

Maria Mustapic

**SEX, DRUGS AND
ROCK'N'ROLL**
in Habsburg Vienna



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The book is divided into 3 main chapters, sex, drugs and rock 'n' roll.

At the beginning of the chapter, the respective topics are incorporated from a socio-historical and cultural point of view, in order to show the reader developments and historical connections.

In this context, I'm not only focussing on Vienna. However, this structure is used to understand the following explanations about Vienna and the Habsburgs. The three topics are described from different perspectives and backed up with historical anecdotes whenever possible.

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SEX

Sex has always been a topic of interest for everyone. Parents and grandparents have sex, and despite the church's reluctance to discuss the matter, Adam and Eve more than likely had sex, too. Throughout history, humanity has had an inconsistent relationship with the subject of physical love. While in some cultures it has always been understood as a natural and normal part of the human experience, other civilizations developed differently and chose to create weighty taboos against the act that creates life.



Sex in Sacred Writings

Judaism is divided on the subject of coitus. On the one hand, sexual desire is necessary to create and maintain humankind. In other areas of the teachings, it is called an “evil urge”. In one particular passage, sex is allowed to be pleasurable; the Talmud states in Berachot 57b that sex is a “...foretaste of the world to come... [and]...the man is obligated to satisfy his wife (Ketubbot 61b)”, furthermore ieven regulates the frequency according to profession “... the independents every day, the laborers twice a week, the camel drivers once in thirty days, the boatmen once in six months (Ketubbot 5.6)”¹.

No wonder it soon became tradition for sailors to have a girlfriend in every harbour!

Other world religions deal with interpersonal issues in their sacred writings as well.

The Koran, for example, encourages adherents: “Your wives are a seed field for you. So go to it [her] whenever you wish. (Qur’an, Sura 2,223),”² which sounds less like a call to reproduce than a carte blanche for the lords of creation to give vent to their libidos.

The Book of Proverbs 5,1819 in the Old Testament, also encourages believers “... her breasts shall satiate thee at all times, her love make thee ever drunken”³.

Song of Songs 7,8-9 reads almost like the Playboy: “Yes, your growth is like the palm tree, and your breasts like grapes. I will resolutely climb the palm tree and grasp its branches. Your breasts shall now be like grapes of the vine, and your breath like the fragrance of apples, and your mouth like the best wine to me.” These passages seem far more titillating than a proscription on sex outside of procreation purposes would suggest.

The New Testament is chock full of advice in this and even promotes a sort of equality.

First Corinthians 7,35 it is written: “Let the husband do to the wife what he owes to her, and likewise the wife to the husband. The woman does not dispose of her body, but the man. Likewise the man does not dispose of his body, but the woman. Do not deprive one of the other ...” Many apostles were married



and took their wives on business trips, as the modern world might view their missionary journeys (1 Cor, 9.5). Jesus seems to have been a complete stranger to celibate lifestyle, standing firmly on Judaism's foundations, which always advocated marriage and sex within marriage. His own connection with Mary Magdalene indicates a possible relationship that may not have been a platonic one.

Although non-canonical, the Third Century Gospel of Philipp discovered in Nag Hammadi states: "Sophia, who is called Barren, she is the mother of the angels. And the companion [of the Saviour] is Mary Magdalene. The [Saviour loved] her more than [all] the disciples [,] and he kissed her [often] on her [mouth]."⁴

Even in Christianity's most holy of books there is some evidence that sex is not a terrible taboo, and that lust is not necessarily the work of the devil.

Sex Morality

As so often in history – especially the history of religions – it is a question of how theory was and is interpreted and put into practice. This is where morality plays an important role.

In Christian sex-morality, sin is probably the main antagonist. Beginning with Adam and Eve, "In the asexually conceived paradise, Adam and Eve did not initially have intercourse; only through the fall did they 'recognize' each other and become sexual beings – a process that has burdened Christians in the form of 'original sin' ever since. Although the church fathers also saw the sexual act as an indispensable prerequisite for the continued existence of mankind, its pleasurable practice was considered a damnable sin, for which one should be punished with the most terrible torments of hell."⁵ An uncomfortable dichotomy for a church that wanted more adherents, but also more control. «The early medieval theology of the sixth to eleventh centuries codified guidelines for confessors in ... penitential books, which contained lists



morality, not to forbid the young person to exercise his *Vita Sexualis*, but it demanded that he settle this embarrassing matter in some inconspicuous way. If sexuality could not be eliminated from the world, it should at least not be customarily obvious. So, the tacit agreement was made not to discuss the whole vexing complex at school, in the family, or in public, and to suppress anything that might remind one of its existence.”²⁰

Since the blossoming young ladies from their own ranks were taboo, the young gentlemen resorted to molesting the staff, with and without consent. It was common practice that the pretty parlour maids were nibbled on by the house masters and their juniors at every available opportunity.

Arthur Schnitzler (1862–1931) mocked this bourgeois pseudo-morality in his *Reigen – La Ronde* (1896/97).



Fig. 7: The Parlour Maid and the Gracious Master around 1900





Fig. 12: The *Schnepfen-Strich* at Graben

The church accepted such unchristian conditions as long as it suited them. In reality, the churches had no choice, since suitors were acquired even in their own halls. In St. Michael's Church, for example, the harlots knelt and prayed only ostensibly, in reality, they waited for a discreet sign from the next customer. Then, prostitutes and johns left the house of worship together. These special measures of recruiting suitors were mostly dependent on the season and the temperatures. To procure in the freezing cold, meant difficult working conditions.

Until the 16th century, the business of prostitution was more or less tolerated, although the prostitutes did sometimes end up at the pillory. It was situated at today's Hoher Markt, in the city centre.

The *schlüpfrigen Damen* (salacious ladies) had various specialities. One could often discern their specialisation or preferences by their stage names. For ex-



DRUGS

Drugs, Panaceas and Secret Diseases

Drugs and Panaceas

Drugs and their use are as old as mankind and not a phenomenon of the modern age. But what are drugs? Substances, that alter the biochemical processes and functioning of the central nervous system and in this way produce altered states of consciousness.

Drugs were known to most peoples and social classes throughout history, whether as a healing substance or as an addictive substance.

A distinction is made between so-called uppers and downers.

Upper, or energising drugs, such as cocaine or caffeine, stimulate the brain, amplify stimuli and relieve pain. Downers, on the other hand, are narcotic substances. Opium or heroin have a sedative effect and an analgesic effect as well. Hallucinogens, on the other hand, give the user a taste of another world.



Intoxicating Antique

According to archaeological findings, medicinal and intoxicating substances such as henbane may have been used from prehistoric times. In European cultural history, people knew and consumed a variety of drugs which had dual use as remedies for hedonistic reasons, ritualistically and occasionally during religious or social rituals.

Cannabis, opium, and many other well-known plants or herbs were also administered in early times for medicinal purposes as painkillers, narcotics, and remedies.

Originally, it was only select members of society who actually or allegedly knew about the effects of intoxicating drugs and how to use them. Magicians, druids, high priests, or even medicine men and doctors often consumed the intoxicating substances themselves. They immersed themselves in other spheres and often could not distinguish their hallucinations from reality.

These self-proclaimed magicians were usually the only ones who knew about the existence, the effect, and the handling as well as the correct dosage of drugs – whether for healing or to put the patient into an ecstatic state.

“In the course of time, they became a privileged caste who had great power over their fellow men and safeguarded themselves by strict secrecy of their art. Healing knowledge and religion were therefore inseparable for a long time.”⁹⁹ The ecstatic effects of some of these intoxicating herbs were celebrated as divine.

Among the ancient Greeks, junkies who predicted the future, such as the Oracle of Delphi who was regarded as a mouthpiece for the gods by the general Greek public, were socially highly respected. According to historians, these *Pythia* were probably priestesses in a drug frenzy.

In the 8th century B.C., Homer describes the use of mind-expanding drugs in his epic poem *Odyssey*. He let people become pigs under the influence of the



Wizard Kirke's special cocktail. Elsewhere, Helena probably did not pour pure wine for her guests.

“But Helena, the daughter of Zeus, thought of other things. She immediately added to the wine they drank a charming remedy, good against grief and gall. It created oblivion for all evils. If it was in the mixing jug, whoever then sipped it, no tear would run down his cheek that day, even if his father and mother both died... Now the daughter of Zeus had means of such powerful effect...”¹⁰⁰. Whether this enchanting remedy was nightshade, hash, or opium remains to be seen.

This classic of ancient Greek poetry shows that the ancient Greeks knew about all the effects and use of intoxicants.

The practice and the knowledge about medicinal and narcotic drugs were handed down by ancient Egypt and the Persian scripts as well.

Select Romans also knew how to handle the mind-expanding substances and used this to their advantage. Roman commanders liked to use downers for tactical warfare, in order to weaken the enemy.

The Gauls found superhuman strength through their very own “magic potion”, which is handed down in the “historical writings” of the famous comic Asterix and Obelix. In fact, Gauls may have dipped the tips of their arrows and spears in henbane juice, thus providing their enemies a free drug trip usually followed by death.¹⁰¹

The Germanic tribes favoured a fermented mixture of honey and water to befuddle themselves. They called it mead, an ancestor of our beer.

Befuddled Middle Ages

Mediaeval knowledge about the effects of certain plants and herbs was largely based on classical education. Scholars in antiquity compiled catalogues of all kinds of plants and substances. Mediaeval medicine was based



ROCK'N'ROLL

Dancing, Partying and Amusement
at and around Hofburg Palace



The History of Partying in Vienna

Vienna has always been a city where people love to celebrate. The Viennese have always been party animals.

In the Middle Ages, most celebrations were church socials.

Social life was determined by the church calendar, and church celebrations, as well as fairs, were a way of self-expression for the Viennese.

In the 15th Century, 33 ecclesiastical festivals were celebrated in Vienna, allowing the general public to lay down their tools. One of the most important ecclesiastical feasts that was celebrated on a particularly large scale was Corpus Christi. It was one of the most splendid processions in mediaeval Vienna, which wound through the streets of the city.

Ecclesiastical festivities such as processions, passion plays, and fairs usually meant pure pleasure and a break from the dreary daily routine of the lower classes. The fairs were comparable to today's Wurstelprater, Vienna's most popular amusement park. The common people enjoyed their free time with jugglers, minstrels, and other various attractions. When the opportunity presented itself, the Viennese knew how to party – sometimes for two weeks at a time.

During Holy Week, instead of a theatre performance or a visit to the cinema, people enjoyed staged presentation of the Passion of the Christ – a classic.

Passion plays were performed within the city walls near St. Stephen's Cathedral or at Neuer Markt.

Another highlight for the population in the Middle Ages was the *Scharlachrennen*, the Scarlet Race. It was held twice a year between 1382 and 1534.

The evening prior, trumpeters and town criers announced the event at Hoher Mark: a horse race from St. Marx-area via Rennweg to the Wien River and along Ungargasse and then back again to St. Marx. The name Rennweg – race way – stems from this race. Participants could win either a crossbow or a suck-



ling pig. The first prize, though, was a piece of scarlet – a precious red woollen cloth. This is how the race got its name. However, participation was reserved only for the highest in society.

Afterwards, the servants were allowed to compete in a race and could also win a valuable piece of cloth as well.

And then there was the “whore race”. No further explanation is needed here, *nomen est omen*.

During such festivities, the common Viennese not only enjoyed the excitement of the race, but also a feast provided by the mayor for his flock at the town hall.

In old Vienna, the common people annually celebrated St. Andrew’s Night on November 30. At this celebration, a spectacle of an oracle predicted one’s future luck and chances of marriage. The most reliable method of predicting the future was said to be throwing shoes. Bachelors and spinsters would throw a slipper over his or her shoulder and the way the shoe landed predicted their marital future. The direction of the shoe’s toe gave a forecast of what was to come: if the tip pointed away from the door, the eager diviner could look forward to their Prince/Princess-Charming, however if it pointed toward the door, their destiny was to remain alone.

The nut oracle revealed whether the supplicant diviner would meet their soul mate. The inquiring individual looking for a partner would give a nut of their choice the name of their heartthrob, then throw it, along with a second nut, into the fire. If both nuts burned up immediately, a happy future blossomed for the couple; however, if the kernels jumped out of the flames again, the two were most likely not meant for each other.

At the end of the festivities, an unmarried Viennese woman would bake her dream man using water and flour and then snack upon him. The following night, her future husband would appear to her in her sleep.

On December 21st, the “Oracle Day of Love” was celebrated. Before going to bed, the bachelorette was supposed to kick her bedstead three times and recite the following little saying:

