

Phenomenology and Cultural Difference in High Modernism

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By

Maria-Ana Tupan

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ARGUMENT

Born at the intersection of literary analysis and cultural history, the present study is collecting evidence in support of the idea that the turn of the twentieth century art was not decadent, in the sense of the gratuitous pursuit of beauty, of apathy and perverse refinement, but, on the contrary, energised by a will to meaningful form grounded in current epistemology, especially of the *science maitresse* of the time, psychology, and its kindred disciplines – psychological phenomenology and phenomenological existentialism. There is continuity between the impressionistic poetics flourishing in the last two decades of the nineteenth century (correlated subject and object of perception) and the modernist aesthetics (of the subject detached from reality and constructing his own object) which was mainly the work of Theodor Lipps, Max Dessoir, and Wilhelm Worringer.

The dilemmas which the literati were facing in the early twentieth century originated partly in the realization that the narcissistic, islandish, landscape of an art considered to be its own end was suddenly invaded by discourses from other disciplines whose relevance or late acquisitions had earned them enough prestige to accede to the centre of public discourse. Such were the new theories of relativity and quantum physics, psychology, anthropology, and Empire policy within the context of the rise of national and independent states. Influential groups of reflective minds shaped by academic education, such as The Bloomsbury Circle or The Cambridge Heretics, or gathering round editors of books and journals, such as *The Criterion*, were neither members of Bohemian clubs or occult societies, nor warrior artists like the numerous French and German coteries of the avant-garde. The newly founded societies were closer to what today we call interdisciplinary groups of reflection, open to a graft of aesthetics on other branches of the bulging sphere of the humanities. The disciplines allowed by T.S. Eliot in his Republic of Letters focused on "general ideas" (we could call them epistemic foci) of "contemporary work in history, archaeology, anthropology, even of the more technical sciences when

those results are of such a nature to be valuable to the man of general culture [...]" (Eliot 1926: web).

In the first issue of *The Criterion*, T S Eliot ponders on the advisability of an editorial policy that could go beyond "the nature and the function of a literary review". Setting out to redefine the notion of literature, Eliot is trying to avoid both extremes, that is, of editing a review which was "too strictly literary", as well as one overloaded with the irrelevant issues of "current political and economic controversy". T S Eliot is, however, moving away from the aesthetics which had been limited to "beautiful expression of particular sensation and perception, general emotion and impersonal ideas" – the *fin-de-siècle* aesthetics of Flaubertian beautiful form (decadence), Mallarméan impersonality and impressionistic records of synaesthetic perception. Eliot believes that defining the frontiers of literature is impossible that even "the purest literature is alimanted from non-literary sources, and has non-literary consequences".

Historical materialism is now rushing in through the back door with its accumulation of historical facts and events, proposing issues of political economy or working with categories falling out of the sphere of culture (modernism, for instance, defined as the effect of material processes, such as industrialization and colonialism rather than characteristic narratives). There is much rewriting of history to do justice to the marginalized communities of the past. Language-oriented, New Historicism is a critical theory which studies discursive negotiations, capable thereby to cast light on the way in which the minds of Europe and beyond connected, borrowed or influenced the resources of an amazingly unitary culture which seems to have had a life of its own across national borders. An intellectual history and a procession of forms have thus been constituted within which similarities and distinctions contribute to a conversation of mutual understanding rather than a clash of incomprehensive monologues. Canons, however, keep changing in light of new research. An extension of the map of modernism, for instance, seems to us justified, if we start tracing back the genealogy of the parameters consensually accepted as defining the modernism of the earlier half of the last century. T.S. Eliot, James Joyce, Virginia Woolf, Thomas Wolfe, or Wallace Stevens are among its central figures, whereas Flann'O Brien and Mircea Eliade fill in

positions on the outer fringes of Europe. Did the Irish and Romanian writers experience a sense of otherness or did their genius bloom forth in an atmosphere felt to be congenial? Had there been created in the capitals of modernism valences to which they could attach the objects of concern in their own culture? Were they aware of any hierarchy of power or of prestige, or were they simply and naturally caught in the whirling galaxy of a European representation of art? Can they be shelved in the same library and read through the same grids? An international space was certainly created at the time, the congress as an institution being a form of intellectual bonding with open doors to the whole world. Given their prestige among other disciplines, psychology and aesthetics were among the first to hold meetings at the initiatives of C.G. Jung and Ernest Jones (1908) and Max Dessoir (1913), respectively.

References to non-literary sources in a discussion of modernist aesthetics are not optional though and by far not just a matter of “general culture”. The new philosophy of art was grounded in non-artistic areas: phenomenology, psychology, linguistics.

The period was dominated by phenomenology, which is usually classified as a triad: transcendental phenomenology (Edmund Husserl), hermeneutic phenomenology (Heidegger) and perceptual phenomenology (Merleau-Ponty). Their origins however can be found in the latter half of the nineteenth century when they were also more overtly associated with issues of language, facilitating epistemological grounding of the characteristic tropes and rhetorical structures of modernist discourse.

This book is an interdisciplinary approach to the construction of selfhood and nationhood in key figures of modernism. Among them, T.S. Eliot, who turns to world culture with the self-confident and self-assured manner of a citizen of a great metropolitan centre, Flann O’Brien, whose fragmented selfhood bespeaks the experience of a colonized nation, and Mircea Eliade, the historian of religions who migrated from Romania to America shortly before the onset of the totalitarian regime and spending the rest of his active life teaching the history of religions at the Divinity School of the University of Chicago. In the interwar period he was the leader of a generation that promoted an agenda of synchronization with the West,

militated for change in all walks of life (they were the Romanian “Heretics”), emulating especially T.S. Eliot’s model of learned writing and of the institutionalization of art through editing journals (the Romanian *Criterion*) and gathering round them some of the brightest minds of the moment in various disciplinary fields (the *Criterion* conferences). Encyclopaedic fiction (O’Brien and Eliade) and learned poetry were the expression of ambitious designs concerning the shaping of imaginary communities – whether the nation (O’Brien) or international webs of shared anthropological representations (Eliade) and cultural narratives (T.S. Eliot). Modernism is thus cast into a broader picture where its much commented aestheticized and closed spatial form opens to utopian projects, down-to-earth politics, and cross-cultural differences.

Cultural anthropology places in relation distinct areas of European modernism, divided between central and peripheral, metropolitan and colonial, nationalist and universalist, yet they appear to be unified by a common poetics of fragmentation of reality and constitution of the narrative subject. Much has been written on significant form in modernism, but what that form was meant to convey was the meaning-making of the mind in relation to the world. Identifying the ideas which fed into canonical modernism may be equally important for interpretation and even for the building of the canon itself.

CHAPTER I

THE MAKING OF MODERNIST AESTHETICS

I.1. Problems of Canonization

Period terms have become increasingly unstable since the rise of literary theory, which is, more or less, the work of the last generation. The dependence of canons on critical theory and epistemology parallels the way methods and equipment affect results in quantum experiments. Coming in handy at this point are two revisionary books on the long eighteenth century, which has ceased to be perceived as the iconic picture of modernity. Revision which gets into academic curriculum has a very big impact on public reception of cultural phases. Such is *The Cambridge Companion to English Literature, 1740–1830*, edited by Thomas Keymer and John Mee, which came out from Cambridge University Press in 2004. The crisis of the Augustan culture with Fielding and Richardson seen as the beginning of a pre-romantic age, in which Laurence Sterne's erudite writing, in the spirit of the French Encyclopaedia, is reclassified as "Romantic autobiography", politics, issues of national identity and Empire replace M.H. Abrams's secularized theology (*Natural Supernaturalism*, 1971), William Blake turns away from Eleusinian mysteries and Biblical figures of authority getting enthusiastically absorbed in the revolutionary events in France, while Jacobin writing and supernatural fiction receive due attention. New meanings are showing through the grids of New Historicism, Postcolonial Studies, Gender Studies, Genre Studies, a.o.

The idea of a "new eighteenth century," which presumably extended from about 1660 to 1830, had already been launched by a revisionist collection of essays edited by Felicity A. Nussbaum & Laura Brown: *The New Eighteenth Century: Theory, Politics, English Literature* (1987). These essays are tracing a genealogy of romantic poetics, which extends the canon as early as the mid-eighteenth century, the gothic imagination

running in parallel to the luminaries' brighter and domineering culture until the eve of the French Revolution.

The Global Eighteenth Century (2005) is a quantitative approach which works with plenty of historical details, reports on civilization, and other such foci of present critical theory. Although reflecting on a previous stage of combined critical theories, the former book seems to have been more consistent, as the area of interest was confined to the history of ideas which elicited responses from contemporary discourse makers, adding up to an epistemological grounding of period terms

A new genre, critical global studies, serves editor Felicity Nussbaum and her twenty one contributors of essays to *The Global Eighteenth Century* to widen the area of research on this "long" century (so labelled on account, not only of its epoch-making events, but also of its combination of opposite cultural patterns ranging from the cult of reason and classical poetics to the wild imaginative hunts of prophetic books and gothic fiction).

The essays provide a "broadening scholarly perspectives beyond Europe," the new narrative of the 18th century covering subjects as diverse as global systems, economic and cultural linkages across the world, paradigms of modernity, the establishment of hierarchies of world power, advancement to colonialism and industrialization, cultural mixture, transnational and transcultural questions about human and social difference.

The building of canons on historical rather than categorical landmarks, such as colonialism and industrialism, replaces legitimating narratives with thick description of historical facts. By placing together heterogeneous materials of global culture - world history, art history, environmental studies, geography - the book capitalizes on the time's favourite encyclopaedic lore, casting new information into a genre created by the living conditions of a globalized world and answering the demands of a postcolonial political agenda. From an empowering strategy, meant to provide a more explicit interpretative frame, multidisciplinary may tempt researchers into a sort of data analysis or history of civilization instead of reaching a synthesis or rule-structured whole. Interdisciplinary, in our

acceptation of the word, means crossparadigmatic. What intelligible designs originating in non-literary disciplines underwrite literary texts? The space may be “global”, but also chartered.

Similarly to the revisionary criticism which pushed romanticism back to Young, Sterne and the mid eighteenth century are we tracing the ideas germinating into modernism back to the middle of the nineteenth century, in that long Victorian Age, as the other side of the positivist, realist and naturalist dominant. We are thus following in the footsteps of Isobel Armstrong who, in *Poetry, Poetics and Politics* (1993), characterizes Victorianism as the passage to phenomenology.

Could generic types follow separate trajectories in an archaeology of knowledge? Hermeneutic doubt and suspicion continued to be woven into the literature of the century from Carlyle to the post-romantics, the world appearing as an enigma which invited questions and offered few keys to probing minds. If the outbreak of the French Revolution had inspired Jacobin writing satirizing oligarchy’s occult power (such as William Godwin’s *Things as They Are; or The Adventures of Caleb Williams*, 1794), its termination had left behind a sea of doubts, including the possibility of identifying agency in history (as in Charles Dickens’s *Barnaby Rudge*). To Thomas Carlyle, history was just an alphabet in need of interpretation (“On History”, 1830), while the French Revolution had simply vanished under contradictory interpretations (*The French Revolution*, 1837). Could the mind make sense of personal or collective experience in light of what the new, physiological psychology, revealed about the mind’s reasoning through images rather than concepts? Immanuel Kant had wondered whether, in the post-metaphysical, post-teleological age, metaphysics was still possible, and he had located its inquiries within the Transcendental Dialectic. In mid-nineteenth century H.L. Mansel relocated metaphysics within a Phenomenological Dialectic (*Metaphysics; Or, The Philosophy of Consciousness, Phenomenal and Real*, 1860), in which representation replaced transcendental concepts.

I.2. Generative Depth Models

To those immersed in the controversy over the epistemological/phenomenological divide in the nineteenth century it should be reminded that both originated with Immanuel Kant. Reputed for the epistemological turn in philosophy, Kant was also the author of an *Anthropology from a Physiological or Pragmatic Point of View* (1795), and it was from this last book of the Königsberg philosopher that his successor, J.F. Herbart, launched the century's developments in the direction of physiological psychology (pragmatism, anthropology). Unlike Kant, who had dismissed the egotist individual of his own making through free associations of the mind in favour of the Critiques' transcendental subject, Herbart lent anthropology scientific dignity by allying research in the field with mathematical calculus of the mental flow. In Kant, physiology and the labour of thought (*Denken*) over the immediate data of consciousness are, as we have seen, a matter of either remaining a prisoner of an associative mechanics of perception or serving the construction of a hierarchy of concepts:

Eine Lehre von der Kenntnis des Menschen, systematisch abgefaßt (Anthropologie), kann es entweder in physiologischer oder in pragmatischer Hinsicht sein. — Die physiologische Menschenkenntnis geht auf die Erforschung dessen, was die Natur aus dem Menschen macht, die pragmatische auf das, was er als freihandelndes Wesen aus sich selber macht oder machen kann und soll. (Kant 1795, p. 3)¹

The physical/ metaphysical dyad of a long tradition in philosophy was now being replaced by the opposition between perception (a psychological activity of the subject) and apperception (not metaphysically but psychologically grounded, that is, in the processing of the data originating in the senses). Katherine Arens sees Kant and Herbart as the initiators of a new scientific paradigm, which she calls “conceptual psychology.” The

¹ A study of the knowledge of man, formulated systematically (anthropology), may be either physiological or pragmatic. The physiological knowledge of human beings is based on the investigation of what nature makes of man, the pragmatic, on what he, as a free-acting being, makes or can and should make of himself.

(Unless otherwise stated, the translations in this book are mine – M.-A. Tupan)

relationship explored by Herbart between environment and the train of thoughts generated through associative processes - *Psychologie als Wissenschaft neu gegründet auf Erfahrung, Metaphysik, und Mathematik* (1824–25) (*Psychology as Knowledge Newly Founded on Experience, Methaphysics, and Mathematics*) - is identified in the late Kant of the *Anthropology* as well, who related the world and the psychology of the thinker:

Kant's new "capacities of the mind," therefore, refer not to a finished knowledge in the human mind, but rather to a capacity for the interaction between the world and the mind in specific areas of private and social existence. Here, Kant introduces a second key aspect leading to a new paradigm: the question of mental context, that is, the environment in which the mind is functioning. In this instance, each region of data may correlate to a different aspect of a world view. (Arens 1989, p. 60)

In Kant, however, the interaction between world and mind is still controlled by concepts; whereas perceptions tend to connect under a common concept, not only through similarity (monotony) but also distinction or difference, **contradiction** separates perceptions governed by different concepts. The logic of identity prevails over associative psychology:

Absteckung (Kontrast) ist die Aufmerksamkeit erregende Nebeneinanderstellung einander widerwärtiger Sinnesvorstellungen unter einem und demselben Begriffe. Sie ist vom Widerspruch unterschieden, welcher in der Verbindung einander widerstreitender Begriffe besteht. (Kant 1898, p. 59)²

It was Wilhelm Wundt who, limiting his argument to mental processing of the immediate data of consciousness, let apperception in through the back door. The mind's interpretation of sense perception within a certain environment which leads to the constitution of an eidetic object, purified of the transitory and irrelevant properties in an open-ended activity of reduction is the primary scene of modernist writing. The art for art's sake

² Distinction (contrast) is the attention-grabbing juxtaposition of mutually repulsive sense concepts under one and the same concept. It is distinguished from contradiction, which is the combination of conflicting concepts.

slogan, or the priority of art over life were not tokens of moral relaxation or decadence but epistemologically grounded assumptions. It was in this progress from physiological psychology to phenomenology that we can discover the generative depth models of the literature of modernism, which, in our line of argument, emerged in the latter half of the nineteenth century.

The realist poetics of the novel was not dependent on interpretation, George Eliot considering, for instance, in a late essay, first published by K.K. Collins in 1980, that language means the same to all speakers and the world is given in common to all the members of a community: "above & below, light & dark, fast & slow, warm & cold, sweet & sour, hard & soft, smooth & rough, heavy & light, noisy & still, cloudy & clear, wet & dry, far & near, & so on, would be the same qualities for each group" because "the main elements of grammar are simply indispensable facts of human existence." (Collins, "Questions of Method," p. 388).

The "indispensable facts of human existence" are the embodied schemata situating the self in the world through polarities of the kind listed by George Eliot. Cognitive psychologists and linguists, such as George Lakoff, Mark Johnson, John R. Taylor, a.o., define this embodied hermeneutics as mapping of physical perceptions onto epistemic ideas through cognitive metaphors (Lakoff & Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By*, 1980). The process is unconscious, whereas pragmatist psychology studies the way the mind is intentionally trying to make sense of the object of perceptions.

Eliot's polarities do not belong to open-ended chains of differences but to the order of concepts, to binaries based on logical contrast. As we have seen, the Immanuel Kant of the *Critique of Reason* remained faithful to the logic of identity even in his *Anthropology* (the distinction/ contradiction polarity).

The modernist codes and mind styles are generally seen as dominated by epistemology. Dick Higgins (*A Dialectic of Centuries*, 1978) and Brian McHale (*Postmodernist Fiction*, 1987) posit the question in very similar terms:

I will formulate it as a general thesis about modernist fiction: the dominant of modernist fiction is *epistemological*. That is, modernist fiction deploys strategies which engage and foreground questions such as those mentioned by Dick Higgins in my epigraph: “How can I interpret this world of which I am a part? And what am I in it?” Other typical modernist questions might be added: What is there to be known?; Who knows it?; How do they know it, and with what degree of certainty?; How is knowledge transmitted from one knower to another, and with what degree of reliability?; How does the object of knowledge change as it passes from knower to knower?; What are the limits of the knowable? And so on. (McHale 2004, p. 9)

Immanuel Kant did indeed make room for the three types that are currently mentioned in connection with epistemology - pragmatism, positivism, and hermeneutics – but his understanding of the first placed it in opposition to the physiological psychology which fuelled modernist writing. As we go back to the Preface of his 1798 book, *Anthropologie in physiologischer oder pragmatischer Hinsicht* as its full title reads, we see him setting in opposition the two kinds of man’s acquisition of knowledge: the transcendentalism of pure reason versus man’s making of himself through the individual and unreliable perceptions of an “egotistic” self which relies only on its idiosyncratic perceptions and chance associations. We see in Kant the philosopher of the epistemological turn (after the cognitive turn, from the pre-modern theosophical ontology to modernity’s gnoseology – probing into the conditions and validation of knowledge), who distrusted the physiological/ pragmatic mode of inquiry which would be practiced by his successors: Herbart, Wilhelm Wundt and William James. While reading modernity in the key of epistemology, we see in the first phase of late modernity (modernism) the rejection of that universal rationality enshrined by Kant in his categorical imperative. No universally valid perspective is affordable to the mind which derives all its knowledge from bodily impressions and its judgment upon their interaction.

The threshold to the new repertory of questions – How does this world appear to me? How is my mind derived from the body? How do I relate to the world around me? - seems to us to have been passed by J.S. Mill through his attack on classical syllogistic reasoning whose conclusion did nothing more than confirm the truth of the generic in the first premise. His alternative, reasoning “from particulars to particulars without passing

through generals,”³ resembled Leibniz’s logic of indiscernibles or non-identicals which applied to the empirical world, where no two things share all their properties so that we might call them identical.

The way Wilhelm Wundt and Alfred Binet elaborated on Mill’s critique of syllogistic reasoning replacing it with reasoning through images provided the schema that lies embedded in the structure of modernist literature, whether in prose or verse.

Experience continues to be internal, but the subject is not the consciousness of its permanent interiority. It becomes one more object along the others in the world of its representations. The labour of thought (French *pensée*, German *Denken*) on the immediate data of consciousness allows a mediated knowledge of the world: the object is a manifold of properties and states which are perceived with certain *constancy*. A concept is no longer produced by the thinking subject; it is the result of the connection or interaction between thought (*pensée*) and its objects. The sense of inner duration depends on the interaction between psychical laws and the complex of the physical connections of substance. These ideas deployed by Wilhelm Wundt in *Elements de Psychologie physiologique* (1886) contain in a concise form the conceptual array of modernist philosophy: phenomenological constitution of subject and object, imagistic poetics, Bergson’s philosophy of the immediate data of consciousness and duration, the poetics of symbolist synaesthesia, Pound’s images and T.S. Eliot’s objective correlatives, a.o. The paradigm of physical psychology or pragmatism inspired the aesthetic paradigms of art history around the turn of the century. The mere description of characteristic tropes and linguistic structures will not suffice for an understanding of the artists’ rhetorical manipulation which is part of the meaning of their works. Modernist aesthetics was very far away from what the eighteenth century consumer of art found to be picturesque, harmonious, civilized, urbane etc. No matter how rebellious modernists

³ J.S. Mill, *A System of Logic*, Book 2. Of Reasoning. Chapter 3. Of The Functions and Logical Value Of The Syllogism.

<https://www.globalgreybooks.com/online-ebooks/john-stuart-mill/system-of-logic/book-2-3.html>

might appear to us nowadays, they did not create in the teeth of what their contemporaries thought fit to fulfil the aesthetic function.

The birth of a new spirit in mid-twentieth century took art away from a perceptualist and into a constructivist direction. Gestalt psychology reactivated the notion of organic form (as conceived by Goethe among others), with all the elements of an art work converging towards some all-inclusive structure and meaning. Oskar Walzel reconsidered the relationship between form and content (“Gehalt und Gestalt im Kunstwerk des Dichters”, 1923), Ernst Cassirer worked out his own version of Gestalt as symbolical form (*The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms* 1923), Roman Jakobson developed a theory of the “dominant” (1935) which presumably grants a work of art structure and hierarchical arrangement of component elements, etc.:

The dominant may be defined as the focusing component of a work of art: it rules, determines, and transforms the remaining components. It is the dominant which guarantees the integrity of the structure...a poetic work [is] a structured system, a regularly ordered hierarchical set of artistic devices. Poetic evolution is a shift in this hierarchy... The image of... literary history substantially changes; it becomes incomparably richer and at the same time more monolithic, more synthetic and ordered, than were the *membra disjecta* of previous literary scholarship. (Jakobson 1981: web)

Formalism in writing and literary theory represented a mid-twentieth century island in between modernist psychology-grounded models and the rise of postmodernism in the 60's, whose inspiring philosophical sources were Nietzsche's legacy of deconstructionism (See the third ontological order of reified forms of subjectivity in Karl Popper's *Objective Knowledge: An Evolutionary Approach*, 1972). In the latter half of the century the reflective mind turned from a phenomenology of perception to a philosophy of language as ontological mediator and operator.

With its distrust of ontological certainty and emphasis upon the self-reliant structures of language, analytical philosophy lies in between the two camps, offering epistemological support to mid-century formalism.

I.2.1. The Deconstruction of the Logic of Identity

I.2.1.1. John Stuart Mill

The logic of identity packed down to modernity in the garb of syllogism entered into a binary with Leibniz's law of indiscernibility of identicals (Leibniz, 1969, 308). Identicals, that is, things sharing all their properties ($A = A$ and $A \neq B$), are only possible in formal language. In the empirical world, there are no such things, they sharing with others a part of their properties (A is partly B , which shares some properties with C , etc.).

The existence of a logical dualism was speculated by John Stuart Mill in his critique of syllogisms. After centuries of syllogistic reasoning, parodied by Hamlet in Act 3, Scene 1 (Self-slaughter is punished with eternal damnation/ People fear damnation/ Hence people refrain from committing self-slaughter despite the misery they have to cope with), Mill asks the commonsensical question whether that kind of reasoning led to an increase in knowledge:

We have now to inquire, whether the syllogistic process, that of reasoning from generals to particulars, is, or is not, a process of inference; a progress from the known to the unknown; a means of coming to a knowledge of something which we did not know before. (Mill 1846, p. 122)

The answer is no: "When you admitted the major premises, you asserted the conclusion." (*Ibid.*, p. 124)

The argument is grounded, as in Leibniz, in empirical experience: To our impression of the way a person acts on some particular occasion, we bring our previous impressions about the way others acted in different circumstances as well as our encyclopaedic resources (what we know about similar cases or about ourselves). Present experience is thus informed by our general store of knowledge, and the existence of typical situations/ characters grants validity to our generalizations. Positivist philosophy served a realist poetics.

I.2.1.2. Wilhelm Wundt

Auguste Comte's positivism, emerging from a nebula of scientism, utilitarianism (John Stuart Mill) and socialism (Henri de Saint-Simon) lent its spirit to the realist manifesto made public by painter Gustave Courbet in 1861 (*Realist Manifesto: An Open Letter*). Empiricism, determinism and social activism (Courbet was a member of the Paris Commune) shaped a mindset which dominated the mid-nineteenth century. A poetics of mimesis recommending the "slice of life" version of art separated thus the escapist agenda of both romanticism and modernism on either side of realism. The two phases of art history may be said to share, not only an anti-realist and anti-historical agenda, but also an understanding of the creative act as a kind of revelation. The romantic idealist philosophy, however, looked upon the art object as an embodiment of some Hegelian, universal spirit, whereas the modernist artist reflected upon the art object as the constitution of form born of the relationship between the mind and the world.

Let us compare two poems which, at a surface level, seem to imagine a similar scene. *The Solitary Reaper* by William Wordsworth about a woman singing while working in the field, whose song lingers in the mind of the narrator long after it is heard no more, was written as an object lesson of the autonomy of imagination in its relation to empirical reality and sense perception. Subjectivity is the domain of transcendental experience.

In *The Idea of Order at Key West*, Wallace Stevens imagines a different scene. The woman's song is working its magic while the singer is immersed in the natural landscape which it seems to shape into an orderly object in the narrator's mind. As Wundt says⁴, there is no thought without

⁴ "Da es aber kein Denken ohne Inhalt gibt, sind diese Anschauungs- und Denkgesetze nichts anderes als die allgemeinsten Gesetze des Gedankeninhalts oder der Dinge selbst." (However, since there is no thinking without content, these laws of intuition and thinking are nothing other than the most general laws of the content of thought or of the things themselves." (Wundt, Wilhelm. *Logik. Eine Untersuchung der Prinzipien der Erkenntnis und der Methoden wissenschaftlicher Forschung*. Erster Band: Erkenntnislehre. Zweiter Band, Methodenlehre. Stuttgart: Verlag von Ferdinand Enke, 1880, p. 387).

a content derived from the immediate experience of the physical object which is present to the intentional consciousness of the subject, shared with other subjects in an intersubjective order. The narrator of Stevens's poem is not the solipsistic romantic but a subject who seeks eidetic confirmation in an intersubjective relationship. The artefact is like an attractor which changes the properties of the colonised space:

It was her voice that made
 The sky acutest at its vanishing.
 She measured to the hour its solitude.
 She was the single artificer of the world
 In which she sang. And when she sang, the sea,
 Whatever self it had, became the self
 That was her song, for she was the maker. Then we,
 As we beheld her striding there alone,
 Knew that there never was a world for her
 Except the one she sang and, singing, made.

Ramon Fernandez, tell me, if you know,
 Why, when the singing ended and we turned
 Toward the town, tell why the glassy lights,
 The lights in the fishing boats at anchor there,
 As night descended, tilting in the air,
 Mastered the night and portioned out the sea,
 Fixing emblazoned zones and fiery poles,
 Arranging, deepening, enchanting night.

The experience can be very well defined in the terms used by Wilhelm Wundt in one of his essays for the description of the aesthetic experience. The woman's singing renders "geistliche Zustände in sinnlichen Formen" (spiritual states in sensuous forms), which are transmitted to observers who experience them as if they had been produced by their own sense organs. These "mimische Bewegungen" (mimetic movements of the body or of the spirit) are generated in the outer observers ("äusseren Beobachter") who feel the same as us ("dieselben mit uns empfinden"). (Wundt 1885, p. 231) In the aesthetic perception, Wundt says, feelings do not depend on the immediate perceptions but on their relation, sometimes unconscious, to previous representations stored in a backfiring

consciousness. (*Ibid.*, p. 210). The perception of order in the artefact, experienced and induced in the observers, lends them a similar state of mind which filters the new scene giving it form (*portioning out, emblazoning, fixing, arranging, setting in polarity*). Unlike the romantics' godlike creation out of the void, Wundt's disciples saw the genesis of the work of art in the exchanges between mind and environment: "In der Vorstellung selbst finden immer nur die unmittelbare Wechselwirkung des Bewusstseins mit der Aussenwelt ihren Ausdruck."⁵

Although less studied, Wilhelm Wundt's influence, especially in France, England, and later in America, as William James's European foil, was probably as famous in the age as Schopenhauer's. His works which popularized the results of his research in Leipzig, where he founded the first laboratory for psychological research, were translated into several languages, and his presence at the meetings of the *British Psychological Society* in London was greeted as a momentous event. Frederic W.H. Myers, a founder of The Society for Psychical Research, drew attention to the Copernican turn effected by Wundt's theories in epistemology: the relationship between reality and its representation in the mind changing in favour of the latter (Myers 2018, XXXVIII). Both Walter Horatio Pater and Oscar Wilde elaborated on this new psychology in their poetics of life imitating art (Oscar Wilde, "The Art of Lying") and of each individual living imprisoned in his dream of the world (Pater, Postface to *Studies in the History of the Renaissance*). An encyclopaedic spirit, Wundt created a disciplinary mix whose paradigm crossed psychology, philosophy, biology, physiology, anthropology and aesthetics. In his book of *Essays* (1885), he refutes Darwin's mechanic theory of the nervous system (pp. 230-31), sets out to overthrow natural philosophy (p. 131) and replace it with experimental psychology, pronounces phrenology a pseudo-science which could profitably be exchanged with the aesthetic interest: how could we make a man's character known better than by drawing his portrait? (p. 227). Dorian Gray's character cannot be known by looking straight into his young and beautiful face but by contemplating each of his vices showing off in his more truthful portrait. It is as if Wilde had written the

⁵ It is in representation that the immediate interaction of consciousness with the outside world finds its expression.

novel according to Wundt's aesthetic recipe. Echoes of Wundt's writing on the Vampire myth can be found in Bram Stoker's *Dracula*. Wundt's *Ethik, Eine Untersuchung der Thatsachen und Gesetze des Sittlichen Lebens* (1886) is his exploration of the relation to an other, as implied in the etymology of this branch of philosophy, but that other is the primitive man, the archaic community, the gloss on morals swerving to phenomenology and anthropology. It is not the individual's conduct in a society of peers that comes into focus but the war of civilizations. How is a myth born? The undead is constituted from superstitions, fleeting impressions or changes in luminosity, sudden disappearances, nightmares etc. Traditions are those which count most in shaping a people's world outlook, as are the spirit of caste, of revenge among barbarians. Stoker's *Dracula* is obsessing with his rights handed down from ancestors (lordship), with the primitive thirst for revenge, for sucking the enemy's blood. The Asian spirit of conquest and the European civilized and peaceful mind (Eudaimonismus) of the civilized individual, thinking of the common good, is set in polarity with the daimonic egotist whose mind is pivoting solely around his clan (*Stamm*), his descent and the inherited blood revenge duties. Mina and Hacker standing for *Kulturgemeinschaft* (p. 213) – the community built through culture, from readings about other nations in the British Museum to cooking recipes of different nations – and Dracula lusting after lordship in Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, where the vampire boasts his ancestry and plans the conquest of the West, carry undoubtedly the stamp of Wundt's anthropological refurbishing of the romantic myth. The German philosopher was appealing to images of conquerors at the time of migrations when the Asian hordes had marshalled over Europe, but in his time the conquest wars were being waged by Europeans for lordship over colonies. The new interest in anthropology, the construction of the primitive man manifested by thinkers as diverse as Wundt, Freud, Frazer, Worringer, or the Cambridge Heretics might have been used to justify the Empires.

Invited to make his research known in France⁶, Wundt published a book in French, where one can see his evolution from the study of sense

⁶ Wilhelm Wundt, *Éléments de psychologie physiologique*, tr. Élie Rouvier. Intro. par M.D. Nolen, Paris: Felix Alcan, 1886.

perceptions, of their synthesis (synaesthesia) and association, to an approach closer to phenomenology, creating a vocabulary which anticipates Husserl's.

Wilhelm Wundt's phenomenology was meant to correct the limits of positivism but also the randomness of empirical psychology. The Wundt-James school of pragmatism allowed the subject to let itself be borne upon the tide of associations in the absence of any transcendental reflection. Actually, the self is constituted by the objects present to its senses. It is through the pattern of recurrent impressions that the self finds itself at a remove from the immediate world of sensorial impressions (Wundt and Bergson: "the immediate data of consciousness").

Husserl's subject is immersed into his field of perception in three ways: unmediated perception of object, memory of previous experiences triggered by associations, and imaginative elaborations: "inventive phantasy, what goes on in the phantasied world" (Husserl 1983: §80. The Relationship of Mental Processes to the Pure Ego, p. 190). Wundt's description of the phenomenological constitution (*Die Gewissheit constituieren* – Wundt 1880, 378) proceeds from unmediated sensations and mediated perception, inner and outer experience (*Innere und aussere Erfahrung*).

All objective certitude is of a mediated nature being the result of the labour of reasoning over the immediate data of consciousness: the multiplicity of properties and states which are found on repeated occasions (with certain regularity).

To Wundt, in contradistinction to Mill, the object is not found by reason or sense organs but **given** (p. 379). Perception is a representation corresponding to a certain object. The representation of the seen (perceived) Object is one with it. A later reflection will differentiate it from the subjective picture (*Bild*). Afterwards the separation of outer from the inner perception of the object depends on our consciousness, being counterpoised to the inner flow of our representations (the results of our previous perceptions). It is the constancy of features with which the same object in different perceptions corresponds to our *Wahrnehmungsergebnissen* (the results of

our previous perceptions – pp. 379-380). Perceptions go under related categories, our knowledge of the object being guaranteed by the “Konstanz der Veränderlingen/ der Erscheinungen” – the constancy of changes/ appearances” (p. 435).

Our certitude depends on three conditions:

- The force of our exterior (outer) perceptions.
- The correspondence between our successive perceptions.
- The correspondence of various subjects (what others perceive).

Wundt is a phenomenologist who sees the experience of an object as progressive but an endless process, and the subject as a dynamic entity placed in a context and in relation to others (being with others in the world).

Certain features (constitutive) of an object are those which are given in different perceptions, on various occasions: *gewiss ist was es sich in aller Wahrnehmungen gegeben bewahrt* (p. 382), that is, “*konstant bleibende Gegenstände des Denkens als fest Punkte*” (objects of thought which remain the same as fixed landmarks – p. 435). Perceptions go under related categories, our knowledge of the object being guaranteed by the “Konstanz der Veränderlingen/ der Erscheinungen” – the constancy of the changing objects which appear to us under different appearances” (*Ibid.*).

That is why time needs to be recovered or, better said, redeemed. Proust’s narrator, Marcel (*Remembrance of Things Past*), or Woolf’s narrator, Bernard (*The Waves*) need to set their memories in order, in the intelligible pattern of a narrative. T.S. Eliot urges redemption of time in several of his poems, the one in “Little Gidding” (*Four Quartets*) being very explicit by setting in polarity the chaotic flow of historical events and their constitution into patterns:

A people without history
Is not redeemed from time, for history is a pattern
Of timeless moments.

Inside consciousness, the representations of external objects obey psychological laws, the laws of thinking (*Denken*). The inner experience takes priority over the external one. Thinking will distinguish between *Passenden Gattungsmerkmale und charakteristische (unpassende) Eigenschaften* (random and characteristic features, those which remain unchanged in the chain of experiences). The characteristic features will serve the constitution of a concept (p. 543). Apperception unites representations according to determined laws. For instance, the perception of *Aufeinanderfolge* (consecutive events) will lead to the idea of causality. Wundt sees psychological processes only in connection to physical processes. The origin of apperception is sensation and perception even if psychological laws grant the mind a certain freedom from the immediate data of consciousness.

In the third chapter (Proteus) of *Ulysses*, Joyce seems to be defending the idea of art as phenomenology rather than transcendence of the world of things. Who is he referring to in the opening of the chapter? We think the allusions to Walter Horatio Pater are too numerous to be overlooked.

INELUCTABLE MODALITY OF THE VISIBLE: AT LEAST THAT IF NO MORE, thought through my eyes. Signatures of all things I am here to read, seaspawn and seawrack, the nearing tide, that rusty boot. Snotgreen, bluesilver, rust: coloured signs. Limits of the diaphane. But he adds: in bodies. Then he was aware of them bodies before of them coloured. How? By knocking his scone against them, sure. Go easy. Bald he was and a millionaire, *maestro di color che sanno*. Limit of the diaphane in. Why in? Diaphane, adiaphane. If you can put your five fingers through it, it is a gate, if not a door. Shut your eyes and see.

Stephen closed his eyes to hear his boots crush crackling wrack and shells. You are walking through it howsomever. I am, a stride at a time. A very short space of time through very short times of space. Five, six: the nacheinander. Exactly: and that is the ineluctable modality of the audible. Open your eyes. No. Jesus! If I fell over a cliff that beetles o'er his base, fell through the nebeneinander ineluctably. I am getting on nicely in the

dark. My ash sword hangs at my side. Tap with it: they do. My two feet in his boots are at the end of his legs, nebeneinander. Sounds solid: made by the mallet of Los Demiurgos. Am I walking into eternity along Sandymount strand? Crush, crack, crick, crick. Wild sea money. Dominic Deasy kens them a'.

Won't you come to Sandymount, Madeline the mare?

Rhythm begins, you see. I hear. A catalectic tetrameter of iambs marching. No, agallop: deline the mare.

Open your eyes now. I will. One moment. Has all vanished since? If I open and am for ever in the black adiaphane. Basta! I will see if I can see.

See now. There all the time without you: and ever shall be, world without end.

It is not only details - such as being rich (while preaching otherworldliness and sanctity), being bold, or being the author of an essay entitled "Diaphaneité" (1864), knowledge of Italian art -, but the logic of the whole argument that makes us think of Pater. As well as Pater in the aforementioned essay, in fact, alluding to it, Joyce sets in polarity the coloured sensuous world of material things and transcendence, composed of its main attributes: eternity ("walking into eternity"), absence of colour (which is the effect of the light of creation), invocation of Jesus and of the gnostic Demiurgos), absolute knowledge.

By diaphaneité, Pater understands the art which redeems matter, which shows things to be translucent with meaning, transferring them to a higher, spiritual order. He bemoans the inevitability of the fall into the world and division of the artist or the thinker who aspire to the oneness of the supreme being (*Imitatio Christi* meaning the ideal of being: "Sibi unitus et simplicatus esse,") Diaphane versus adiaphane: transcendental or this-worldly, the concrete, physical world.

Joyce is defending a Wundtian philosophy of the subject's self's relationship to the world. He suggests the impossibility of validating a metaphysical position. The topic is the acquisition of knowledge, expressed both in Italian - *maestro di color che sanno* - and in Gaelic -

Dominie Deasy kens them a (Schoolmaster Deasy knows them all). The subject is suspended between idealist Pater and the pragmatic, down-to-earth Deasy. The former had set limits to representation as diaphaneité. The latter was an expert who worshipped food and money. Stephen gives them a metaphorical garb: diaphaneité is like a gateway to the invisible. Adiaphaneité is like a door that shuts one up on this side of experience. Is the former possible? Is the latter satisfying?

Stephen wonders, how had [Pater] come to know about bodies if not by perceiving them as coloured and hard to the touch. He had read about the Scriptures as God's signature, yet he catches Pater mentioning the word "bodies". Could he have known about them if he had pointed his scone only upwards, to the sky, without lighting the world beneath?

But he adds: in bodies. Then he was aware of them bodies before of them coloured. How? By knocking his scone against them, sure.

The improper use of the pronoun suggests that a word having only a grammatical meaning depends for meaningful reference upon its initial association with a class of real objects (*them bodies them coloured*). *Nebeneinander* and *nacheinander* – German words – point to a Wundtian positioning of objects in space sublimated into concepts of placement in space and distribution in time.

The concrete/ abstract scheme is also used in other binaries such as: shells/ money (the former is a slang word for the latter), both of which can be found on headmaster Deasy's table, who is ignorant of categorical distinctions, or Jesus (Redeemer of man) and the gnostic Demiurgos, creators of the material world in which man is imprisoned, or Madeline the mare (harlot Madeleine of the Bible) versus Mary's immaculate conception which Stephen is symbolically alluding to by his invention of a ride on a mare as pure act of language: *A catalectic tetrameter of iambs marching. No, agallop: deline the mare*. Acatalectic, adiaphane, agallop ...The passage seems to have a basso continuo on the letter [a], the first letter of the alphabet.

In imitation of Christ who had redeemed Madeline, Stephen redeems the mare, "delineating" it, producing an artifice. He positions himself thus,

neither in the material world, nor in its diaphanous sublimation, but in a sphere of language – letters, rhythms, pronouns, poetry – of his own making.

In *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, Joyce alludes to Yeats in the final scene of his hypostasis as artist, replacing the symbolist poetics of his predecessor with the reified objectivity of his language, which turns on itself in narcissistic self-sufficiency. His progression from synaesthetic perception to apperception and artefact follows Wundt's description of psychological processes in his *Essays* (from synaesthesia to Lessing's gloss on *Laokoon*):

He drew forth a phrase from his treasure and spoke it softly to himself:

—A day of dappled seaborne clouds.

The phrase and the day and the scene harmonised in a chord. Words. Was it their colours? He allowed them to glow and fade, hue after hue: sunrise gold, the russet and green of apple orchards, azure of waves, the greyfringed fleece of clouds. No, it was not their colours: it was the poise and balance of the period itself. Did he then love the rhythmic rise and fall of words better than their associations of legend and colour? Or was it that, being as weak of sight as he was shy of mind, he drew less pleasure from the reflection of the glowing sensible world through the prism of a language manycoloured and richly storied than from the contemplation of an inner world of individual emotions mirrored perfectly in a lucid supple periodic prose?

The same poetics underwrites Joyce's *Ulysses*. *Diaphaneité* means transparency, showing through or across (*phainesthai*: "to appear"). It is not the world that comes forward into view, though; it is the work of art.

Steph'n's poetics follows the phenomenological process described by Wilhelm Wundt in his 1885 *Essays*:

The exchange between his body in movement and consciousness generates a flow of representations combined through "ähnliche Gefühle und Empfindungen" (similar feelings and sensations). Movement implies awareness of both changes in space and of deferral in time: "A very short space of time through very short times of space." His "ineluctable"