convey one meaning, and it seems that even for Schiele himself, the theme was in perpetual development. That development is loosely tied to his biography, and it is likely the result of a considered artistic mission. The models that I have suggested, *sehen* and *schauen*, ecstasy and enstasy, the light of the painting and of the body, equal love of and acceptance of death and life, are guidelines to finding meaning not only in these paintings, but also in any work of art, at least according to Schiele. Yet, as I hope to have shown, these terms manifest themselves fully in his double self-portraiture, pictorially demonstrating and

articulating his written ideas, and they might inform us on how to view other works in his oeuvre. Schiele claimed the “eternal” in art, perhaps referring to the understanding that art provides more than a picture and more than direct content; that it stimulates us to seek the ideas, emotions, concepts or desires that mutually make us human.

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FIGURES



Figure 1. Egon Schiele, *Transfiguration (The Blind II)*, 1915.



Figure 2. Egon Schiele, *Seated Male Nude (Self-Portrait)*, 1910.

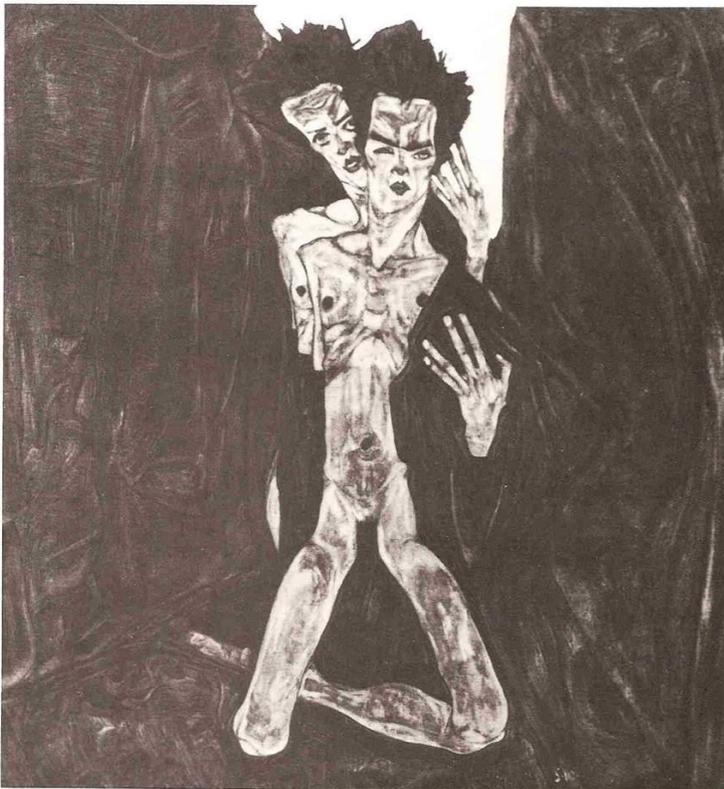


Figure 3. Egon Schiele, *The Self-Seers I*, 1910.

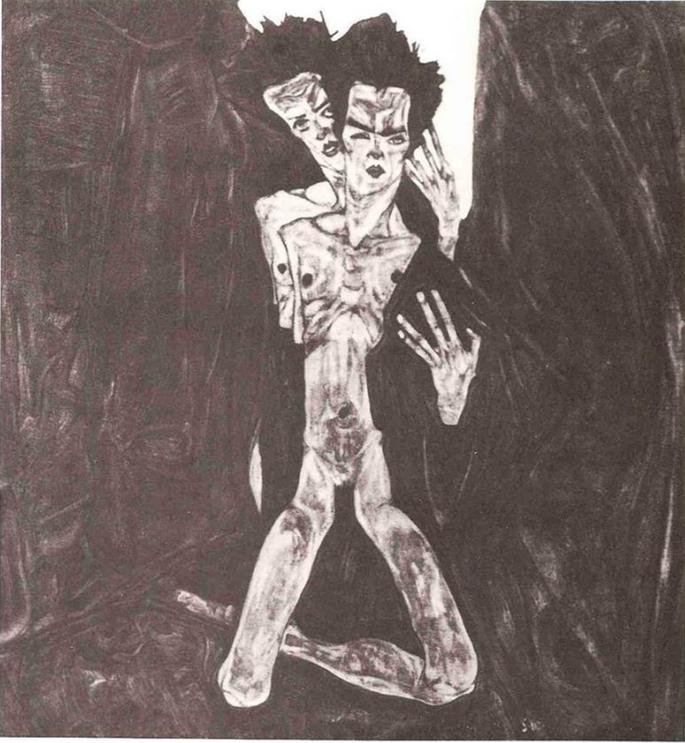


Figure 1.1. Egon Schiele, *The Self-Seers I (Double Self-Portrait)*, 1910.



Figure 1.2. Egon Schiele, *The Self-Seers II (Man and Death)*, 1911.

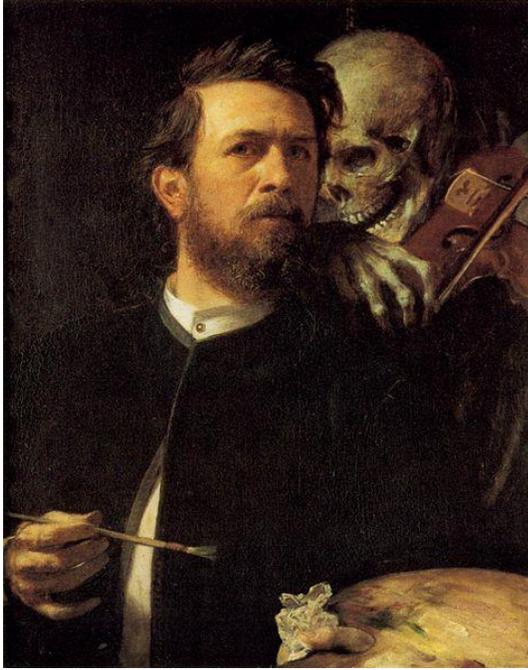


Figure 1.3. Arnold Böcklin, *Self-Portrait with Fiddling Death*, 1872.



Figure 1.4. Ignác Šecht. *Double Self-Portrait as a Laboratory Worker and a Chemist*, c. 1870.



Figure 1.5. Anton Joseph Trčka, *Trick photograph of Schiele shown twice*, 1914.



Figure 1.6. Lorenzo Lotto. *Portrait of a Goldsmith in Three Views*, 1525-1535.



Figure 1.7. Hans von Aachen, *Two Laughing Young Men (Double Self-Portrait)*, ca. 1574.

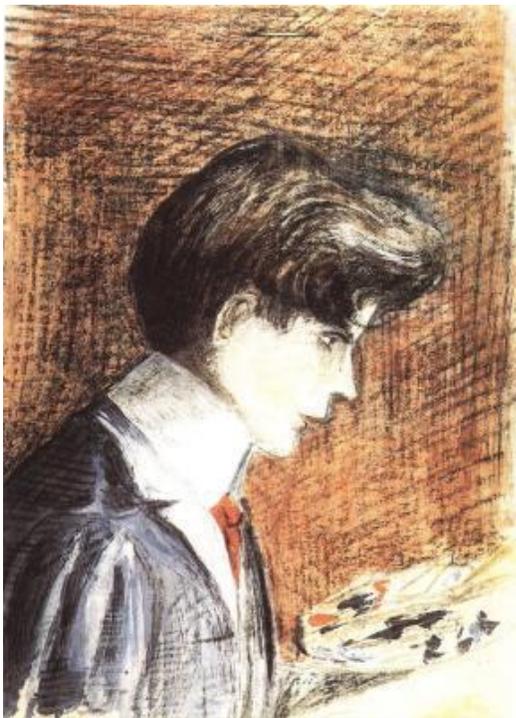


Figure 2.1. Egon Schiele, *Self-Portrait with Palette*, 1905.



Figure 2.2. *Portrait of Egon Schiele in 1906.*



Figure 2.3. Adolf Bernhard, *Photograph of Egon Schiele, 1906.*



Figure 2.4. Egon Schiele, *Self-Portrait with Long Hair*, 1907.



Figure 2.5. Egon Schiele, *Self-Portrait with Red Background*, 1906.



Figure 2.6. Albrecht Dürer, *Self-Portrait*, 1500.

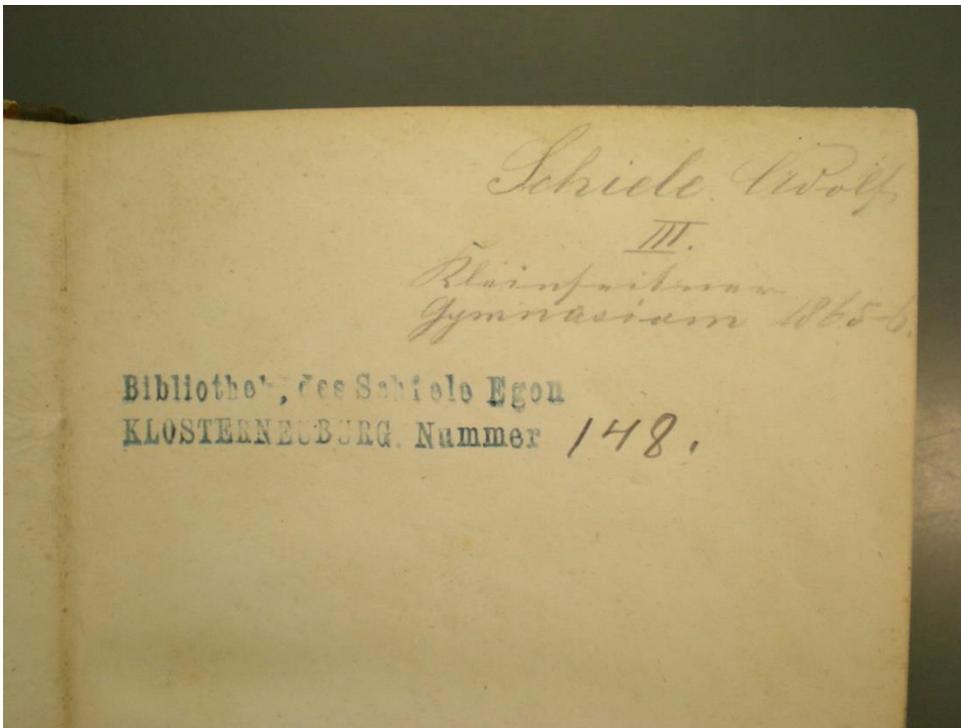


Figure 2.7. Johann Thomas Ambrózy, *Book 148 from Egon Schiele's Library*, 2011.

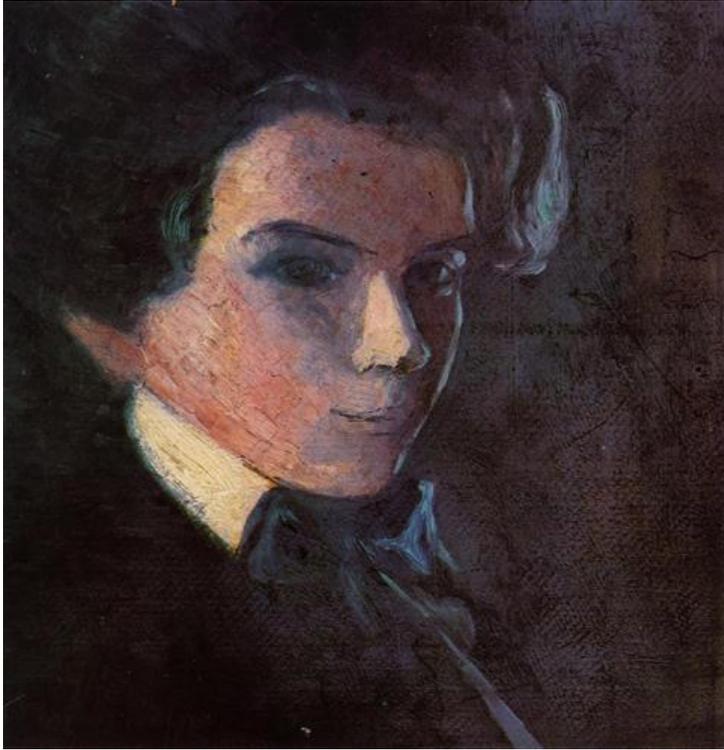


Figure 2.8. Egon Schiele, *Self-Portrait, Facing Right*, 1907.



Figure 2.9. Rembrandt van Rijn, *Self-Portrait as a Young Man*, ca. 1628.

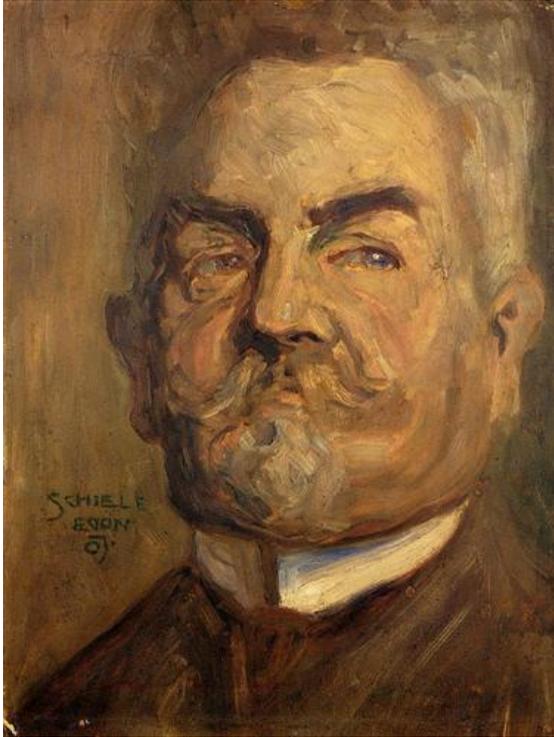


Figure 2.10. Egon Schiele, *Head of a Bearded Man I*, 1907.

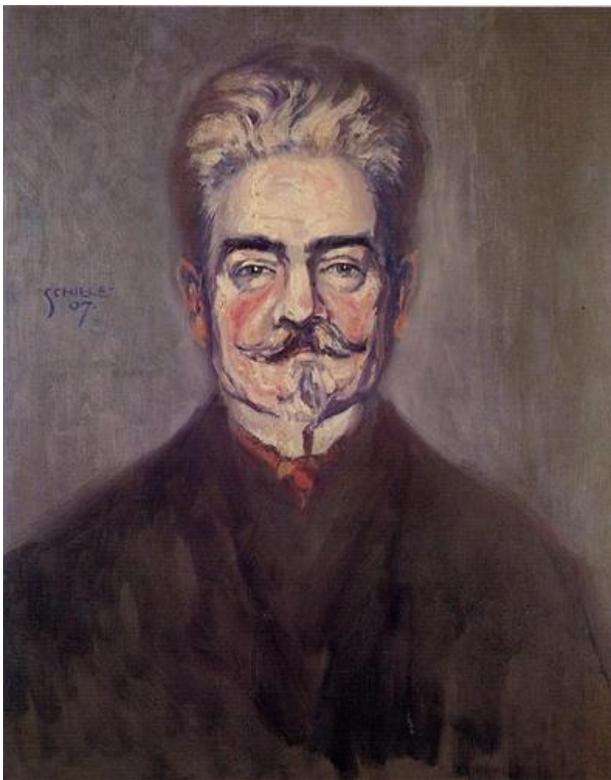


Figure 2.11. Egon Schiele, *Portrait of Leopold Czihaczek*, 1907.

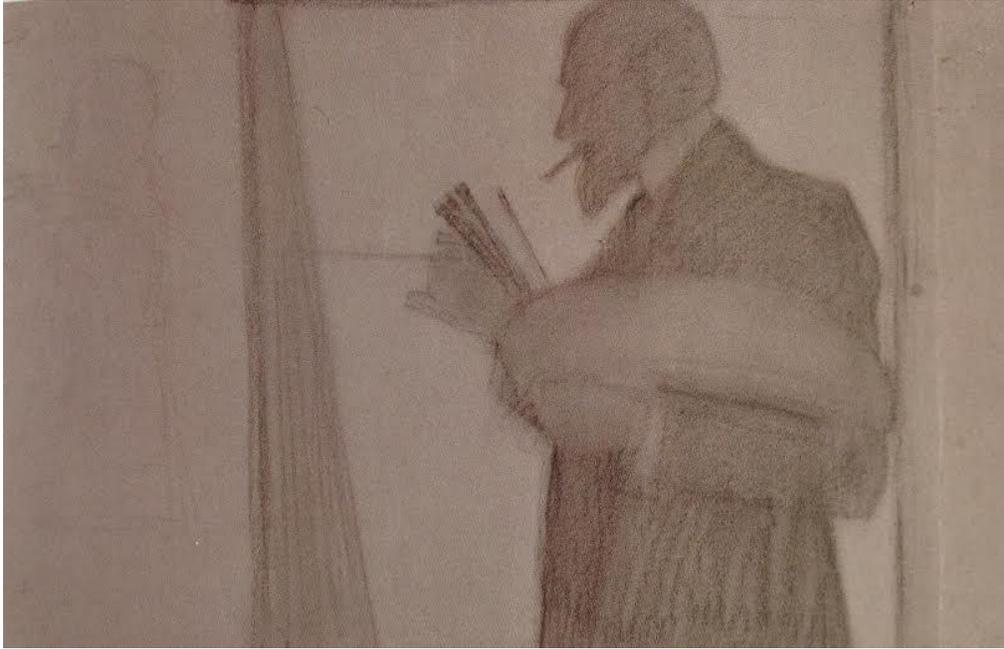


Figure 2.12. Egon Schiele, *Professor Strauch at His Easel*, 1908.

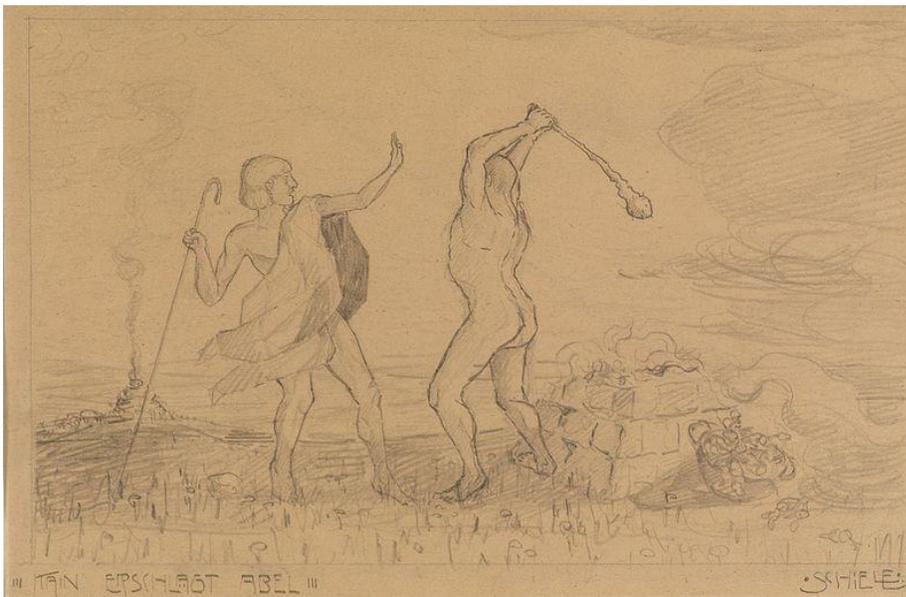


Figure 2.13. Egon Schiele, *Cain Slaying Abel*, 1907.



Figure 2.14. Egon Schiele, *Nude Study*, 1908.

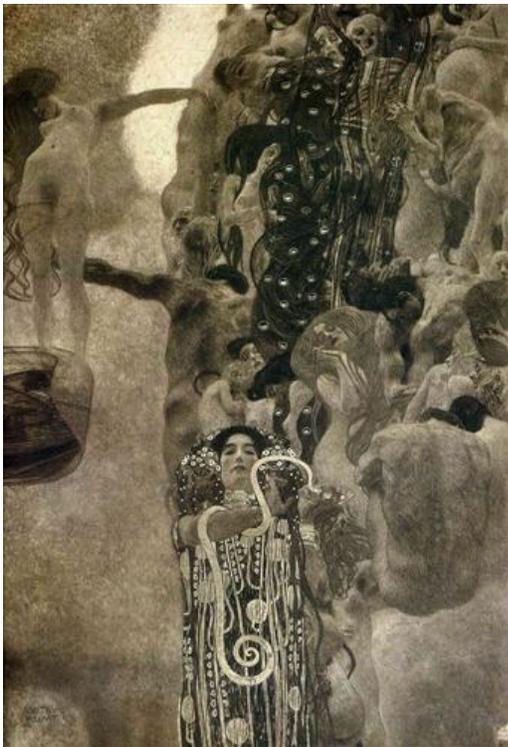


Figure 2.15. Gustav Klimt, *Medicine*, 1901.



Figure 2.16. Parmigianino, *Self-Portrait in a Convex Mirror*, 1524.



Figure 2.17. Detail from Jane Kallir, *Egon Schiele: The Complete Works*, page 386.



Figure 2.18. Detail from Jane Kallir, *Egon Schiele: The Complete Works*, page 387.



Figure 2.19. Rembrandt van Rijn, *Self-Portrait with a Cap, Mouth opened Wide*, 1630.



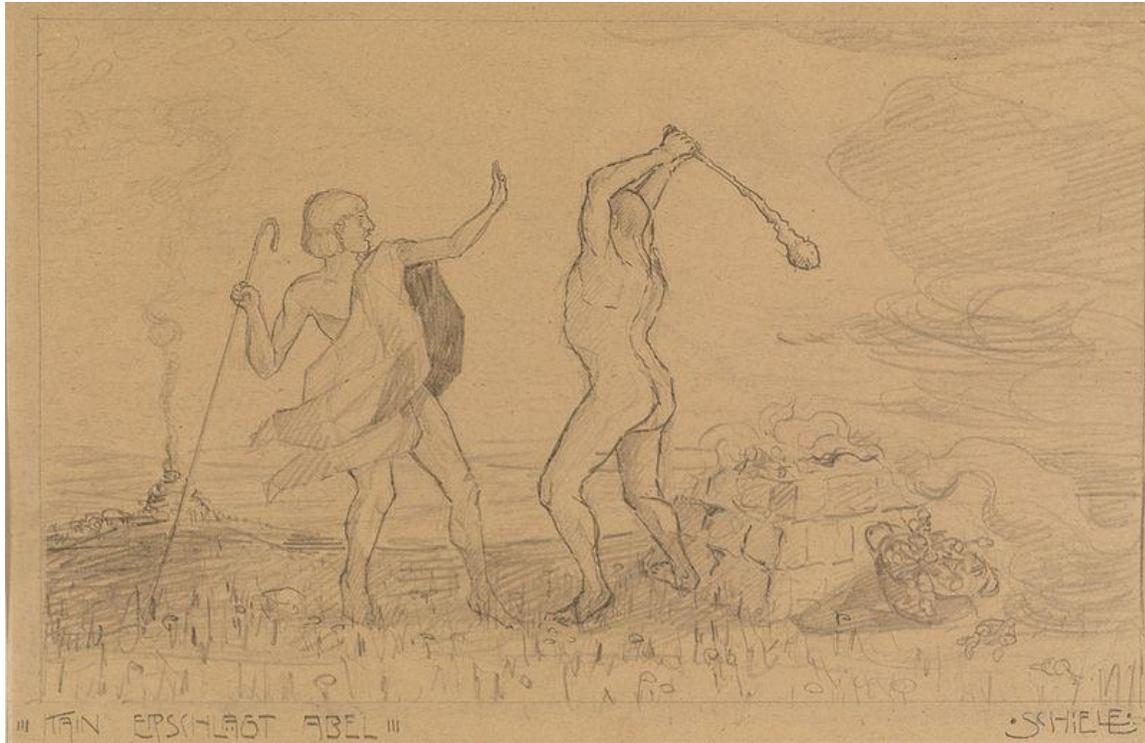


Figure 3.3. Egon Schiele, *Cain Slaying Abel*, 1907.



Figure 3.4. Egon Schiele: *Melancholia*, 1910.

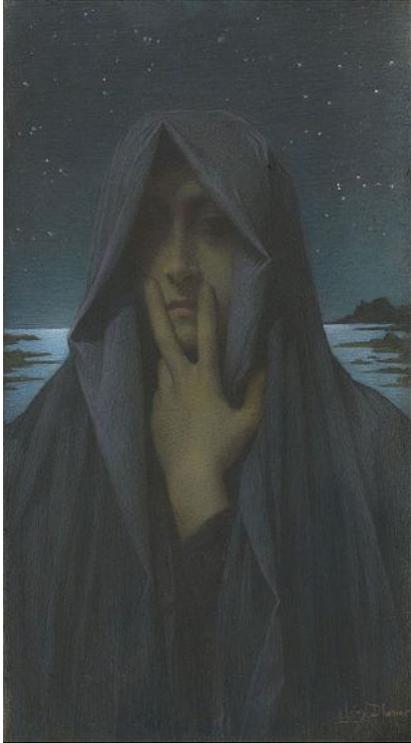


Figure 3.5. Lucien Lévy-Dhurmer, *Silence*, 1895.

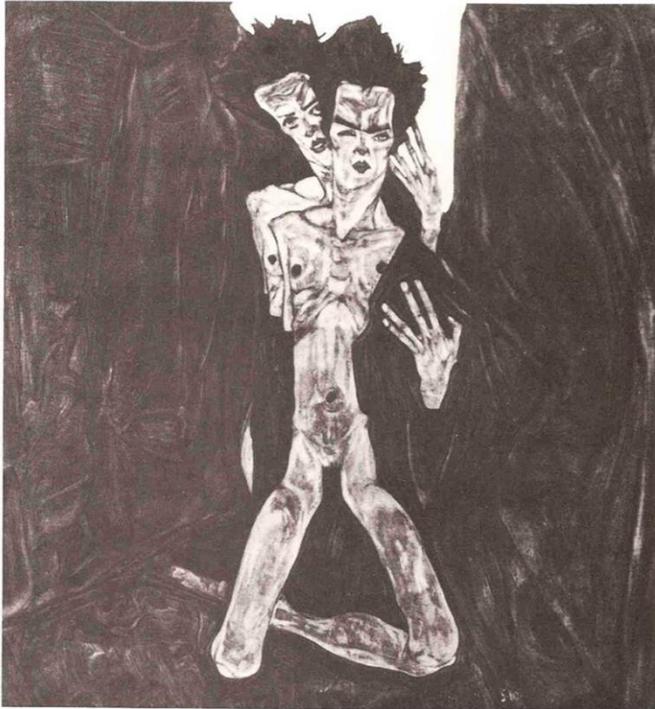


Figure 3.6. Egon Schiele, *The Self-Seers I (Double Self-Portrait)*, 1910.



Figure 3.7. Egon Schiele, *Prophets*, 1911.



Figure 3.8. Egon Schiele, *The Self-Seers II (Death and Man)*, 1911.



Figure 3.9. *The Birth of Genius (Dead Mother II)*, 1911.



Figure 3.10. Egon Schiele, *The Poet*, 1911.



Figure 3.11. Egon Schiele: *Vision and Destiny*, 1911.



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Figure 3.12. Detail from Jane Kallir, *Egon Schiele: The Complete Works*, p. 429.



Figure 3.13. Egon Schiele, *Double Self-Portrait*, 1915.



Figure 3.14. Johannes Fischer, *Trick Photograph of Egon Schiele*, 1915.



Figure 4.1. Egon Schiele, *Seated Male Nude*, 1911.

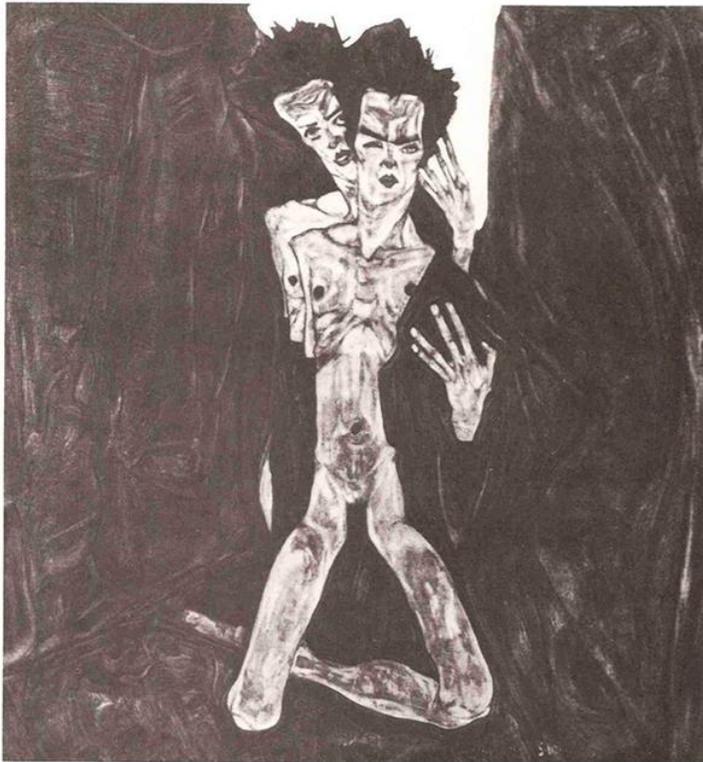


Figure 4.2. Egon Schiele, *Self-Seers I*, 1910.



Figure 4.3. Egon Schiele, *Self-Seers II (Death and Man)*, 1911.

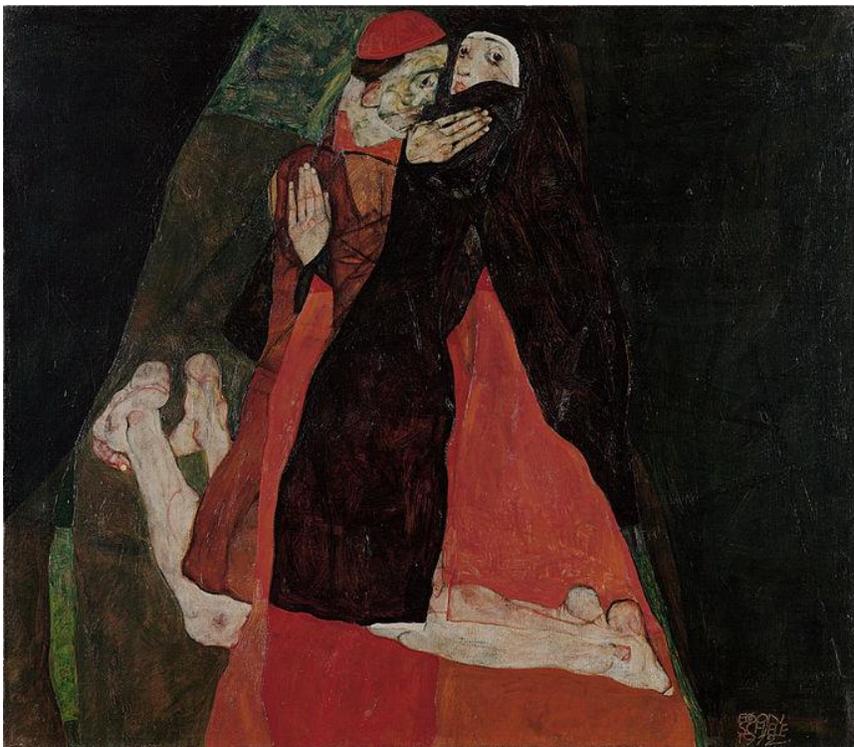


Figure 4.4. Egon Schiele, *Cardinal and Nun*, 1912.



Figure 4.5. Egon Schiele, *Self Portrait as St. Sebastian*, 1914.



Figure 4.6. Egon Schiele, *Nude Study Standing over a Mirror*, 1908.



Figure 4.7. Egon Schiele, *The Artist and His Model*, 1910.

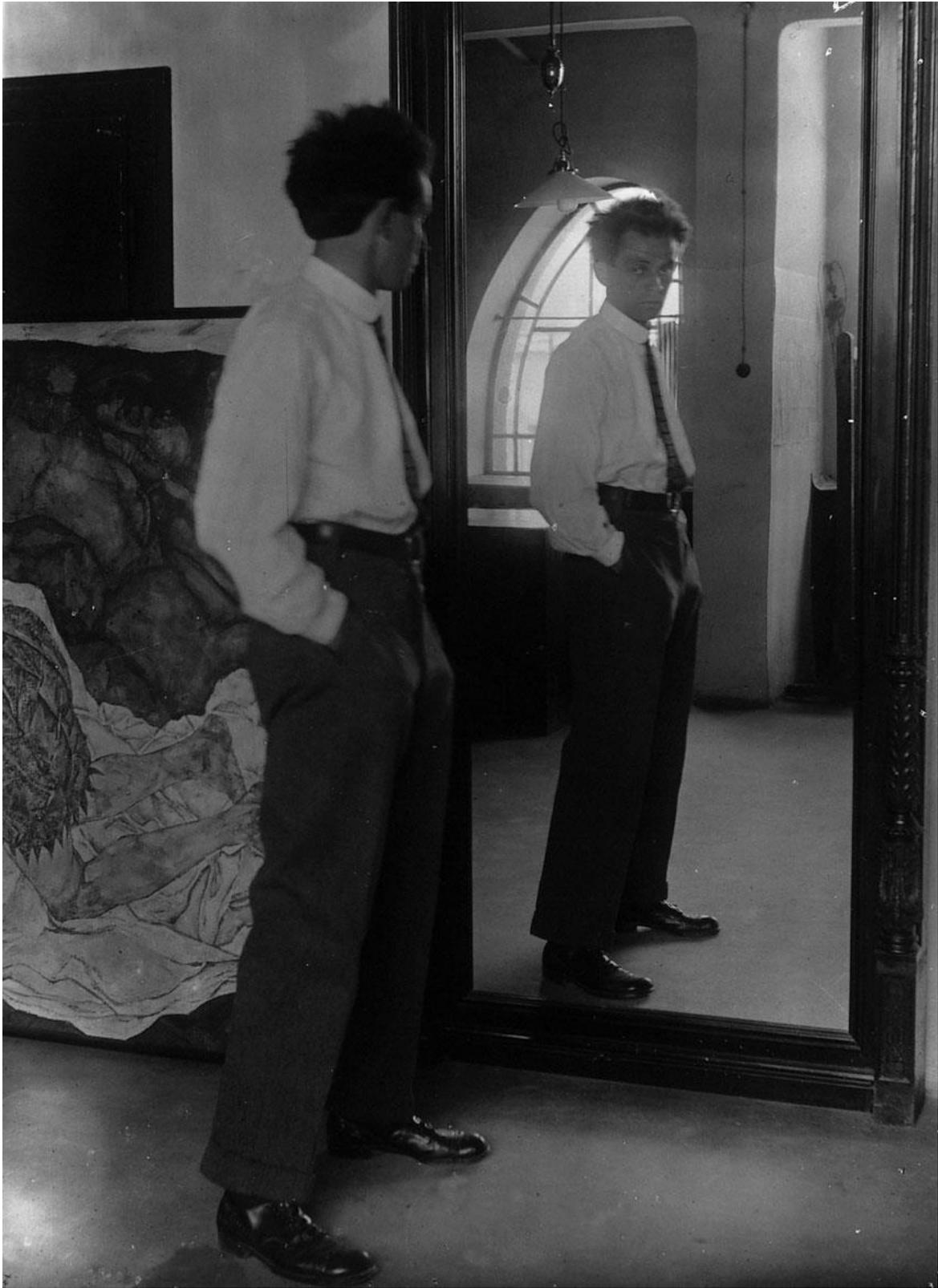


Figure 4.8. Johannes Fischer, *Egon Schiele Standing before his Mirror*, ca. 1916.



Figure 4.9. Egon Schiele, *Death and the Maiden*, 1915.



Figure 4.10. Egon Schiele, *Double Self-Portrait*, 1915.



Figure 4.11. Egon Schiele, *Seers (Double Self-Portrait with Wally)*, 1913.



Figure 4.12. Egon Schiele: *Couple*, 1909.



Figure 4.13. Egon Schiele, *Hindering the Artist is a Crime, It is Murdering Life in the Bud!*, 1912.



Figure 4.14. *For My Art and for My Loved Ones I Will Gladly Endure*, 1912.



Figure 4.15. Egon Schiele, *Prisoner!*, 1912.



Figure 4.16. Egon Schiele, *The Single Orange was the only Light*, 1912.

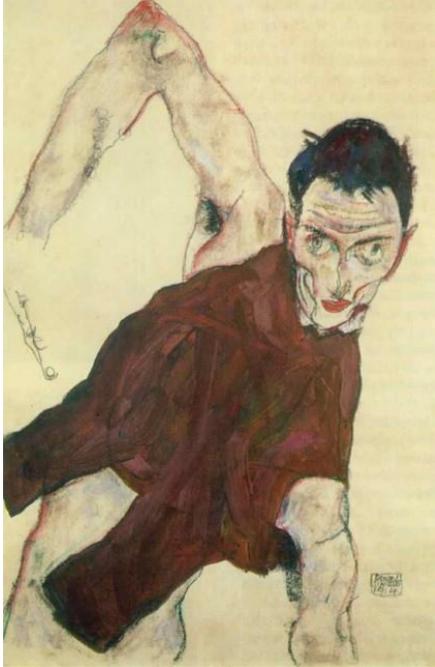


Figure 4.17. Egon Schiele: *Self-Portrait in Jerkin with Right Elbow Raised*, 1914.

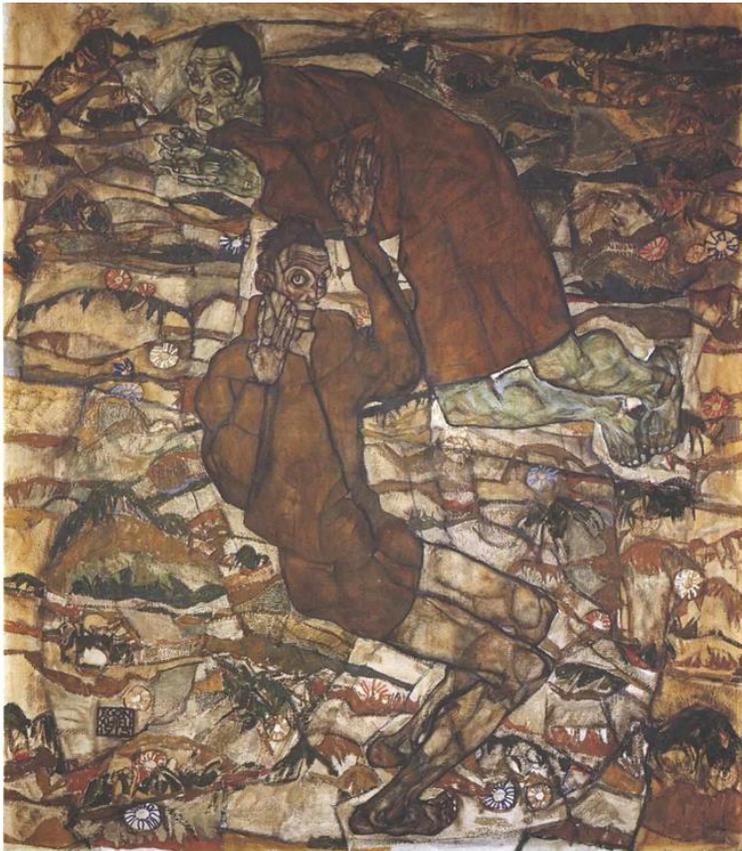


Figure 4.18. Egon Schiele, *Entschwebung/Transfiguration (The Blind II)*, 1915.



Figure 4.19. Egon Schiele: *Devotion*, 1913.



Figure 4.20. Egon Schiele: *The Truth Unveiled*, 1913.

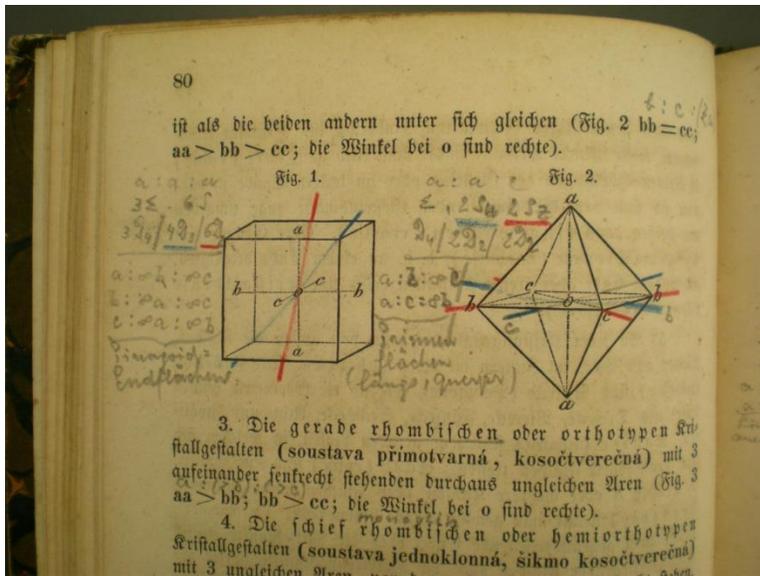


Figure 4.21. Page from Adolf Schiele's copy of *Naturgeschichte des Mineralen*. Photo courtesy of Johann Thomas Ambrózy, 2012.

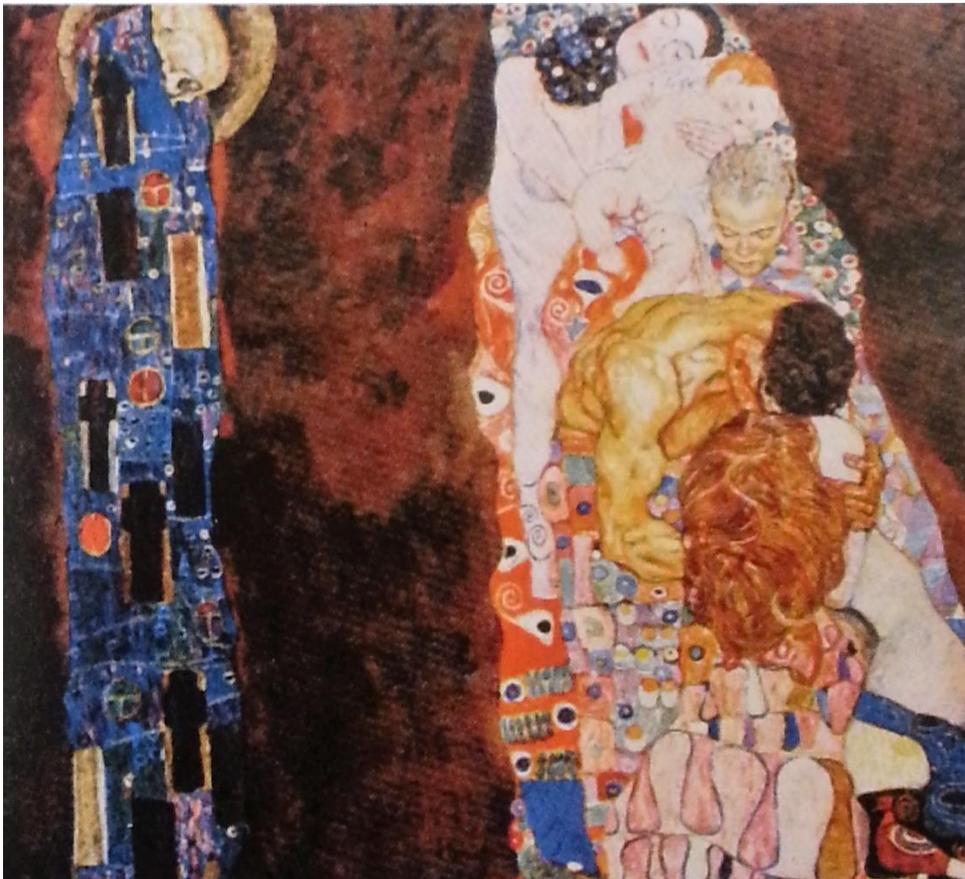


Figure 4.22. Gustav Klimt, *Death and Life* (as it appeared in its premiere condition), 1911.



Figure 4.23. Gustav Klimt, *Death and Life*, final rendition, 1916.



Figure 4.24. Egon Schiele, *Recollection*, 1913.

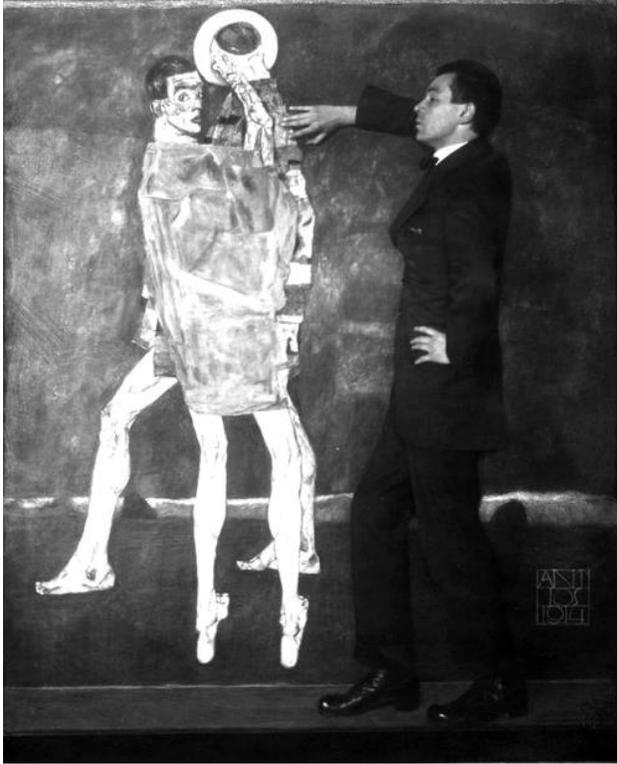


Figure 4.25. Anton Josef Trčka, *Photograph of Egon Schiele before "Encounter,"* 1914.



Figure 4.26. Johannes Fischer, *Trick Photograph of Egon Schiele Shown Twice,* ca. 1916.

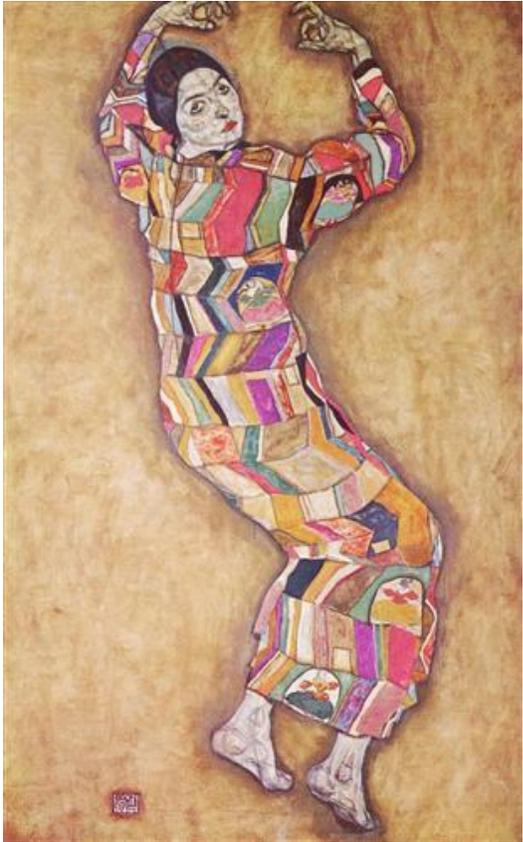


Figure 4.27. Egon Schiele, *Portrait of Friederike Beer*, 1914.



Figure 5.1. Egon Schiele, *Two Squatting Men*, 1918.



Figure 5.2. Egon Schiele, *Two Squatting Women*, 1918.



Figure 5.3. Egon Schiele, *The Family*, 1918, oil on canvas.



Figure 5.4. Egon Schiele, *The Self-Seers II (Man and Death)*, 1911.

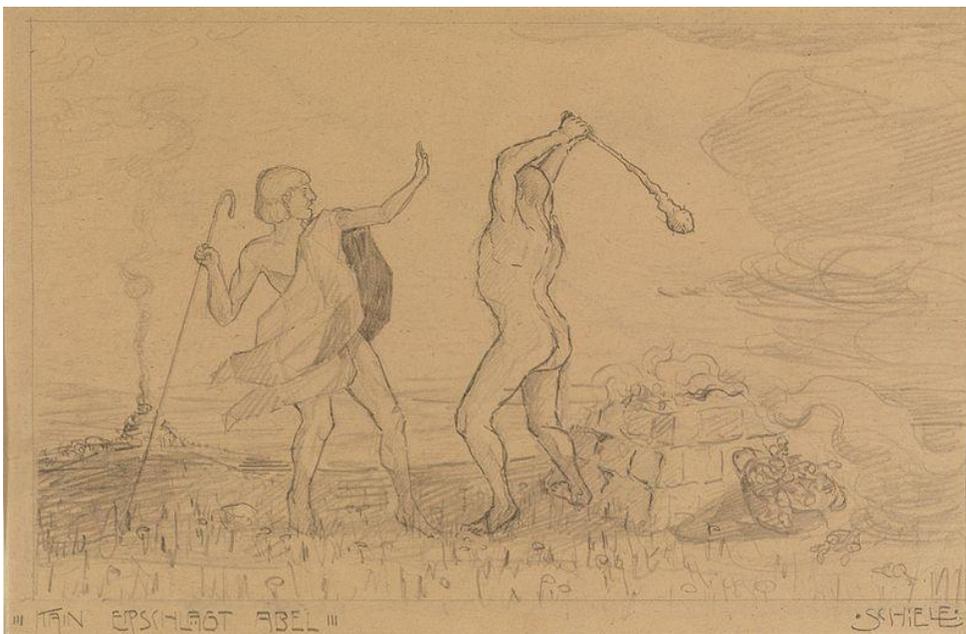


Figure 5.5. Egon Schiele, *Cain Slaying Abel*, 1907.