

Two Men, Two Homes

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On a street called Berggasse in central Vienna the gently rolling pavement is all that remains of the 'mountain alley' (trans. German) of centuries ago. Here many of the homes built in the 18th and 19th centuries have been restored or preserved in their distinct 3-4 storey chunky, smooth-stoned Viennese style. At number 19 that preservation is as a museum to the 47-year working life of Sigmund Freud in the family home and psychotherapy practice rooms that he, and later his daughter, Anna, worked from until the family's escape to England in 1938 following Nazi annexation of Austria.

Some of the possessions they fled with have now been returned, bringing the Freud family vividly back to life through their furniture in the lounge, sunroom, and in the patient waiting room, the hallway with its green rattan wall boards fitted with coathooks of sharply chiselled brass, through photos and ornamentation, Freud's antiquarian collection in his office, the furnace heater and spot for her dog in Anna's office, a boxed set of board games in the living room, the marble stairway entrance and doorsteps. Conversations between mother, father, and daughter can be imagined. The daily walking of a German Shepherd dog. The doorbell rung by patients that might receive two responses at the two entrance doors at the top of the staircase, one from Freud and the other from Paula, the Freud family's lifelong housekeeper. The latter dressing Freud's cancer treatment wounds in a small annex room adjacent to his office, the same room in which she makes up her bed each evening before folding it away in a cupboard the next morning. Everything was beautifully renovated 4 years ago and thousands of tourists and psychotherapy enthusiasts pay €14 a time to visit. There are a wide range of books beyond Freud's for sale in the ground floor foyer and cheese cake and pastries are on sale for the peckish.

In contrast the spa town of Bad Vöslau, a 30-minute train ride south-west of Vienna, looks like it has seen better days. Covid-19 has ravaged businesses since 2020 and several decades-old hotels have closed down. The huge spa pools, dozens of brightly painted individual changing rooms, deckchairs, restaurants, accommodation units, and grassy knolls are all thoroughly underutilised on the rainy day that Selina and I visit. What's more, days of localised rain have cooled the waters so that even the staff dissuade us from a quick dip. Behind the spa complex narrow roads finger up the hill, among them Maital, literally the May Valley, where at house

number 4 J L Moreno and Marianne Lörnitzo live from 1919 to 1925. Their unmarried status is scandalous so the neighbour we met, whose family have lived opposite Moreno's house for 100 years, hastens to tell us and this seems to owe something to the antisemitism of the day with Moreno being of Jewish descent, Marianne not.

The house is in poor repair and may well have been completely derelict by now had the Moreno Museum Association not recently invested in a new roof with copper guttering and downpipes to ensure some level of weather tightness.¹ Yet plants have overgrown walls, windows, fences, and gardens around the house and the forest green front doors have a broken glass pane, elsewhere a side window is ajar, and the only passers-by likely to gain entry are birds, cats, and the like. Peering through the broken door pane I spy a short wide hallway strewn with dusty debris and beyond that a doorway to the main living room. Is this the room where Moreno scrawled his epiphanies on the walls when he returned home from cosmic-filled night walks through the streets of Bad Vöslau?

So what do the photographs that accompany these brief notes tell us about the men who occupied these houses on Berggasse and Maital and the movements they inspire? They are different personalities of different generations. Could we say that Freud was a stable force that helped galvanise Moreno and was galvanised himself by his objectors? That Freud provided a cultural conserve with respect to medical individualism for Moreno to push and rail against? Sounds like a role relationship of some mutual value.

... and so perhaps psychodrama dwells in a May Valley garden where the creativity of our nature — the S factor of spontaneity — results in the odd window being broken and the ever present possibility of inundation by weeds or flowers, while psychodynamic psychotherapy holds steadily to its traditions on the Berggasse — those streets of commerce that are really circuitous mountain alleyways — only a brief 30-minute train ride away. Could we say, quite different but not so far apart really?

1 There are plans afoot to convert the Maital House into a museum that will also be a place of research into Moreno's work (see <https://www.morenomuseum.org/en/content/maital-4>) and further can be gleaned about Moreno's Bad Vöslau period from Wieser and Wildhaber (2011).



View from doorway to entry stairway on right leading to Freud's first-storey house. Courtyard beyond (Berggasse 19, Wien).



Courtyard at rear of Freud's house. Under house door at ground level (Berggasse 19, Wien).



View from Freud's office on first floor of house onto courtyard sheds and neighbours (Berggasse 19, Wien).



Courtyard at rear of Freud's house. Shed doors (Berggasse 19, Wien).



View along entranceway towards street door. Steps to Freud's house on left (Berggasse 19, Wien).



View from Freud's first floor office window onto courtyard sheds and neighbours' buildings (Berggasse 19, Wien).



Moreno's home in Bad Vöslau, a spa town near Vienna (Maital 4, Bad Vöslau).



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(Maital 4, Bad Vöslau).

REFERENCES:

Wieser, M., & Wildhaber, H. (2011). J.L. Moreno: The Bad Vöslau period (1919 to 1925). In G. Moita, A. Roma, & T. L. Ribeiro (Eds.), Proceedings of 4th Regional Mediterranean and Atlantic Congress of the IAGP, Porto, Portugal. <https://iagp.com/docs/IAGP2011Portoproceedings.pdf>



Craig Whisker is an AANZPA Certificated Psychodramatist and Educator who regularly leads residential psychodrama workshops in NZ and training workshops in both group work and family therapy in NZ and Singapore. He and Selina Reid recently travelled overland from Turkey to the UK, including a week in Vienna during August which is when

the published photos were taken with a Canon GX7 camera.