

‘this is nat language at any sinse of the world’:

James Joyce in Trieste and late-Habsburg Language Skepticism

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ABSTRACT

‘this is nat language at any sinse of the world’:

James Joyce in Trieste and late-Habsburg language skepticism

Tzvi R. Rivlin

James Joyce lived in the Habsburg port of Trieste during the twilight years of the Empire. During this period he completed Dubliners, wrote A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man and began writing Ulysses. Trieste, like many cities in the Austro-Hungarian Empire (e.g., Prague and Budapest) felt the effect of a theoretical crisis that had taken root in Vienna, and owing mostly to political and cultural circumstances it manifested itself throughout the Empire. This study examines the discourse of language critique that flourished during that period in Austrian philosophy and literature to make a case for an interpretation of Joyce as an artist whose work resonates with this discourse. Language critique was anti-metaphysical, stressed the historicity of language, drew limits to what could be said and relegated what was beyond those perceived limits to the ineffable. Parallel to this skepticism the critical modernism of Vienna condemned the ornament and imitation that was characteristic of Viennese art and life. In this atmosphere of linguistic skepticism literature was not impoverished but on the contrary was exalted as the only viable means through which ethics could be communicated. Epiphany, in the Joycean sense, was a central theme among these writers, who navigated their works between the Scylla of positivism and the Charybdis of mystical silence in response to the epistemological demand of language critique.

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Introduction:

Milan Kundera claims in Le Rideau (2005), his recent book-length essay on the novel, that “James Joyce [n’a jamais été mieux compris] que par un Autrichien: Hermann Broch” (50). While Kundera advances this view in the service of a broader argument – that the novel is an international genre that should not be confined by the canonical prerogatives of nations – his claim that an Austrian was eminently qualified to understand Joyce can be explored even further. Broch admired Joyce and sought to apply what he had learned from Joyce to his own novels. In his critical essays, he places Joyce’s Ulysses into the context of a European philosophical tradition of linguistic skepticism that was particularly widespread among Austrian intellectuals. Broch begins ‘The Spirit in an Unspiritual Age’ (1934), with the words “Humanity today has been overtaken by a peculiar contempt for words, a contempt that is almost revulsion” (41). For some of Joyce’s readers this might bring to mind the contempt of Stephen Dedalus for “those big words... which make us so unhappy” (U 38.4-5). Broch claims that language skepticism arises from a conflict between philosophy’s two basic premises, “the Logos and the Spirit” (47). By ‘Logos’ he means a central viewpoint; be it scientific or religious, and by ‘Spirit’ he means human striving toward the Absolute. In this essay Broch claims that Joyce’s Ulysses worked within this conflict:

For between the muteness of radical skepticism and the muteness of radical mysticism is speech. And if this age makes myth unattainable, it is the muteness of skepticism that makes it so, the skeptical muteness of positivism, which in literature can be seen most clearly in Joyce. All of positivism’s disgust with language, all of its aversion to dealing with worn

out concepts, all its reluctance to deal with a tradition ossified by jargon:

In Joyce all this comes to life in poetic and profoundly brilliant form (62).

This “muteness” was one of the most prominent themes of the Austrian language crisis, and the omission of this context from Broch’s essay merits some attention. The Austrian language crisis, or *Sprachkrise*, was a skeptical view of language that emerged out of an epistemic shift occurring in the late 19th century. Indeed, the authors and philosophers who produced language critique in late-Habsburg Austria – a task that could only be undertaken in and with words – had to navigate a course between the Scylla of grammar and the Charybdis of silent mysticism. The “skeptical muteness of positivism,” discernible through most of Ludwig Wittgenstein’s Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus (1921), limited all that can be sensibly spoken of to the propositions of natural science; to tautologies or contradictions that could denote empirically verifiable facts, but gave no meaning to those facts. Consequently, language could not speak of ethics; or to paraphrase Broch, Logos was denied the expression of Spirit. Before Wittgenstein began writing his *Tractatus*, other Viennese intellectuals grappling with Nietzsche’s rejection of metaphysics and Mach’s empiriocritical psychology viewed language as an unreliable and stultifying metaphysical construct; limited by historical and cultural circumstances, and its users had forgotten its basis in poetry and rhetoric. Philosophical responses like Fritz Mauthner’s Beiträge zu einer Kritik der Sprache (1901-02) considered language epistemologically useless, and literary responses like Hugo von Hofmannsthal’s ‘*Chandosbrief*’ (‘Lord Chandos Letter’ 1901), described a terminal crisis with a language that had lost its habitual transparency and unity. The language critiques that had emerged in the last few decades of the Habsburg Empire relegated much of what

constituted “knowledge” to the realm of the ineffable, or as Ludwig Wittgenstein so famously concluded his *Tractatus*: “Whereof one cannot speak, thereof one must be silent.” Broch argues in an essay entitled ‘Joyce and the Present Age’ (1936) that Joyce confronted language with deliberate means and precise aims when he composed Ulysses:

Through the complexity of his representational apparatus, through the almost rationally esoteric nature of his conceptual and linguistic processes (his word-and-sentence-polyphony is rooted in some ten languages and constitutes, despite its astonishing flexibility, polish, precision and beauty, an almost aggressive dissolution of language), through the gigantic superstructure he has erected over the poetic immediacy that lies hidden beneath it, it is as though Joyce wanted to furnish proof (at the same time that he pursues the witty and marginal aim of supporting the “organically unknowable”) that it is precisely the success of this sort of enormous undertaking, precisely this kind of felicitous imitation of a world whose defiance of imitation may be imitated, precisely the hypertrophic power of expression to which the writer is driven, which makes it possible to express the inarticulateness of a world condemned to remain mute (70).

We can understand much of Broch’s essay in terms of language critique: In Joyce’s “hypertrophy” of descriptive and conceptual language, which suggests an “aggressive dissolution of language,” one is not hard pressed to find such a tendency in Wittgenstein’s highly structured, chain-like *Tractatus*, or in the logorrhea of Mauthner’s three-volume *Beiträge*. Nor is it difficult to see Joyce’s “rationally esoteric... conceptual and linguistic” process in terms of Wittgenstein and Mauthner’s linguistic mysticism, or

in those of Hofmannsthal's eloquent linguistic crisis, a distinctly positive attitude toward the "inarticulate" and "organically unknowable" world that can only be intuited once the edifice of language that obfuscates it has been razed. Since the silence to which Austria's language critics exhorted their readers was philosophically unconvincing, language critical writers sought out ways of drawing attention to the ineffable from within the limits of language. Since transgressions of the limits of language rendered ethical propositions senseless, poetic uses of language played a crucial role in discourses on ethics. Where the "success" of such philosophical and literary undertakings was a failure of language, it would not have been a meaningful or edifying failure to merely take a quietist stance (i.e. silence) or to baldly state the failure of language. Calling attention to the limits of language attested to the failure of the Enlightenment enterprise of rational epistemological systems, and this was the ethical task of language critique. Broch claims that the elaborate mimetic superstructure of Ulysses is motivated by this ethical imperative as well as an instinctual modernist aversion toward the inherited traditions of Cartesian ratiocination on the one hand and decadent aestheticism on the other:

The strong emotion emanating from this work leaves all that is rational and conscious well behind it – were this not the case the work would never have come into being – but this emotion is also colored by profound pessimism and aversion to all inherited and therefore obsolete modes of being. It is colored with a deep aversion to rational thinking, which though penetrating, has nothing left to say; to language, which, though beautiful, has lost its power of expression. In short, it is an emotion that springs from a loathing for culture – here too it is in tune with the time, for

it is the loathing for rationality with which an overrationalized age plunges into the irrational – it is an emotion marked by the tragic cynicism with which modern man, desiring culture, nevertheless destroys it; it is an emotion in which Joyce negates not only his own artistic action, but art itself (which he constantly represents as an operatic buffoon); an emotion which nevertheless has forced him to conceive things from a universal standpoint. Certainly no present day artist can avoid this dilemma, none can escape pessimism with regard to his own activity (70-1).

Broch claims that Ulysses, “in tune with the time” and facing this linguistic pessimism had an “ethical task... namely, to raise literature to the plane of cognition” (92), and out of “the bourgeois, or rather the philistine outlook... to regard the work of art as a means of enjoyment, as a purely esthetic creation whose ultimate ideal derives from kitsch” (92). Broch attributes to Joyce an aesthetic sensibility similar to that of Vienna’s critical modernists Karl Kraus and Adolph Loos who looked at art and linguistic expression as a reflection of the morality of a culture. This context seems to be transparent for Broch who would have only needed to relate Joyce’s satirical appropriations of journalistic styles to those of Kraus, or Joyce’s aversion toward sentimentality to Loos’s condemnation of ornament. Joyce’s active dissolution of language; his negation of his own artistic activity realizes the ethical responsibility of art and destroys art through imitation, but not in the same fashion as kitsch.

Broch attributes to Joyce a cynicism toward culture and language reminiscent of Nietzsche’s ‘tragic wisdom,’ also discernable in the works of Italo Svevo, who ‘lies’ in an ‘extra-moral sense’ while refusing to emulate the ornate prose styles of popular Italian

literature, just as the Viennese literary impressionists that had influenced him revolted against decadent literary forms. This loathing for culture was Nietzsche's legacy, and Joyce could have drawn that from anywhere in Europe at the time, but the radical linguistic pessimism that Nietzsche's critique of culture entailed was particularly pronounced in the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The dissolution of the Logos of political authority paralleled that of the epistemological Logos of language. As the politically unstable and culturally plural Empire gradually dissolved from within, and religious views were being replaced by scientific ones, the Empire seemed to inhere only in a Habsburg myth that produced the image of order.

Broch sees Joyce destroying myth from within a mythologizing structure and opposes the logocentric premise of T.S. Eliot's seminal essay 'Ulysses Order and Myth.' Eliot writes that Joyce's mythical method "is simply a way of controlling, of ordering, of giving shape and a significance to this immense panorama of futility and anarchy which is contemporary history" (27). For Joyce, it was precisely the ordering principle of myth – which Eliot associates with Yeats and erroneously conflates with Joyce – that exacerbated the "nightmare" of history from which Stephen Dedalus is "trying to awake" (U 42. 16). Eliot's claim that Joyce's method had the importance of a scientific discovery only reflects his own view that task of the poet was to bring *Spirit* back in line with *Logos*, and inadvertently speaks of a deep religious yearning for transcendental absolutes, or in Broch's words "the hope of rediscovering a lost language in myth" (59). Eliot's praise for Joyce's "mythical method" thus springs from profound anxiety arising from the secularization of European culture (or the 'death of God.'). Where Eliot remarks Joyce's mythical method "manipulates a continuous parallel between antiquity

and contemporaneity,” Broch observes that Joyce did not cross the boundary separating his narrative from the transcendental superstructure of myth in his novel:

Mr. Bloom is not a mythic figure nor ever will be... [Joyce] brought it right up to the border of myth, but not one step over that border... It is because the character of Bloom contains all the religious nihilism and relativism of our age, and is consciously represented by him. But a mythic figure is always one of consolation, of religion (Broch 61).

To cross into myth would have meant an inadvertent concession to the artistic task of the Irish Revival who collectively believed that they had to lay claim to the cultural productions of their nation in order to produce a tradition that defined what it meant to be Irish (Eide 85). Joyce had resisted this movement as it sought to rediscover the Irish identity in ancient Irish myths and in the Gaelic language. The transcendental yearnings of the Irish contributed to the state of paralysis that Joyce articulated so well in his works. Joyce distanced himself from nationalist programs for the revival of Irish culture and its literary tradition by his self-imposed exile and by creating a distinctly European literature about Ireland that focused on the immanent and the contingent life of Dubliners. For Broch, and for Kundera, Joyce’s work was what Goethe would have considered *die Weltliteratur*, not to be confined to the *petit contexte* of national literatures.¹

Broch did not discuss Joyce in conjunction with the Austrian language crisis, and I imagine that he would have thought it too provincial to make reference to his language critical predecessors in Austria. Yet for a Viennese writer who had emigrated to America, and for the Franco-Czech Kundera, associating Joyce with *die Weltliteratur* and

forgetting to mention that he lived in Habsburg ruled Trieste during the twilight years of the Austro-Hungarian Empire seems a telling oversight. From the vocabulary of language critique with which Broch writes about Ulysses, he too may have brought Joyce up to the border of the language skeptical atmosphere in late Habsburg Austria, and in his own words, “not one step over that border...” The discursive similarities between Joyce’s writing and that of his peers in the cities of the Habsburg Empire remain, for the most part unexplored (Italo Svevo being a notable exception). It is already a critical commonplace that Joyce’s treatment of language was central to his work, however critiques of language circulating in the intellectual environment of Trieste while was living there are often left out of consideration.

Joyce’s language has been the object of a great deal critical scholarship, and much of its appraisal concentrates on what lay within the expansive universe of Joyce’s texts; his bookshelf, his letters and the documentable ideas of his acquaintances. Beyond that, it draws, often anachronistically, from the postmodern tradition of literary criticism following in Joyce’s wake. By comparing late-Habsburg artists and thinkers to Joyce, and by focusing on how the uses, abuses and limitations of language that preoccupied them also figured prominently in Joyce’s works, I do not mean to assert new and unexplored influences on Joyce, at least not directly. What I intend to do is to identify a language critical discourse that was available to Joyce while he lived in late Habsburg Trieste. It is hard to imagine Joyce, who was as highly sensitive as he was to the immanent content of Irish life, oblivious to the contingencies his of his exile in Trieste, Paris and Zurich, or to imagine someone who spoke as many languages as he did confined to English language sources and influences. Critics almost unanimously agree

on this. It is also undeniable that Joyce wrote about Dublin and wrote mostly in the language spoken there, but as Broch has shown, his work can also be seen to reflect an engagement with contemporary debates in the skeptical philosophy and the politics of language taking place in the urban centers of Austro-Hungarian Empire.

While living in Trieste between 1904 and 1914, Joyce completed Dubliners, wrote A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man, composed a number of poems including the obscure prose-poem Giacomo Joyce, produced occasional political journalism for Italian newspapers, took notes for Exiles, and began writing Ulysses. As John McCourt notes in his valuable and insightful study of Joyce's years in Trieste, The Years of Bloom (2001), it was very much a "*piccolo Dublino*" for him, since he could see the similarities between the two busy port cities; both were colonized for centuries, predominantly Catholic, and culturally heterogeneous. Joyce's journalism is tangible proof that he saw more than one parallel between the predicament of Habsburg ruled Trieste and that of his native city. Joyce likened Ireland to "an immense woven fabric" in newspaper articles and public lectures for a predominantly Irredentist audience, portraying Dublin as a city that contained many of the same cultural and linguistic paradoxes as the one he lived in. The ethnically diverse citizenship of Trieste, as well as its ambivalent cultural identity and vibrant print media culture gave Trieste its unique character and context. Language was a constant political issue in Trieste as it was throughout the Habsburg Empire, for the many languages spoken there did not live at peace with each other (see Martens 210). As one Irredentist columnist wrote, "Austria is a Babel-like state, a real Noah's ark, in which we Italians are the least satisfied and most beaten down of the animals."² As an Irishman, Joyce could certainly relate to this kind of resentment toward the Empire. The

multilingual tension of this “Babel-like state” heightened Joyce’s already critical awareness of language as it did for many writers and philosophers in the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

The central hypothesis of Stephen Toulmin and Allan Janik’s study of Ludwig Wittgenstein’s thought and formative context is that “to be a *fin-de-siècle* Viennese artist or intellectual, conscious of the social realities of “Kakania”, one had to face the problem of *the nature and limits of language, expression and communication*” (117). Claudio Magris, writing on the influx of German culture in Trieste, would agree with Toulmin and Janik’s contention that that language consciousness penetrated Austrian culture, and that it had several, often intersecting manifestations in the late-Habsburg context. It was most recognizable in the Viennese *Sprachkrise*, but parallel to this development, political and cultural strains of language skepticism emerged as the diverse populations of the Austro-Hungarian Empire formed national groups and saw language as a matter of definitive cultural identity.

In Joyce’s Trieste intellectuals frequently discussed philosophy and regarded the central issues in Viennese thought as bearing directly on their own interests, whether artistic, scientific, ethical or political. Among Joyce’s students at the Berlitz School where he taught English was Ettore Schmitz, the eponymous Italo Svevo, whose person and writings gave Joyce a model from which he formed Leopold Bloom (see McCourt 86-92; Moloney 115-156). Claudio Magris observes that the most clearly discernible Austrian cultural characteristic of Svevo’s writing was the influx of Viennese *Sprachskepsis* (1988, 49). It remains to be shown in this study how the intellectual atmosphere of Trieste and the Austrian linguistic skepticism that had contributed to a

notable mistrust for language in Svevo's writing had also had such an effect on Joyce.

This study was inspired by the insights as well as the shortcomings of two fields of study: that of Austrian intellectual history and that of Joyce scholarship. John McCourt's study of Joyce's formative years in Trieste offers novel insights into the parallels that Joyce saw between Trieste and Dublin and comments on pertinent events in the Austro-Hungarian Empire, but offers little concerning the traffic of Viennese ideas in Trieste. Conversely, the works of Italian Germanic scholars like Massimo Cacciari and Claudio Magris emphasize the impact of Viennese thought and culture on Triestine intellectuals, but fail to consider whether it had any effect on its émigré writers, placing Joyce on the margins of their intellectual histories. Other studies of turn-of-the-century Austrian thought that examine the prevalent language skepticism and its basis in the intellectual and aesthetic culture share this oversight.³ Considering the similarities between critical and literary approaches to language in Viennese thought and the role of language in Joyce's writings, I find the omission of Joyce from these studies worth contesting.

The theoretical framework of this study draws upon the methodology of several other scholars who place the work of a particular writer or philosopher into a socio-historical context, or attribute works to a period in intellectual history, allowing us to understand or re-imagine an author's works in a different way. In the aptly entitled Wittgenstein's Vienna, Toulmin and Janik offer a picture of the late Habsburg intellectual and social milieu in which Wittgenstein's thought began to take shape to provide a more comprehensive view on Wittgenstein's thought outside the context of Frege, Russell and Western European analytic philosophy. This study entails a similar diversion of

traditional focus for Joyce studies, as well as similar theoretical considerations regarding the methodology, limits and presuppositions of such a project:

Far from producing some *Zeitgeist* or similar historical *virtus dormitiva* as the unenlightening key to our explanatory analysis, we shall simply draw attention to (“assemble reminders about”) a large number of well-attested facts about the social and cultural situation in the last years of Habsburg Vienna. And we shall add, as the “missing premises” in our argument, a severely limited number of supplementary hypotheses, several of which are open to indirect support and confirmation. (Toulmin and Janik 14)

The parallels that I will be making between Joyce’s texts and those of his Austrian contemporaries are such “supplementary hypotheses,” through which I hope to tease out a set of discursive relations and effects that Joyce shared with the representative works of Austria’s language-critical writers. As I mentioned earlier, the methodology for this project is derived from various historians of intellectual discourse: Chandak Sengoopta follows from J. G. A. Pocock’s historical-discursive method in order to contextualize Otto Weininger in the context of *fin-de-siècle* Vienna,⁴ arguing that “historians of intellectual discourse first need to identify whether a certain “language” or “mode of utterance” existed as a cultural resource for the use of a number of authors at any one point in time” (7). In order to get a sense of Joyce’s writing in this context, I set Joyce aside for much of the study and explore what Pocock calls his “discursive universe.” As Pocock recommends, “Only after this initial exploration is the historian ready to investigate the unique ways in which an individual author might have used this prevalent

“language” (ibid.). To appreciate Joyce’s unique contribution to discourses on language, Pocock would recommend that my goal should be

to render the implicit explicit, to bring to light assumptions on which the language of others has rested, to pursue and verbalize implications and intimations that in the original may have remained unspoken, to point out conventions and regularities that indicate what could and could not be spoken in that language, and in what ways language *qua* paradigm encouraged, obliged, or forbade its users to speak and think. (qtd. in Sengoopta 7)

Employing such an approach would enable us to see Joyce as “inhabiting a universe of *langues* that give meaning to the *paroles* he performs in them” (ibid).

The task before me is theoretically complicated from the outset, since the language of this investigation can strike me as erroneous according to some of the critiques examined in this study, and fall into the *mise en abyme* of its premise, which is that I am performing a critique on the language of *Sprachkritik*. Yet it also strikes me that Austrian language critique, striving toward the absolute and failing, also falls prey to an unspoken myth and even a metaphysic of failure, inherent in its discourse in spite of its disavowals of mythical and metaphysical language. Nonetheless, it is in this way that I hope to illuminate the *paroles* of Broch’s critical writing on Joyce and to light a fire, so to speak, under appraisals of Joyce’s work that have not hitherto taken the *langue* of language critique into account. I explore the “discursive universe” of late Habsburg Vienna and Trieste in three chapters:

The first chapter explores how mistrust of language went hand in hand with urban intellectual culture in the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the Austro-Hungarian sense of statehood and the emergence of the Habsburg myth. Language critical discourses drew analogies between the lost integrity of language and the slow internal dissolution of the Empire. Austrian language critique gained its impetus from the failure of liberalism in the Viennese political sphere,⁵ and its complexity from cultural and linguistic diversity exacerbated by crises of identity felt by people at the centre and at the periphery of the Empire.

The second chapter deals with the epistemological roots of *Sprachkrise*, whereby late 19th century philosophical, scientific, philological and rhetorical criticism of the human sciences created a void in language where the unquantifiable and abstract fields of ethics and aesthetics were concerned. I limit my discussion to the discourse of four prominent thinkers associated with the Austrian language crisis: Friedrich Nietzsche, Ernst Mach, Fritz Mauthner and Hugo von Hofmannsthal. I could have just as well chosen others to illustrate my point,⁶ which is that the assimilation of anti-metaphysical and positivist ideas in late-Habsburg Vienna became available as a discourse through which ideas about culture were understood, articulated and turned from theory into an ethical and aesthetic praxis.

The third chapter explores the literary usage of epiphany, impressionism, mystical silence and epistemologically unstable narratives by Austrian writers in order to comment upon the void in knowledge vacated by the language of the human sciences, and the crises of identity engendered by political and cultural indeterminacy. A parallel exploration looks at the discursive effects of Joyce's writing from the context of language

critique that can be extrapolated from his 'Epiphanies', and from the way he used them and incorporated them into his novels. Joyce's aesthetic and epistemological attitudes toward the problem of language were similar to those of his Viennese contemporaries Peter Altenberg, Arthur Schnitzler, Hugo von Hofmannsthal, Robert Musil, as well as the Triestine authors Scipio Slataper, Italo Svevo and Roberto Bazlen and the Gorizian poet-philosopher Carlo Michelstaedter. These writers showed a marked distrust of language, however as Patricia McBride rightly observes, "the language crisis did not impoverish Austria's writers, but on the contrary, clarified the task of literature as a medium that is uniquely suited for presenting hardly communicable states of mind located at the periphery of ordinary experience" (60). Language skepticism provided an occasion for new evaluations of the poetic subject and for experimental language use. What I hope to show through this far from exhaustive investigation is the value of Austrian intellectual history and Joyce studies *to each other*, in assessments of Joyce's work and that of the intellectual atmosphere in which he wrote them.

1. The cultural and political roots of Austrian language skepticism

*I'm full of the best kind of food and likker,
My clothes and my shoes every season get slicker,
And yet I'm in shreds and I'm falling apart –
I am just a man full of nothing at heart.*

– Johann Nepomuk Nestroy, A Man Full of Nothing

The pessimistic strain of language philosophy that I will be discussing with a view to Joyce's literary production is intimately tied with the cultural and intellectual situation of the urban centers in the Austro-Hungarian Empire, which were profoundly affected by the decline of Habsburg rule. In The Man Without Qualities, Robert Musil's satirical novel set in the twilight years of Habsburg Vienna, he considers the Empire to be the only one of its kind in history that ever came to ruin because of a "defect in language" (484). The lack of a clear essence and ambiguity as a general attitude toward life characterize Musil's protagonist Ulrich as a 'man without qualities,' whom he places at the centre of an empire that suffered from the lack of *logos* as a governing principle (e.g. an authority; an identity; a national idea) and thus to a defect in *logos* as word, speech and discourse. The Austro-Hungarian Empire "perished from its own inexpressibility", since as Musil surmises, "if you asked an Austrian where he was from, of course he couldn't say" (491). The concept of the Austrian "existed only in Hungary, and there as an object of dislike" (180). On the other hand, in order to be an Austro-Hungarian subject in Austria, one had to subtract the element that was foreign to the Imperial Germanic culture of the capitol city, for if the Austrian "called himself a national of the kingdoms and lands of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy as represented in the Imperial Council, meaning that he was an Austrian plus a Hungarian minus that Hungarian" (180).

This was a situation “which left the Austrian sense of statehood with no country of its own” (180).

Many commentators agree that the Habsburg Empire fell apart because there was no Austrian national idea or language to embrace and unify the countries of the Empire. The Habsburg Empire was a bureaucratic house of cards, or “a ramshackle affair” as Joyce called it. Its authority was maintained by a powerful myth of organization and stability that was unraveling parallel with the crumbling conceptual structures with which knowledge was recorded, conserved or communicated toward the end of the nineteenth century. From this premise, the conspicuous lack of *logos* in a national idea and a national language, it is possible to compare Austrian language pessimism with the decline and fall of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The degree to which Austrian intellectuals realized this leads to a way of seeing possible historical precedents and political motives for Joyce’s aggressive dissolution of language.

The Habsburg Myth

The old Austria, engaged in discovering that it was built on sand, as was all reality, appeared in public in the seductive guise of order and harmonious wholeness; it gave rise to a literature which, with disillusioned lucidity, unmasked the vacuum of civilization and the nihilism of modern learning... The history of the Habsburg myth is the history of a civilization which, in the name of its love for order, discovered the disorder of the world. (Magris, qtd. in Le Rider 15)

Claudio Magris explains in his monograph Il Mito Absburgo nella Letteratura Austriaca Moderna (1963), that the Habsburg myth was not merely a figurative transformation of real historical circumstances, but the complete substitution of a historico/social reality with a fictitious and illusory one; the sublimation of a concrete society into a picturesque, secure and ordered storybook world (1963, 15). The “limiting features of culture” under Habsburg rule were transformed into “irreducible facts of nature”, a myth in the Barthesian sense, as Colin MacCabe explains in James Joyce and the Revolution of the Word, “These operations which Barthes termed *myth* ensured that the processes of signification were ignored in favor of a reality thereby produced as always already brute and always already given” (213). The Habsburg myth arose to counter the emerging consciousness that in many ways the Empire was an inherently unstable structure. It was not a reflection of the concept of *Hausmacht* – the idea that the Habsburgs were the instruments of God on Earth (Toulmin and Janik 37) – as it was an image of the conservatist ideology of social order applied to the Empire.

The Empire had a territory of 250,000 square miles in area with three major geographical divisions: Austria, Bohemia, and Hungary. It was populated by about a dozen recognizably different nationalities or language groups: Germans, Czechs, Magyars, Poles, Ruthenians, Slovaks, Serbs, Croats, Slovenes, Dalmatians, Rumanians, and Italians – all of whom, with the exception of the Austrian ruling aristocracy, were largely without access to political power. When Prince Metternich convened the Congress of Vienna in 1815 after the Napoleonic Wars, he restored Ferdinand I (“the most harmless of tyrants” according to Hermann Broch) to the throne and reconstituted the Austro-Hungarian Empire with a radical conservatism that insisted upon obedience to

political authority and saw organized religion as crucial to social order. While Metternich was unwilling to accept liberal demands for civil liberties, representative government and nationalistic aspirations that were generated by the French revolutionary era on the one hand, and by German liberal culture on the other, national and cultural groups within the Empire were increasingly excited by the ideas of nationalists and liberal reformers.

1848 marked a decisive turning point for the Empire when Ferdinand I in the face of revolution abdicated the throne in favor of his nephew Franz Joseph I with the historic words, "Schon recht, Franzl, bleib brav" ("All right Frankie, be good." Broch 1948, 193). The revolutions throughout the Empire in 1848 were unsuccessful at deposing the crown because people were generally divided by the multiplicity of aims for which they fought (i.e. social, economic, liberal, and national). Although the revolutions led to the abolition of feudalism, the imperial monarchy was still in power, but it was clear that the state was already rejected by the majority of its peoples. Austrian Liberals had gained a foothold in politics, but were rendered ineffective by aristocratic power and imperial bureaucracy.

The reign of Franz Joseph I, as *Kaiser und König*, which lasted until his death in 1916, was one of imperial absolutism, continuing the Metternich conservatism whereby society had to be organized and ordered, and tradition remained the best guide for this order. However, as Toulmin and Janik write: "the monarchy's affairs assumed a formalism behind which existed nothing but vacuousness and chaos. At the best of times, Francis Joseph was mediocre and shallow, relying always on ceremonial for insulation, which more and more became a cover for his own personal failings" (40). As his inability to manage the diverse cultural groups in his Empire became more apparent, so

did the need for a unifying idea. As Jacques Le Rider comments, “The ‘Habsburg myth’ exalted the paternalism of the old Franz Joseph speaking to ‘my peoples,’ like a father in Kafka who runs through his eleven sons” (15). The monarchy and the bureaucratic governing structure that sustained the Empire were essentially a house of cards, but the illusion of stability and order that they produced outlasted it.⁷ The fall of the Empire was merely the escalation and conclusion of a long internal dissolution, “which was already immanent in the disharmony between the Habsburg state and its national and cultural components,” as Michael P. Steinberg writes in the introduction to Herman Broch’s Hugo von Hofmannsthal and his Time:

The state was an artificial entity held together by neither language nor culture nor economy. In all respects it was a Tower of Babel, whose political and cultural fragmentation had been extended by its intellectuals into all spheres of rationality. As rational communication and the sense of society that it implies were considered more and more elusive if not totally false, languages of art – in other words, style – as well as language itself were condemned as both meaningless and false. (2)

Steinberg makes an important parallel here, between the language of ordered, “rational” thought and that of a decadent aestheticism which offered up a false sense of society and culture. The Empire’s dissolution created the need for a myth, a deeply religious yearning generated by a lost sense of authority, that expressed itself in the fetishization of historical and decorative artifacts, and this tendency extended into the use of language. The Tower of Babel is a fitting motif, running through many assessments of late Habsburg Vienna, not only because it represents the failure of *logos* striving towards

the absolute, but because architecture had provided Vienna with its own cultural symbol: the *Ringstrasse*. As Carl Schorske writes in Fin-de-siècle Vienna: politics and culture, “Two features gave the Ringstrasse its importance for the origins of modernism in Austria: its power as a cultural symbol and its historicist style, in which buildings were constructed on Gothic, Renaissance, and neoclassical models” (1981, 157). The newly constructed Ringstrasse set the stage for the emergent critical modernism that associated language with cultural values.

Viennese critical modernism

The historian David S. Luft sees Viennese critical modernism as “a postliberal critique of liberalism from within” (89). Viennese critical modernism did not mean ‘modernization’ in the sense of a progress measured by economic, scientific and artistic advances (as the liberal fathers, their aesthete sons, or as Hermann Bahr, would have it⁸), as much as a critical attitude toward hypocritical and superficial social, linguistic, artistic and architectural forms. Before then, Viennese liberal thought focused on undermining the bureaucratic governing structure and the spiritual foundations of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Viennese critical modernists undermined this liberal bourgeois culture that had reacted to the Empire, since it mirrored and reproduced its moral and aesthetic values. Language skeptical critique in the writings of Karl Kraus and Adolph Loos, against Viennese journalism and architecture, were exemplary of this strain of modernist thought. These writers saw the expressive content of language depending less and less on the conscious intentions of the speaker than on the ethics they inherit from their community. Shunning their liberal fathers and their aesthete brothers, they

attempted to restore integrity to an otherwise decadent society by removing the arts from discourses about facts. As Karl Kraus declares:

Adolf Loos and I – he literally and I grammatically – have done nothing more than to show that there is a distinction between an urn and a chamber pot and that it is this distinction above all that provides culture with elbow room. The others, those who fail to make this distinction, are divided into those who use the urn as a chamber pot and those who use the chamber pot as an urn.⁹

Kraus allies himself with Loos who distinguishes between functional objects and objects of art, and levels his critique at Viennese bourgeois taste, expressing the view that the intermingling of the two is inherently immoral. Viennese architecture and journalism had become so contaminated with art that there was literally no “elbow room” in on the tabletops of bourgeois liberals who had filled their rooms with art-objects and bric-a-brac. Toulmin and Janik point out that Kraus takes pains to distinguish the sphere of values from that of fact, and through a polemical analysis of language between the sphere of reason and that of fantasy (89). Inherent in Kraus’s statement is a comparison between the ethical and the unethical subject as one who sees this distinction and one does not. The sensibility of Kraus and Loos is echoed in Hermann Broch, who wrote that “an aesthetic value that does not spring from an ethical foundation is it’s own opposite – kitsch” (1948, 210), and accordingly called Vienna “the metropolis of kitsch” for its “eclecticism of false Baroque, false Renaissance, false Gothic” (1948, 141).

Kraus critiqued journalism in Vienna for being particularly unethical, especially the *Neue Freie Presse*, which feared Imperial censorship, thereby communicating a

slanted message, and of the *feuilleton*: a popular species of journalistic vignette or cultural essay that originated in Paris and flourished in Vienna. The *feuilleton* was a subjective response to a real situation that distorted the facts of the matter in a heavily ornamental language that any objective view of the situation was lost, so much so that “it both reduced the essayist’s creativity to the level of word-manipulating and prevented the reader from making any rational assessment of the facts of the case” (Toulmin & Janik 79). The manipulator of words was therefore immoral in proportion to his artistic virtuosity because he lacked integrity.¹⁰ Kraus viewed a person’s art as intimately connected with their moral character and his polemics were aimed at bringing out the moral defects in the character of the writer that corresponded to the language of their works. Kraus attacked *feuilletonists* in the satire and polemics that he produced for his popular periodical *Die Fackel* (The Torch).¹¹ However, Kraus praised such early practitioners of the genre as Friedrich Kürnberger and Peter Altenberg whose works he considered integral with their character (Toulmin and Janik 81).

Kraus condemned word-manipulation but endorsed practices of wordplay that were connected with the moral character of the author, as his revival of Johann Nepomuk Nestroy suggests. Nestroy confronted high-German with the Viennese dialect in his comedies to comically show up the pretensions and hypocrisy of Viennese cultural values. As Thornton Wilder, who adapted Nestroy’s plays writes “The target of Nestroy’s satire was the ethos of Vienna’s newly stabilized bourgeoisie: the self-deluding and sentimental *Gemütlichkeit*.”¹² In 1922 Egon Friedell called him “the greatest, in fact, the only Austrian philosopher.”¹³ Such was the reverence for Nestroy by the turn of the century that even Joyce lists him among the saints before Aquinas as “S. John Nepomuc”

(441.6-7) in the ‘Cyclops’ episode of Ulysses. As Max Knight and Joseph Fabry explain in their introduction to a collection of Nestroy’s plays, he combined Viennese dialect and High German into “similes, metaphors and gyrating figures of speech,” and exploited the tendency of German to form excessively long words, “sometimes rattling off a word with up to two dozen syllables” (22). Nestroy also worked with a modicum of other languages and made bilingual puns.¹⁴ J.P. Stern calls attention to the “acute language consciousness” and the “authorial self-consciousness” that was the source of Nestroy’s wordplay and comical effect.¹⁵ Both Nestroy and Kraus placed emphasis on language as a tool for revealing hypocrisy and folly, and Kraus saw himself continuing Nestroy’s tradition, but as J. P. Stern avers, Kraus radically differed from Nestroy since his wordplay was directed toward moral and ethical ends (1981, 513).

According to Kraus, language was corrupted through hypocrisy, evasion, imprecision and irrelevant ornamentation. The corruption of language through ornamentation was a preoccupation that he shared with Adolph Loos, who thought of architecture as a kind of language and ornamentation as dissimulation and decadence. The architecture that Loos envisioned was one wherein function and clarity would be seen as aesthetic qualities, as opposed to ornament, allusion, history or convention; in other words, his aesthetic was the polar opposite of the Ringstrasse. The functional and austere Goldman and Salatsch Building on the *Michaelerplatz* seems to mock the statues of heroic figures that front the ornate Imperial Palace directly across from it. One might say that the difference between these buildings is the same as the difference between Nestroy’s “man full of nothing” and Musil’s “man without qualities.” Just as the reactionary *Neue Freie Presse* was the object of satire in Kraus’s anti-newspaper *Die*

Fackel, so Loos confronted the architecture of the *Ringstrasse* in his polemical essays, as Carl Schorske comments:

The architect Adolph Loos, in one of his earliest and most arresting critical forays, branded *Ringstrasse* Vienna in 1898 with an epithet that stuck: “the Potemkin city.” Its architecture he viewed not as the symbol for a fuller and purer life, but as a false front, screening with historicist facades the hollowness and corruption of Austrian society... the historical styles were signs that the bourgeois was concealing his identity under masks of the past; or – the other side of the coin – that he had failed to find an adequate system of expression for his own truth (158).

Loos was hostile to the reactionary logic of the *Ringstrasse*’s historical styles. With its Neo-Classical, Renaissance, Gothic and Baroque architectures the *Ringstrasse* reflected the decadent aspirations of the liberal bourgeois as well as the pomp and grandeur of the aristocratic ruling class. “In the liberal epoch,” Friedjung wrote, “power passed, at least in part, to the bourgeoisie; and in no area did this attain fuller and purer life than in the reconstruction of Vienna” (qtd. in Schorske 158). As a cultural symbol the *Ringstrasse* reproduced the Habsburg myth in a hollow illusion of grandeur perpetrated by the misuse of an architectural “language” and by transgressing the distinction between the aesthetic and the functional. The criteria for good architecture would entail a unity of form and personality; it would reflect the morals of the people who produced it and would relegate the sphere of the aesthetic to the purely private. For Kraus this principle extended into language; an index of the morality of its users where personal integrity was the measure of virtue and imitation was the principal vice

(Toulmin and Janik 87). Loos's critique of the intermingling of the aesthetic and the functional and of historical imitation suggested that the historical styles of the Ringstrasse attempted to compensate for the lack of a distinctive modern Austrian architecture.

Linguistic pluralism

The polemics of Viennese critical modernists drew attention to the lack of a national idea to unify the Habsburg lands, which may have been exacerbated by the problem presented by the plurality of national ideas in the Empire. As Musil observed in The Man Without Qualities, an Austrian lacking a national idea or language would have to say "I am a man from one of those nonexistent kingdoms or countries; so for that reason alone he preferred to say: I am a Pole, a Czech, an Italian, Friulian, Ladino, Slovene, Croat, Serb, Slovak, Ruthenian, or Wallachian – and this was his so-called nationalism" (491). Joseph Roth's war novel Radetzkymarch confirms this hypothesis as a document of how a multi-ethnic nation causes confusions of identities for individuals within it. According to the historian and philosopher Ernst Gellner, the Empire made their case worse by making their bureaucracy more important and pervasive, and by changing the language of that bureaucracy from Latin to German. Gellner writes: "Full effective citizenship now belonged to those who could deal with the bureaucracy in an idiom it respected, and who were masters of that idiom" (31). Thus, it favored those whose mother-tongue was German and marginalized ethnic-cultural-linguistic groups in regions where German was not habitually spoken.

Identity politics and national culture were mired in language consciousness as Kafka's version of the biblical story of the Tower of Babel – to which Max Brod gave the

title 'The City Coat of Arms' – suggests.¹⁶ Linguistic multiplicity preceded the building of the tower, which would always remain an ideal, whereas the “worker’s city” was a thinly veiled reference to the multilingual Habsburg Empire (Martens 201). Owing to its predominant language and culture, as well as its geographical location, Trieste shared with cities like Prague or Budapest an identity on the periphery of the empire and nationalist aspirations. As J. P. Stern observes, Austria had failed to develop a valid language of its own, and this was a deficiency felt very poignantly by another Prague writer, Rainer Maria Rilke, who complains that “the heritage of a poet born in Prague is no better than “verbal refuse” (“verdorbene Sprachabfälle”), a hotchpotch made up of incompatible linguistic bits and pieces and contained within “the deteriorating margins of language” (“dieses fortwährende Schlechterwerden der Sprachränder”))” (qtd. in J. P. Stern 516). These examples attest to the fact that the multiplicity of languages in the Austro-Hungarian Empire was a major literary preoccupation. Brian Moloney compares Italo Svevo with writers like Ivo Andric and Bruno Schultz to point out that language pluralism was a definitive trait of turn of the century Austro-Hungarian literature: “I triestini colti condividevano le stesse tradizioni culturali dei loro contemporanei dell’impero, e per di più nelle lingue originali; di modo che possiamo dire con Ara e Magris che “in questo tipo di atteggiamento linguistico si possono riconoscere le radici e l’essenza di una *mittel-europäische Bildung*.”¹⁷

This hypothesis is confirmed by Fritz Mauthner, the first philosopher credited with raising language to the cardinal problem of philosophy, who declared in his autobiography that his critical interest in language stemmed directly from the many languages and dialects that he was exposed to during his childhood in Habsburg Prague:

I cannot understand how a Jew born in a Slavonic land of the Austrian Empire could *not* be drawn to the study of language. In those days... he learned to understand three languages at once: German as the language of civil servants, of culture [*Bildung*], poetry and polite society; Czech as the language of the peasants and servant girls, and as the historical language of the glorious kingdom of Bohemia; a little Hebrew as the sacred language of the Old Testament and as the basis of *Mauscheldeutsch* [Jewish-German jargon] that he hears not only from the Jewish hawkers, but occasionally also from quite well dressed Jewish businessmen of his society, or even his relatives... the mixture of completely dissimilar languages in the common *Kuchelböhmisches* [Czech-German jargon] and the more common *Mauscheldeutsch*... was bound to draw a child's attention to certain linguistic laws.¹⁸

Mauthner's situation could just as easily be said of another who was drawn to the study of language: Carlo Michelstaedter, the philosopher from Gorizia, forty-four kilometers north of Trieste, who spoke the classical languages of Greek and Latin, and the sacred language of Hebrew, as well as he spoke Italian, German, French, Slovene and the local *Goriziano* dialect. Joyce certainly had Triestine friends and students who spoke as many languages, besides those who spoke local dialect. *Triestino* held a great fascination for Joyce who could speak it, write it in letters and continued to speak it with his family long after they had left Trieste.¹⁹ Brief accounts of this "boneless Viennese Italian" (GJ 1) appear in Giacomo Joyce and in some of the language of Finnegans Wake. John McCourt notes that Joyce would have also been aware of an Austrian version of the

dialect of spoken by the *Austriacanti*: the upper class Imperial loyalists in Trieste, and that he probably saw the dialect of *Triestino* as “an inclusive force which, in each of its varieties, embraced different civilizations and became a living encyclopaedia of the cultures, nations and languages that had been assimilated into the city” (52). The idea of a hybrid language which reflected the contingent cultural reality of its multiethnic population must have seemed appealing to Joyce as an alternative to a mythical Irish language or an unreflective and assured use of English.

Rather than focusing on their particularity, Triestine irredentists proclaimed that they were awaiting “a national deliverance” (GJ 8) from Italy, and manifested one of the many minority nationalist ideologies that had been appearing throughout the Austro-Hungarian Empire in the 19th century. Although none of the ethnic, cultural and linguistic minorities in the Austro-Hungarian empire were homogenous, the emergent nationalism of these groups mainly assumed

a strongly populist tinge. It was *Völkisch* or *narodny*. Such nationalist ideology was about as clear a sense of false consciousness as you might wish to find anywhere: it had no relation to reality. The nationalists themselves were quite unaware of this. What they were in effect forging was a new high culture, to be enshrined in texts, with its written literature.

(Gellner 32)

Italian nationalists in Trieste were no exception to this rule, and Joyce saw in Irredentism, with its emphasis on *italianità* in literature and culture, as well as the falsified histories of his pupil Attilio Tamaro, a parallel between the Irish Revival and Irish Nationalism. As McCourt notes, “Like the Irish nationalists, the Triestine

irredentists turned a blind eye to the complexities of the past in order to present a mythical vision of it which they hoped to re-create in the future" (99). Joyce draws these parallels in his Triestine journalism.

Irredentism was undeterred by the fact that the region had been occupied by several cultures, all with more or less equal claim to having roots there. Roberto Bazlen recalls the cultural and linguistic complexity of Habsburg Trieste: "Dunque, questa città che parla un dialeto Veneto, questa campagna che parla un dialetto slavo, sono affidate a una burocrazia austriaca ineccepibile, ma che parla il Tedesco."²⁰ Joyce must have witnessed in Trieste the same nationalist and linguistic indeterminacy as Musil's typical Austro-Hungarian subject. While the largest ethno-nationalist group in Trieste was of Italian origin, the city had been ruled by the Austro-German Habsburg monarchy for over five-hundred years and Slovene farmers inhabited most of the rural territory that surrounded it. As the multiplicity of nationalities that made up Triestine identities created political and well as linguistic ambivalence, Joyce transfers some of these ambivalent nationalist allegiances to Dublin.

The narrator of Giacomo Joyce considers the national allegiances of his young Triestine pupil, "They love their country when they are quite sure which country it is" (9). Joyce places this observation into the 'Cyclops' episode of Ulysses:

—And after all, says John Wyse, why can't a jew love his country like the next fellow?

—Why not? says J. J., when he's quite sure which country it is (438.8-11).

Bloom's bivalent definition of a nation as "the same people living in the same place... Or also living in different places" (430.9-10, 16) employs geographical and

cultural criteria without a strong nationalist overtone. The anti-Semitic interlocutor, who sees Bloom's negotiations as "trying to make a muck out of it" (430.15), assumes the uniformity and centralism of a closed system, shared by the patrons of Barney Kiernan's. National identity is partly constituted by the exclusion of some element identified as "foreign," but Joyce problematizes this construction with the Austro-Hungarian paradox of nationalism that Musil and Slataper were so aware of. For an Austrian who belonged to and/or interacted with many ethnic/linguistic/cultural groups, the articulation of a stable national identity would constitute the exclusion of a part of oneself. Bloom's articulations of Irishness are as complicated and labile as those of a Triestine Slav with Irredentist aspirations, or any of Musil's Austro-Hungarian citizens who in trying to assert their national identity also articulates its antithesis.²¹ When Bloom is asked "What is your nation..." (430.18) by the Citizen, he responds that he is Irish by nativity, saying "I was born here. Ireland" (430.19), and asserts that he is a Jew by ethnicity "And I belong to a race too" (431.34). By asserting his Jewishness and his Irishness, Bloom defies an oppositional 'either/or' logic, favoring an inclusive 'both/and' political understanding of self.

Peripheral configurations

For the skeptical Triestine intellectual it was equally as problematic to identify with the Empire of which he was a subject, as it was to identify with alternate national ideas, if both relied on the exclusion of an aspect of his cultural identity constructed as foreign. Joyce's playful skepticism toward nationalist concepts derived from cultural,

ethnic or linguistic nativism shared with Italo Svevo and Scipio Slataper a similar critical perspective. Joyce could relate to the Irredentist position on Habsburg rule in Trieste, like these Triestine authors, who at the same time remained skeptical of alternate nationalist visions. Joyce was sensitive to parallels between the propaganda of Irish nationalism and Triestine irredentist propaganda that “offered falsified histories of the city, justified as being a means to achieving unification with Italy.”²³ Nationalist myths such as that of linguistic or racial purity, or a historically established culture and community strove to mask a more fundamental dissolution and pluralism. Joyce portrayed the Irish people in this fashion to the Triestine audience for whom he wrote in the Irredentist paper *Il Piccolo della Sera*:²⁴

Our civilization is an immense woven fabric in which very different elements are mixed, in which Nordic rapacity is reconciled to Roman law, and the new Bourgeois conventions to the remains of a Siriac religion. In such a fabric, it is pointless searching for a thread that has remained pure, virgin and uninfluenced by other threads nearby. What race or language... can nowadays claim to be pure? No race has less right to make such a boast than the one presently inhabiting Ireland.²⁵

When Joyce wrote articles on Ireland for *Il Piccolo Della Sera* he knew that his Triestine readers would also discern the similarities between the Habsburg Empire and the British Empire on political and cultural issues of empire and independence, and even has some of his characters drawing upon the Hungarian analogy in Stephen Hero and Ulysses.²⁶ Joyce was not the first to comment on such parallels as “Sir Richard Burton had used the example of Trieste to lend weight to his opinion that the British government

should concede a measure of home rule to Ireland” (McCourt 93).²⁷ Joyce wrote on Home Rule for a Trieste audience, in terms that would have resonated with those thinking in terms of the link between nation and language:

[Ireland] entered the British dominion without forming an integral part of it. It almost entirely abandoned its language and accepted the language of the conqueror without being able to assimilate its culture or to adapt to the mentality of which this language is the vehicle. (CW 159)

A few years later Joyce puts these words into the mouth of Stephen Dedalus who complains to a Gaelic Leaguer, “My ancestors threw off their language and took another, Stephen said. They allowed a handful of foreigners to subject them” Do you fancy I am going to pay in my own life and person for the debts they made” (P 203)? Joyce saw the English language, the legacy of imperialist official nationalism, in terms of a lost relationship with language, as those on the periphery of the Habsburg Empire saw the official German. Franz Kafka expresses in his diary this sense of loss with the sentiment that he never felt at home – quite literally – in his “mother tongue:”

Yesterday it occurred to me that if I did not always love my mother as she deserved and as I could, only because the German language prevented it. The Jewish mother is no “Mutter,” to call her “Mutter” makes her a little comic... “Mutter” is peculiarly German for a Jew, it unconsciously contains, together with the Christian splendor Christian coldness also, the Jewish woman who is called “Mutter” therefore becomes not only comic, but strange. Mama would be a better name if only one didn’t imagine “Mutter” behind it. I believe that it is only the memories of the ghetto that

preserve the Jewish family, for the word “Vater” too is far from meaning the Jewish father.²⁸

For Kafka, the pronouncement of the word “Mutter” describes a problem common among Austro-Hungarian subjects in the empire: an alienated relationship to an imposed language that distorted and falsified their experiences and memories. To Kafka as a Jew, the emotional reality of his mother or father cannot find expression in speech. Joyce ascribes a similar sentiment to Stephen Dedalus who contrasts his alienated relationship to the English language with that of his English Dean of Studies in *A Portrait*, and notes his own ambivalent sense of its simultaneous “familiarity” and “foreignness”:

The language in which we are speaking is his before it is mine. How different are the words home, Christ, ale, master, on his lips and on mine! I cannot speak or write these words without unrest of spirit. His language, so *familiar* and so *foreign*, will always be for me an acquired speech. I have not made or accepted its words. My *voice* holds them at bay. My *soul* frets in the shadow of his language. (189, emphasis mine)

In his distinction between his “voice” and his “soul” Joyce articulates the split between the official, assimilated Imperial language at the surface of his discourse and the true but submerged psyche of the Irish who is not entirely at home in the language to which he belongs. Thomas Singer, in his Wittgensteinian reading of Joyce, argues that “Stephen acquires not just a system of words, but a form of life, that of turn of the century Catholic Ireland” (188). This “form of life” is a language of communication, and thus of everyday waking consciousness and thought: representative and formative on levels of the psyche and the mind. Having assimilated into the master’s tongue, however,

Stephen has *a priori* adopted a false consciousness. His whole life becomes false and therefore inauthentic if this language is not integral with his emotional reality as a human being. John McCourt frames the passage from *A Portrait* quoted above as a Triestine dilemma, whereby the resentment toward the Imperial language meant different things to different people:

In the Triestine environment this statement could have been made by an Italian who resented the Austrian imposition of the German language, or the use of Austriacans, the Austrian version of the Triestine dialect used by the Austrian upper classes in the city; or it could have been uttered by a Slovene whose use of *Triestino* would have been very different from that of an Italian. (52)

What Joyce may have acknowledged from his exposure to Trieste's language pluralism and to *Triestino* was the fallacy of reviving an ancient language as a requirement of Irishness. Joyce resists the essentialism of the Irish nationalist who sees the revival of sacred or ancestral 'dead' languages as highly important in the agenda of nation building and of a nationalism that defines cultural nativism as the only means by which the Irish might survive British domination. Joyce demonstrates a resistance to nationalist ideas that one finds in Slataper or in Svevo, whose famous protagonist Zeno considers the Tuscan Italian (or "good Italian" of his friend/rival Guido in opposition to his own contingent *Triestino* dialect) as a language of inauthenticity: "With our every Tuscan word, we lie! ... Obviously our life would have an entirely different aspect if it were told in our dialect" (404). The concern with authentic and inauthentic expression in Svevo, Slataper and Kafka reflects the literary preoccupation with epistemological

considerations of language generated by linguistic multiplicity. When Scipio Slataper, who wrote in *Triestino* and pidgin-Italian, declared “Trieste has no cultural traditions” in 1909, it was not a negative critique according to Angelo Ara and Claudio Magris:

La cultura triestina, che Slataper proclama inesistente, era una frangia periferica di quell sapere tradizionale che ovunque andava irrigidendosi e morendo in Europa: la *Kultur*, il sapere quale organizzazione e classificazione del mondo, veniva smascherata quale immane tautologia ormai irreparabilmente scissa dall’esperienza, quale meccanismo che riproduceva se stesso, imprigionando nei propri schemi la molteplicità della vita. La cultura di fine secolo è costituita in primo luogo, sulle orme di Nietzsche, dalla rivolta della vita contro la cultura, contro quel sapere che già Flaubert aveva raffigurato fatalmente imbecile; *Il mio Carso* di Slataper è una voce di questa protesta.²⁹

Ara and Magris support the idea that epistemological discourses in circulation could be configured into articulations of identity. Nietzsche’s revolt of life against culture finds an expression in Slataper, as well as Svevo who substitutes these terms with “health” and “sickness” in *La coscienza di Zeno*.³⁰ The influence of Vienna on the emerging literary figures of Trieste was evident in their love-hate both for Austria and for the bourgeois culture that it seemed to encourage (see Johnston 171). Affinity with Austria encouraged writers like Scipio Slataper, whom John McCourt calls “Joyce’s almost exact contemporary” (28) and Italo Svevo (meaning “Italian Swabian”; the pen name of Ettore Schmitz) to write in a colloquial pidgin-Italian with remnants of German and *Triestino* that was often decried as degrading and unpatriotic by Triestine Irredentists and Italian

nationals (see Robinson 221). With an undeniable undercurrent of skepticism about the authority of language, and a Krausian mistrust for what he thought of as ornate writing, Svevo's works bear a closer resemblance to those of his Austrian contemporaries than those of Italian writers who were preoccupied with the aesthetic glories of the Italian style. Svevo expressed his dislike for overly ornamental prose to Joyce as this biographical episode attests:

[Svevo] challenged Joyce to find any page by D'Annunzio which did not contain at least one meaningless sentence and, opening one of the Pescaraese writer's books at random, read the following passage: 'The smile which pullulated inextinguishably, spreading among the pallid meanders of Burano lace. ...' (Gatt-Rutter, 1988: 231, qtd. in Robinson 251).

Svevo's distaste for ornate prose attests to the influx of language critique circulating in Trieste. Linguistic skepticism was frequently discernible in critical journalism and literature responding to the necessary Italian of Irredentism as well as Imperial pressures, articulating plural, particular and hybrid reconfigurations of identity and language that were often without precedent. The language and culture of Trieste were predominantly Italian and there was also a large Slavic population, but there was no identifiable Triestine type because of the many ethnic groups that were drawn to the city because of its rapid economic growth in the nineteenth century. Thomas Harrison observes that Trieste had an "unprecedented distillation of three cultures: Italian, Germanic and Slavic," and asserts that "the intellectual task facing Triestines was to make this confluence productive" (24). As Scipio Slataper realized in his *Lettere*

Triestine’ for the Florentine newspaper La Voce – the first of which he entitled “Trieste has no cultural traditions” – Trieste certainly suffered from an “uncreated conscience” of its own. Roberto Bazlen extends the heterogeneous and unclassifiable artistic tradition of Trieste to authors who come from abroad to live there:

E come non esiste un unico tipo triestino, non esiste nemmeno una cultura creativa triestina; creare un’opera omogenea con premesse simili sarebbe stato impossibile... E pensa che anche gli artisti stranieri sbattuti a Trieste sono tutti tra i meno catalogabili, quella strana linea Burton Lever Joyce... e Stendahl, e Hamerling e la strana infanzia di Feruccio Busoni.³¹

Implicit in Bazlen’s ‘*Intervista su Trieste*’ is his view that the paradoxes of cultural indeterminacy that produced the Triestine literary *non*-tradition, as well as the city’s rare atopic quality, had a profound effect on the foreign authors who had lived there. For Slataper, the task of the Triestine artist was to conceptualize some authentic way of living outside of the nationalist ideas of language and culture that classified life and enclosed it in conceptual schemes, hence to envision a kind of ‘no-man’s-land’: Il mio Carso is an affirmation of his culturally plural life in the geographically forbidding Karst surrounding the cosmopolitan Trieste. Slataper’s novel was also critical about nationalist *völkisch* ideas of rural and urban culture whereby “Peasants were virtuous and they also made good soldiers. Cosmopolitanism was treacherous, alien, feeble and enervating” (Gellner 32). An earlier title for the book was Il mio Carso e la mia città, which suggests that both his city and his Karst were important to his sense of self. Slataper begins with an articulation that privileges neither his Croatian, nor his Moravian nor his Italian heritage, dismissing them all as categorical fictions.³² Slataper opposes a cultural and linguistic

home to imperial and national homelessness and critiques conventional nationalist discourses finding in neither Austrian imperialism nor Italian nationalism a sufficient cultural identity. He reminds Irredentists that there were other ethnic elements, i.e. Slavic, in Trieste that could not just be wished away, and asserts that efforts to constitute identity should precede the acceptance of a national identity as given (Harrison 225). Slataper sees Trieste as a sufficient home in itself, in its singularity and its plurality: “Trieste is my country. I discover more about Trieste every day. ... It is a point where cultures meet” (qtd. in McCourt 170).³³ “In *Il mio Carso*” as John McCourt observes, “he defined “Triestinità” as an awareness of real but indefinable difference – real when lived internally, false when expressed” (170).

There is much to suggest that Joyce saw the loss of the natural relationship to language having cultural-historical roots, and in late-Habsburg society considerations of language were often inextricable from thinking about national identity. Since linguistic pluralism was incompatible with stable nationalism, attitudes varied toward linguistic pluralism as well as dialect and linguistic cross-contaminations, from Mauthner’s account of his childhood to Kafka’s alienation from German; from Rilke’s complaint about “verbal refuse” to the critical neglect of Triestine literature. On the other hand, those who could appreciate the hybridity and contingency of such articulations as those of Svevo and Slataper were often skeptical of nationalist ideas as well. Joyce’s appreciation of Svevo thus transcends the politicized aesthetics of nationalism and canon.

Viennese Modernists saw aesthetics as a reflection of ethics and considered an aesthetic based on imitation and decadence immoral. Kraus’s satire was an activity aimed toward developing an acute sensitivity to the misuse of language and perhaps the

functional architecture of Adolph Loos was a silent articulation of this authenticity. Viennese critical modernism denounced aesthetic and ethical attitudes that gave late-Habsburg society the illusion of stability and power, and extended this critique to other nationalist myths. As Stephen Dedalus strives to liberate the submerged self, buried and over-laid by what he considers “an acquired speech,” he succeeds in unmasking its inherent colonial power as a distorting, falsifying agency, but he cannot “forge the uncreated conscience of [his] race” with his little villanelle. Stephen’s mires his attempt at an Irish art in the evocation of precious moods or fanciful states of mind typical of the decadence that Kraus abhorred: an aesthetic reaction to lived experience.

Svevo and Slataper would have been worthy of Kraus’s praise for having expressed Triestine consciousness in a language without pretense to the Italian style demanded by their peers. Joyce’s work demonstrates an attitude toward language common to his Austrian contemporaries that foregrounds a lack of authenticity in language and the in art of the Irish Revival; a void, or a constitutive gap that opens up within language and experience, within representation and memory. Joyce’s confrontation with realism and naturalism in his ‘epiphanies’ was aimed at the principal literary challenge at the heart of Vienna’s critical enterprise, namely the difficulty of presenting the emergence of epiphanic moments in ordinary experience while eschewing the conventions of style or canon. Joyce attests to seeking such a language for his work as he writes in a letter: “[While writing *Ulysses*] I’d like a language which is above all languages... I cannot express myself in English without enclosing myself in a tradition” (Joyce ctd. in Milesi 144). This statement, identifying language with tradition and a

desire to write outside of it could have been made by any of Joyce's Trieste contemporaries.

2. The epistemic roots of Austrian language skepticism

... (in the Nichtian glossery which purveys aprioric roots
for aposterioric tongues this is nat language at any sinse of
the world and one might as fairly go and kish his sprogues
as fail to certify whether the wartrophy eluded at some lives
earlier was that somethink like a jug, to what, a coctable)
... (FW 83.10-5)

During the three decades before the turn-of-the-century, discourses concerned with knowledge had gone through a transition from linguistic complacency to a radical distrust of language. Several studies have found the epistemic roots of Austrian language skepticism in philosophical traditions and critiques of the human sciences that “cast a widespread doubt upon the conception of human nature that we associate with the Enlightenment and classical liberalism” (Luft 7).³⁴ In Vienna, the failure of the Liberals in the political sphere was a critical juncture at which politics and epistemology would soon coincide. Following their brief rise and fall from political power in the 1870s, Viennese Liberal bourgeois and intellectuals sought to undermine the spiritual foundations of Habsburg rule (i.e. the concept of *Hausmacht*) by turning their attention toward the natural sciences and to psychology. According to Toulmin and Janik, one of the goals that Liberal movement had aspired to when it briefly came to power was “the replacement of superstitious feudal Catholicism with modern scientific rationalism (i.e. *laissez-faire*) as the official state philosophy” (49). The scientific reorientations of the 19th century instilled in these intellectuals a confidence in the power of science to solve all problems, but the generation coming to maturity at the turn of the century did not share that view wholeheartedly.

Vienna’s intelligentsia, who were largely influenced by Schopenhauer, Nietzsche and Kierkegaard (or the philosophical tradition known as *Lebensphilosophie*, vitalism, or

“irrationalism”) denied that reason and consciousness were the dominant and defining features of human nature and emphasized the inadequacy of liberal scientific rationalist views. In Vienna, both scientific positivism and philosophical irrationalism partook in a critique of language as the seemingly self-evident foundation of all knowledge, asserting the primacy of an empirical world-view over a rational one. “The blend of scientific materialism and philosophical irrationalism was a distinctive feature of the intellectual world of turn of the century Vienna” (Luft 7), and every intellectual associated with Viennese critical modernism combined these perspectives in different ways. While the generation of language skeptical thinkers that came to maturity after the turn-of-the-century was largely concerned with ethics, early language critique was mainly preoccupied with epistemological questions.

The simultaneous engagement of philosophy, philology, natural science and literature taken together in a critique of contemporary human sciences was characteristic of this early phase of Austrian language consciousness. Although there were many intellectuals who contributed to this critique, I have chosen to examine four of them for their documented impact on Viennese modernist thought: Freidrich Nietzsche, Ernst Mach, Fritz Mauthner and Hugo von Hofmannsthal.³⁵ It would be misleading to say that each one was a representative of the domain of knowledge that they were popularly associated with, since their learning and preoccupations encompassed all of these disciplines. Nietzsche, who repudiated the metaphysical tradition, had a background in philology, Mach was a physicist whose undertaking was philosophical, Mauthner worked as a journalist, was hostile to philosophy and exalted literature, and Hofmannsthal had studied natural sciences and physics with Mach and Franz Brentano.

Among the shortlist of thinkers above, only Nietzsche is directly alluded to in Dubliners (especially in 'A Painful Case'), A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man and Ulysses. It is well known that Joyce read Nietzsche before leaving Ireland. Many critical studies attest to the impression that this philosopher made on Joyce as well as his impact on modernist (and postmodern) thought. Although Nietzsche is recognized as an important influence for modernist thought in all of its configurations, Mach's enormous influence on Vienna's intellectuals – academics, artists and coffeehouse intellectuals alike – accounts for much of the particularity of Vienna's critical modernist character.³⁶ Beginning in the 1860s, while Nietzsche was a professor at Basel, Mach also embarked upon a radical critique of traditional epistemology that led him to challenge the status of central categories of scientific discourse – concepts such as time, space, matter, consciousness, and most conspicuously, the self.³⁷ The combined influence of Mach and Nietzsche suggested to the authors and philosophers associated with the *Sprachkrise* that behind all the foundational masks and illusions of language there was nothing but an aching void of subjectivity.

Fritz Mauthner and Hugo von Hofmannsthal felt these influences quite profoundly. Mauthner's three-volume Beiträge zu einer Kritik der Sprache [Contributions to a Critique of Language] (1901-02) provided a model for an investigation of language that was simultaneously a powerful critique of knowledge. Although Mauthner's work was widely read and hotly debated by German speaking philosophers,³⁸ Hugo von Hofmannsthal's *Ein Brief*, also known as *Chandosbrief*, or 'Lord Chandos Letter' is more often considered to be the representative document of the Austrian language crisis.³⁹ Hofmannsthal's fictional missive to Lord Francis Bacon marked the end of the young poet's literary career and describes a crisis with poetic language that began in changing epistemic structures. It was

no mere coincidence that Hofmannsthal's poetic production came to an end as Mauthner spoke of the inadequacy of language as a bearer of knowledge, and Ernst Mach refuted the Cartesian conception of the subject.⁴⁰

In spite of differing styles and methods, Nietzsche, Mach, Mauthner and Hofmannsthal demonstrated similar concerns and preoccupations in their writing; characteristics that were definitive of the time. Each of them represented a break with the transparency of rationalist systems of thought through a historical critique of language that undermined the correspondence model of its foundations. Starting with Nietzsche's critique of Enlightenment philosophers from Descartes through to Kant and Hegel, a definitively anti-metaphysical method was adopted by many Viennese thinkers, and well evidenced in Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*. Nietzsche's conflation of language and rhetoric disseminated the view of language *as* metaphor, and his linking of language with culture asserting the forgotten importance of aesthetics in discourses purporting to speak the truth. Nietzsche's famous dictum "God is dead" and Ernst Mach's psychology, whereby the subject is organized by random sensations, led to a thoroughgoing perspectivism that is attested to in the literary tradition of Viennese Impressionism. Perspectivism entailed a radical questioning of the subject – the 'unsavable subject,' as Mach and Bahr called it – often to dissolution of its unity as a necessary or economical fiction; an illusion based in its very grammatical construction. The change in philosophical discourse that drew attention away from the human sciences and focused them on their bases in language had a profound impact on the place of literature in the changing discursive formations of late Habsburg Austria and the literature produced in Vienna and Trieste.

Language and historical critique

Nietzsche's works abound in remarks that view the constructions of language with suspicion. Nietzsche undermined the fundamental unities that allowed the sciences to proceed without considerations for the wide-ranging philosophical assumptions about language, reference, truth, subjectivity, and interpretation. His language philosophy was fragmentary and dispersed throughout his writings. Of special interest to this study is Nietzsche's essay 'On Truth and Falsehood in an Extra Moral Sense', which condenses many of his views on the critique of language. It was a by-product of his work in preparing lectures on classical rhetoric in Basel in 1873, published posthumously in 1903. This essay had a profound impact on modernist and postmodern appreciations of Nietzsche, but I would suggest that the impact of this late arrival to his published works added momentum to the Viennese *Sprachkritik*. Foucault claims in The Order of Things that Nietzsche's critical foregrounding of rhetoric in his critique of contemporary philosophy was a central in the epistemological transformation that would shift the attention of the human sciences almost exclusively toward studying discourse and language:

Language did not return into the field of thought directly and in its own right until the end of the nineteenth century. We might even have said until the twentieth, had not Nietzsche the philologist – and even in that field he was so wise, he knew so much, he wrote such good books – been the first to connect the philosophical task with a radical reflection on language. (305)

Foucault claims that Nietzsche awoke the nineteenth century from its dream of logical frameworks and classifying systems of thought (263), and reminds us that

Nietzsche's critique of language begins with this training in classical philology. Nietzsche's early philological writings largely agree with the tradition of German Classicists and situate ancient Greece as the paradigmatic cultural foundation of European thought. However, by tracing a genealogy of rhetorical thought from the Sophists through Plato to Aristotle, Nietzsche highlights the tension between rhetoric and philosophy in his own epoch.⁴¹ Christian J. Emden explores Nietzsche's thought on language and consciousness in a recent study, emphasizing Nietzsche's background in classical philology and rhetoric, "characterized as it was by the rise of scientific materialism, the emergence of a neo-Kantian theory of knowledge, and the growing historicist and scientific explanations for cultural processes" (27). Nietzsche's attention to the rhetorical content of disciplines that were growing more scientific and abstract enabled him to maintain a critical distance from the philosophical debates of his era:

Considering that [Nietzsche] was an attentive reader of contemporary scientific publications and an equally attentive observer of the epistemic transitions of his time, it serves to note that the scientific reorientations of the 19th century, together with the historicist ideas of the time influenced the study and theory of language considerably. As comparative and historical linguistics emerged as leading disciplines through the work of, among others, Wilhelm von Humboldt, Franz Bopp, and Friedrich Schlegel, general epistemological questions about the relationship between language and knowledge, which had dominated many intellectual debates in the eighteenth century, were increasingly replaced by questions concerning linguistic typology, the reconstruction of Indo-European

protolanguages, phonemic laws, morphological descriptions, and research into the physiological workings of language. (35)

Nietzsche was interested in drawing rhetorical thought back into philosophical debates, inattentive as nineteenth century philosophers were to their rhetorical and historically biased constructions, to knowledge as a discursive effect of rhetoric. If Foucault was right, and that the contemporary study of discourse will come to replace the intellectual centrality of, and focus upon, humanity, then Nietzsche's historical impact upon the relationship between philosophy and rhetoric may have had the effect of displacing the former with the latter.⁴² According to Emden, Nietzsche's reflections on language went well beyond a rhetorical aestheticism by establishing a link between language and culture, a link which "became an increasingly prominent factor in his later "genealogical" project of the 1880s" (13). Nietzsche discusses the relationship of language to culture in Human, All-Too-Human: A Book for Free Spirits (1878):

LANGUAGE AS A PRESUMPTIVE SCIENCE. – The importance of language for the development of culture lies in that fact that in language man has placed a world of his own beside the other, a position he deemed so fixed that he might therefrom lift the rest of the world off its hinges and make himself master of it. Inasmuch as man has believed in the ideas and names of things as *æternæ veritates* for a great length of time, he has acquired that pride by which he has raised himself above the animal; he really thought that in language he possessed the knowledge of the world. The maker of language was not modest enough to think that he only gave designations to things, he believed that with his words he expressed the

highest knowledge of things; in reality language is the first step in the endeavor after science. Here also it is the belief in ascertained truth, from which the mightiest sources of strength have flowed. Much later – only now – it is dawning upon men that they propagated a monstrous error in their belief in language. (§11)

This passage expresses many of the fundamental ideas of language critique that followed in Nietzsche's wake. 'Truth' about the world and 'power' over it are only the illusory discursive effects of a belief in language. Since there are no eternal facts and no absolute truths, only historically limited discourses based in language, the development of culture is the extension of language's mistaken domain over things. Language follows a one-way progression from a naïve, pre-verbal purity to ossification and decadence. Language, with its roots in metaphor, acquires a deceptive literalness over time, and it is tied to an historical dimension that cannot be dealt with by human sciences that extend the domain of culture simply by taking language at its word.

For Fritz Mauthner, the limits of language – and thereby thought – were also determined by culture. The customs and practices of a culture are the sources of meaning of its language. Language is the "common sensorium" of a culture; a human activity and as such it is a purposeful one. It orders human life in the way that a rule orders a game and a given culture distinguishes itself from all other cultures by the means by which it organizes itself: "Language is only a convention, like the rule of a game: the more participants; the more compelling it will be. However it is neither going to grasp, nor to alter the real world." The rules of this game are also continually changing; not only language, but the whole of culture is continually in a state of transformation. The pattern

of a man's thinking – and of his speaking, which is the same thing – is determined by, and reciprocally determines, the culture in which he lives, as both develop simultaneously. Language is not something pre-existing which cannot be derived from “immutable laws of thought.” The inescapable ambiguity of language permits sufficient clarity to establish a pragmatic unity of purpose in the practical affairs of everyday life, but as an instrument for coming to know the world it is of very little value. Even if human beings had some way of obtaining objectivity in knowledge, language is too ambiguous to convey it.

Fritz Mauthner works with the Nietzschean premise that knowledge which is “true for all time” is impossible in his Wörterbuch der Philosophie (1910), which was less of a glossary of philosophical terms and concepts than a genealogy of their historical transformations. Mauthner explains the “psychological origin” of each term, how a term originally functioned and changed and relates these changes in use to the history of philosophy (Toulmin and Janik 125). For instance, taking to task the notion of “laws of nature” Mauthner claims that it had its roots in mythology and the personification of nature, before the theological “natural law” of the Middle Ages, which looked upon nature as the divine ordering of providence. “Thus did the myth of “laws of nature” pass down to the present time; the phrase began as a metaphor and later became reified and universally adopted by scientists” (Toulmin and Janik 129). Mauthner recognized language as the unquestioned basis of all of the sciences. As Katherine Arens explains, “Mauthner's texts deal with a plurality of disciplines in order that an underlying methodology for the humanities may be brought into relief, not as a prescriptive science, but in order that the limits of knowledge in any historical period may be revealed” (4).

It seems that Mauthner's critique entails dire consequences for the sciences, but in fact Mach endorsed this endeavor and encouraged Mauthner for it. Mach carried out a historical critique of language for a similar purpose: to purge theological terms and meanings from the language of natural sciences and theoretical physics. Mach placed the pure sciences in close proximity to the historical disciplines: science, philology and physics are subject to the limitations of historical relativity (Arens 205). For Mach, the scientific outlook was always tentative and "No point of view has absolute, permanent validity. Each has importance only for some given end" (Mach 1885, 37). The sciences required an historical critique to uncover the perspectivism inherent in their structures as sciences since they adapted by shifting large conceptual patterns in response to newly perceived pressures of empirical data. "Continuous systems of data assembled into internally consistent patterns designated as "knowledge" are clearly taken by Mach as the essential pattern of a science, regardless of the discipline to which the data are normally attributed" (Arens 205). According to Mach, breakthroughs in science were often a direct result of paring away the illusions generated by an unquestioning acceptance of scientific terms and concepts.⁴³ Mach's critique of the language of scientific theory even went so far as to consider great scientific theories, which had traditionally been viewed as the greatest achievements of the human mind, to be mired in and limited by the culture of their epoch.⁴⁴ The historicity of language, and therefore thought, poses a constraint.

Hofmannsthal projects the concerns of his contemporaries back into the seventeenth century in Chandos's missive to Bacon, suggesting a dialogue between the poetic and the scientific (or perhaps between himself and Brentano or Mach); and speculates on the fate of literature in the age of scientific materialism and positivism.

Lord Chandos Letter would have been written on the threshold of the Classical *episteme*, when language had lost its central place in the Renaissance order. In The Order of Things Foucault regards the period in which Hofmannsthal wrote the fictitious letter as the threshold between two *epistemes*, that of the Classical and the Modern.⁴⁵ Language lost its status as representation and bearer of knowledge, and had consequently been demoted to a new status: that of a historical reality and an object of our knowledge.⁴⁶ Gary Gutting writes of this transitional period that “language returns to something like its status during the Renaissance; it has its own density, its own being, as opposed to the transparency of Classical representational language.”⁴⁷ But, whereas the Renaissance language that preceded that of the Classical episteme was “controlled and limited by the primal Text of the world, given as God’s creative word, the language of modern literature is ungrounded and wanders with “no point of departure, no end, and no promise” (Gutting 197; Foucault 44).

This projection of Lord Chandos Letter into the past takes on a dimension of historical critique when one considers that Hofmannsthal had become familiar with Bacon through the lectures of the positivist philosopher Franz Brentano which he attended in his first semesters of university in 1892-3 (Le Rider 49). Brentano, who taught a course in ‘practical philosophy’ claimed to draw inspiration from Bacon and asserted the importance of his ideas for current scientific inquiry (49). These notes from his diary, written in 1894-5, attest to the impression made on Hofmannsthal by Bacon:

Words are locked and bolted prisons of the divine *pneuma* of truth.

Idolatry – adoration of an *eidolon*, a symbol which at some time has been a living thing to some human being, worked miracles, has been the

dazzling revelation of the divine mystery of the world: linguistic concepts are such *eidola*. Usually they are no more sacred than actual idols, nor more truly rich than a buried urn, nor more genuinely 'strong' than a buried sword. Everything which is, *is*; being and meaning are the same thing; consequently, all being is symbol.⁴⁸

Hofmannsthal's early speculations on language express the conviction that words somehow contain a truth, but that they also hide it from human understanding. The concept is only the historical residue of a revealed truth, but truth is a tautology, meaningless in itself, which is why unquestioning recourse to the word/symbol is to give it an undue credence. The word *eidola* used here is unmistakably borrowed from Bacon: in his *Novum Organon* (1620) he describes as idols the various social, religious and intellectual norms which obscure human knowledge and judgment: idols of the tribe, idols of the cave, idols of the marketplace and idols of the theatre (Le Rider 49). Hofmannsthal seems to be speaking of the 'idols of the marketplace,' misleading verbal norms which limited common language; such a language may be suitable for everyday life, but not to describe nature with any accuracy. As Richie Robertson notes, Bacon figured as a proponent of the scientific world-view whereby: "The scientist should be empirical. He should observe things in front of him. He should thus help mankind to acquire power over nature, and, as Bacon puts it, 'the achievement of all things possible'."⁴⁹ Bacon tried to salvage the sciences from views informed by a number of social, institutional and epistemological domains whereby words were not only vague in their purview, but they demonstrated an inappropriate transferability. When Chandos describes his early euphoria, whereby he conceived of the world as a whole, without

difference, he describes to the view that “all being is symbol;” tantamount to these confusions brought about by idolatry of language in this Baconian sense. Bacon, who considers words to be inaccurate in any case, warns against the contamination of scientific understanding by confusing the scientific usage of words with the vulgarized meanings given to such words in the process of social intercourse. Since the conflation of such different realms is the realm of the poet, Hofmannsthal questions the role of literature in the contemporary scientific worldview with Bacon’s skepticism of language.

The rejection of metaphysics / language is metaphor

Joyce has his protagonist in Stephen Hero (c. 1903) reflect upon the ‘tradition of the marketplace’ to Father Butt, the dean of studies: “Words, he said, have a certain value in the literary tradition and a certain value in the marketplace – a debased value” (SH 30). Joyce carries this expression and the ensuing confusion between different uses of language over into *A Portrait*, but the conversation in the later text gives it a new context. Stephen refers to a “lamp” as a metaphor for the effect of ideas from Aquinas and Aristotle on his thoughts, but the dean seems to misunderstand him by likening his “lamp” to that of Epictetus; a historical or mythical object. He realizes that he is on slippery ground in his discussion of aesthetics:

— I mean a different kind of lamp, sir, said Stephen.

— Undoubtedly, said the dean.

— One difficulty, said Stephen, in esthetic discussion is to know whether words are being used according to the literary tradition or according to the tradition of the marketplace. I remember a sentence of

Newman's in which he says of the Blessed Virgin that she was detained in the full company of the saints. The use of the word in the marketplace is quite different. *I hope I am not detaining you.*

— Not in the least, said the dean politely.

— No, no, said Stephen smiling, I mean...

— Yes, yes: I see, said the dean quickly, I quite catch the point:

detain. (89)

The use of the word “lamp” is abstracted in Stephen's transcendental language of the “literary tradition.” He opposes this abstraction to the language of the “marketplace”; given a “debased value” in social interactions. However, the language of the literary tradition was of no use to Mach, and neither was the language of the marketplace, since he was concerned with a correct view of language for verifiable relations between facts and things. To Mach the dean of studies would have been mistaken since he conflated the transcendental for the historical, and Stephen would have been mistaken for positing the transcendental as truthful. It is by the same erroneous view that Chandos makes no distinction between drinking milk freshly drained from a cow's udder and absorbing the contents of a book in his study: giving concepts an ontological status. According to many of Austria's thinkers, the conflation of abstract terms with the realm of facts and things was the kind of error that one encountered in metaphysics and in unbridled aestheticism.

The condition in which Chandos (or Hofmannsthal as the pseudonymous poet Loris) composed verse assumed an inherent coherence between intellect and matter, solitude and society, appearances and reality, the self and the world. “The young Loris sought to do unify the self and the world at the point where they interacted: his

impressions: 'I am a poet,' says Loris, 'because my experience is pictorial'; in these images, objective content and subjective form become one" (Toulmin & Janik 113). His poetry was a recording, an articulation, of impressions and images. As long as the word could be counted as a thing among other things, a resemblance based criteria could assume a stable relationship between the word and the image.⁵⁰ Chandos's ability to reconcile differences between objects and concepts with a view to their similarities presupposed a habitual unity in language. His subsequent confusion and crisis results from his inability to master concepts according to this habit:

I no longer succeeded in comprehending them with the simplifying eye of habit. For me everything disintegrated into parts, those parts again into parts; no longer would anything let itself be encompassed by one idea. Single words floated around me; they congealed into eyes which stared at me and into which I was forced to stare back--whirlpools which gave me vertigo and, reeling incessantly, led into the void. (134-35)

The loss of this 'simplifying eye of habit' eventually results in Chandos' ability to receive epiphanic moments, but at this stage the unhinging of the relationship between similar things has dire consequences for Chandos as a poet. Concepts disintegrate since they no longer possess a habitual unity that assumes metaphoric correspondences. Without that unity Chandos experiences a vertiginous *mise-en-abyme* whereby his confession only exacerbates his alienation; he perceives language reflecting upon himself and no longer experiences his own discourse as producing or communicating knowledge. Trying to understand language through language, as Mauthner asserted, only produces more language, so the "whirlpool" is both an apt metaphor as well as a damning use of

language. Since Chandos attributes his loss of language to a malady or a defect within himself, he experiences his language crisis on the level of affect. Vertigo is one of the several kinds of affect that accompany Chandos's use of metaphysical terms and concepts. Distaste is another:

At first I grew by degrees incapable of discussing a loftier or more general subject in terms of which everyone, fluently and without hesitation, is wont to avail himself. I experienced an inexplicable distaste for so much as uttering the words *spirit*, *soul* or *body*... This was not motivated by any form of personal deference (for you know my candour borders on imprudence), but because the abstract terms of which the tongue must avail itself as a matter of course in order to voice a judgment – these terms crumbled in my mouth like moldy fungi. (133-34)

The bodied reactions of Chandos should make us recall the more cerebral ones of Stephen Dedalus, and his distaste for “those big words... which make us so unhappy” (U 38.4-5). The Stephen of Ulysses is easily distinguishable from his youthful incarnation in *A Portrait* by his increasing mistrust for language. At this point Stephen is already too weary of language to point out confusions, even in a conversation with Mr. Deasy that contains more provocations for a critique of language than that of the dean of studies in *A Portrait*. Deasy is certainly, to quote Hofmannsthal, “wont to avail himself” of opinions but his teleological “*per vias rectas*” (38.27), is anything but, since his discourse relies on a twisted logic of metaphysical presuppositions. Deasy believes that he speaks “the dictates of common sense” (39.11), with his “in a nutshell” summaries of which “There can be no two opinions on the matter” (40.15), but these are the result of enormous

historical accumulations; a 'nightmare of history' from which Stephen is trying to awaken. Deasy's British dominated version of history is as lucid, transparent, and as material as the Stuart coins on his desk or the twelve Protestant spoons he keeps in a case. Deasy does not realize that his view of Ireland depends upon a loyalist rhetoric of Imperial dominance as much as that of Michael Cusack, the bellicose Citizen in the 'Cyclops' episode, whose sense of Ireland relies on a nationalist rhetoric of folk purity and xenophobia. Through these characterizations, Joyce projects Nietzsche's argument that every word projects a perspective and that versions of truth based on such categorical opinions operate rhetorically, producing knowledge only as a discursive effect. Stephen's distaste for language resembles that of Chandos for whom the familiar discourse with which he was once compelled to "voice a judgment" employs such distinctions as good and bad, fortunate and unfortunate, rising and falling fortunes, and so encourages the habit of expressing categorical opinions.

An equally unacceptable alternative to Deasy's language presented in the same episode is the free-association of the schoolboys. In Stephen's history lesson the name of a place; "Pyrrhus" (U 29.9) is substituted by a similar English word "A pier" (29.16), and then by another name of a place, "Kingston's pier, sir" (29.17). Instead of presupposing the discursive effect of knowledge through language it goes in the opposite direction and presupposes that nothing can be known.⁵¹ Stephen experiments with this kind of free association in 'Proteus' with visual metaphors. Stephen's hat becomes a leaf, his eyelashes become peacock feathers. He becomes Christ, Lucifer, Hamlet, Buck Mulligan, the cocklepickers, Adam and Eve, Berkeley, Alfred Tennyson, and a toothless superman. Even the allusion to philosophy (taken so seriously by most Joyce scholars) is

shown up as unbridled rhetoric. The more that he realizes the concepts box him in, interfere with his clear perception of the world, the more he mocks the language of his concepts: (e.g. “ineluctable”, “*neibeneinander*”, etc.). The concepts that he chooses to show the world (or to illuminate, as the “lamp” of Aquinas and Aristotle did in *A Portrait*) to picture what he sees become increasingly arbitrary and useless as they only serve to avow his solipsism. Stephen’s metaphysical speculation mocks the initial euphoric stage of Chandos story, where the difference between the words and the world could not be perceived. The tendency to confuse words with objects illustrates a loss of reality that comes about from aesthetic freedom unrestrained by reason.

Mach’s positivism relied on the belief that the problems of philosophy were all soluble if only the scientist could resist the temptation to be mystical.⁵² By way of resolute positivism Mach was absolutely opposed to any sort of metaphysical speculation (Toulmin and Janik 134). Mach did not recognize philosophy to have any legitimacy apart from science and frequently insisted that he was not a philosopher, but as one who saw science as “involved in any correct view of the relations of special knowledge to the great body of knowledge at large” (*Mechanics* 610) he could not escape this epithet. He approached this calling with much prudence: “we, too, should be aware lest the *intellectual* machinery, employed in the representation of the world on *the stage of thought*, be regarded as the basis of the real world” (ibid.). Considering the problems of representation and abstraction in language Mach subjected the fundamental concepts used by scientists and philosophers to a remorseless investigation in which their lower-order, experiential bases are laid bare, and every sort of superfluous commitment is discarded.⁵³ Mach developed the *principle of economy of thought*; a version of Okkam’s razor,

whereby the task of all scientific endeavor was to describe sense data in the simplest or most economical manner; “to replace, or *save*, experiences, by the reproduction and anticipation of facts in thought” (*Mechanics* 576). Physical theories, for Mach, were only descriptions of sense-data which simplify experience by allowing the scientist to anticipate further events (Toulmin and Janik 134-36).

Mach removed philosophy from a position that could authoritatively comment on ethics and aesthetics by his exclusion of them from what could be empirically observed. He shared a similar view of the origin of language, based in impressions of the world, with Nietzsche,⁵⁵ but arrived at it through the principle of economy of thought, and was much more optimistic about its positivistic development. Mach was critical of language enough to acknowledge its limits, though he aspired to a univocity of scientific language in notation – of an “ideal universal character” – that would push the vertical (referential) and horizontal (national/cultural) limits of language a bit further:

Language, the instrument of this communication is itself an economical contrivance. Experiences are analysed, or broken up, into simpler and more familiar experiences, and then symbolized at some sacrifice of precision. The symbols of speech are as yet restricted in their use within national boundaries, and doubtless will long remain so. But written language is gradually being metamorphosed into an ideal universal character. It is certainly no longer a mere transcript of speech. Numerals, algebraic signs, chemical symbols, musical notes, phonetic alphabets, may be regarded as parts already formed of this universal character of the

future; they are, to some extent, decidedly conceptual and of almost general international use (*Mechanics*, 578)

Mach's optimism regarding notational language relies on a literalist conception of language that saw ordinary language as figurative; its expressions as ornamental and unanalyzed (i.e. in science you might say, "what you really mean is *this*").⁵⁶ Scientific language, conceived according to the principle of economy of thought, is for Mach the ultimate form of explanation and is thought to explain everything completely: "Hence, the literal and straightforward language of science is normative. Clarity is seen in terms of literalness and literal language is seen as identical with the truths it expresses – as stating exactly how things are without emotive or any other type of remainder" (Binkley 214). Mauthner would assert against this conception of language that the metaphorical nature of language precludes univocity, and thereby makes precise scientific knowledge impossible. As Elisabeth Bredeck observes, "Mauthner uses the term 'metaphor' in reference to language as the medium of cognition; but 'language' has an undeniable social dimension as well, and Mauthner places its individual, psychological aspect in the foreground" (24). By disavowing metaphor and dismissing the lower-order experiential bases of language from science, Mach's utopian project did not traverse "national boundaries" it only wished them away. Culture was a linguistic remainder that was irrelevant to science: The tower of scientific language could only be built at the exclusion of culture's sprawl.

The exclusion from language of what could not be verified by Mach's method was, according to Brentano's disciple Edmund Husserl, "a reaction against the threat of groundlessness; it was the reaction against a theorizing with the help of conceptual

formations and mathematical speculation removed from intuition which brought no clarity into the correct sense and achievement of theories” (Mulligan 41). Husserl’s critique of Mach is interesting when one considers its trajectory in Wittgenstein’s thought. Wittgenstein writes the *Tractatus*: “We feel that if *all possible* scientific questions be answered, the problems of life have still not been touched at all” (6.52). If the language of science was to be reduced to series of tautologies and contradictions, then they would say nothing about the world. On the other hand, since metaphysical speculation was untenable, Wittgenstein had to consign “the problems of life” to the ineffable. Mach’s economy of thought which excluded all that language could not comment upon from the scientific domain, *via* what could not be empirically observed as elements of sensations, thus pointed toward a void in language that scientists had historically failed to heed.

Nietzsche’s rejection of metaphysics came about through his fundamental critique of philosophy. He broke away from the philosophical tradition of Descartes, Kant and Hegel and undermined philosophical perspectives that focused on “pure thought” and “pure reason” while he was a professor of Greek rhetoric and philology in Basel. His scathing rejection of what academic philosophers before him held dear, namely the concepts of “truth”, “knowledge” and “morality,” were the result of a rhetorical critique of their status as abstract terms. Nietzsche’s ‘On Truth and Lying in an Extra-Moral Sense’ was primarily a critique of the language of philosophy and the claim to truth that was traditionally associated with that language. To the question of “What is truth?” he writes:

[A] mobile army of metaphors, metonyms, anthropomorphisms, in short, a sum of human relations which were poetically and rhetorically heightened, transferred, and adorned, and after long use seem solid, canonical, and binding to a nation. Truths are illusions about which it has been forgotten that they *are* illusions, worn out metaphors without sensory impact, coins which have lost their image and now can only be used as metal, and no longer as coins. (250).

Nietzsche argues that there is no such thing as an unrhetorical or unpoetic use of language, especially not in discourses that claimed to speak the truth. Because words can be assigned new meanings metaphorically, they demonstrate a transferability that is not true of the things represented. Since words can substitute cause and effect metonymically, language thereby reverses the nature of things or procedures. According to Nietzsche, language always contains a highly subjective attitude or opinion towards things and consequently has an arbitrary rather than an essential knowledge of the world. He opposes two kinds of truth that are inadequate to man to explain why man is so easily led into language. There is truth in the form of tautology, which he calls "empty husks" or the "pure inconsequential knowledge" to which man is indifferent (248). And there is truth in the form of instinct, of intuition, which was responsible for the formation of language, but we have forgotten that this was so, and which language so often occludes: "The 'thing-in-itself' (which would be pure, disinterested truth) is also absolutely incomprehensible to the creator of language and not worth seeking. He designates only the relations of things to men, and to express these relations he uses the boldest metaphors" (248). Abstract concepts are the result of an inappropriate metaphoric

transferability: “Every concept originates by the equation of the dissimilar” (249).

Isolated actions become characteristics, characteristics become concepts, concepts become ontological entities. One can see a parody of this process in Ulysses, where objects are transfigured into verbal entities, allowing objects of impression like the fan in ‘Circe’ or the printing press in ‘Aeolus’, aspects of people, like the voice of miss Bronze in ‘Sirens’, or their clothing in the case of the man referred to as M’Intosh, to partake in the traffic of language. These characteristics of language become institutionalized or conventionalized in the actual linguistic practices and common usage of a society.

Nietzsche’s view that the language of philosophy was epistemologically useless was shared by Fritz Mauthner, who was strongly influenced by Nietzsche, and his notion of language as metaphor is strikingly similar. However, it is more likely that Mauthner came to these ideas independently. Owing to the unusual publishing history of ‘Truth and Falsehood in an Extra-Moral Sense’ it is unlikely that Mauthner may have read it.⁵⁷ Mauthner rejected metaphysical terms by pointing out the meaninglessness of the words it used, but he diverged slightly from Nietzsche’s analysis by way of his nominalist view of the relationship between the world and language: The difference between Mauthner’s nominalist sense of metaphor and that of Nietzsche was that Mauthner considered these metaphors to be normative. Nominalists, who were traditionally theologians, “tried to argue that names are the exact correlatives of sense experiences, and so the only sound foundations for knowledge, however in Mauthner’s sense, *names* are at best *metaphors* for what the senses perceive” (Toulmin and Janik 122). To the nominalist it is impossible to imagine something without being able to say what it is – and this would make one skeptical about our capacity to know the world. So much of Mauthner’s skepticism arose

from the fact that there are words for things that do not exist (i.e. concepts) and no words for much of what does exist. Since language (and thought – Mauthner equated the two) do not stand in any necessary relation to the real it follows that what we hold to be knowledge is nothing other than a delusion made possible by our disregard of the essentially metaphoric nature of language and the contingency of the senses.

Since no linguistic expression can be taken as representative for reality, it becomes the task of the philosopher to emphasize this idea and to liberate his readers from the bewitchment of language: “Philosophy . . . is critical attention (*Aufmerksamkeit*) to language. Philosophy cannot do concerning the organism of language or the human spirit anything more than a physician towards the physiological organism; he can observe and name the occurrences” (*Beiträge*. I. 648; qtd. in Weiler 1958, 85). Gershon Weiler summarizes Mauthner’s thought on the role of the philosopher thus: that this ‘diagnostician,’ the philosopher, is to point out that language cannot grasp reality, and that any question concerning reality can at most give us new words. Truth is tautology, as Nietzsche and Mach suggested, but the meaning of the world eludes us and we are left with language alone. According to Mauthner, language cannot grasp a thing, especially not itself, so it is not worth being spoken any more. The right way of doing philosophy therefore would be to stop asking questions: “Critique of language . . . is the last attempt, it is the last word, and because it cannot be the solution of the riddle of the sphinx, so it is at least the redeeming act that forces the sphinx into silence, because it destroys the sphinx” (qtd. in Weiler 1985, 85). As Weiler points out, Mauthner’s language skepticism is turned into a mysticism of silence more thoroughgoing than the one Wittgenstein recommended at the end of the *Tractatus*: “Wittgenstein confined his remark to those

subjects *whereof* one cannot speak; but according to M. we should not speak at all” (1985, 85). Mauthner’s language critique is a pessimistic one, as opposed to the optimism of Mach, whose critique of language was a program for reforming it.

Mauthner saw his critique as destructive activity that leads to a critical-skeptical attitude to language. He regarded his philosophy as the self-destroying act of thought and that the very conception of a “critique of language” confronts the difficulty that such a critique must itself be undertaken in and with words. Echoes of Nietzsche’s vitalistic opposition between life and culture and the tradition of *Lebensphilosophen* are present in Mauthner’s thought and in the silent mysticism that it engenders. Since reality can be grasped by feeling only, not by thought and language, but only through being lived. Thus, the critique of language turns out to be the way to mystical silence: “I will try again to say the unsayable, to express with poor words what I have to give to godly heretics in nominalistic mysticism, in sceptical mysticism” (*Wörterbuch*. ii. 131, qtd. in Weiler 1958, 86). This appears to be a refusal of silence, but it entails what Wittgenstein would have called *showing* the limits of language by bumping against them (PI §119). The unsayable cannot be said because one cannot define the boundaries of the sayable, *i.e.* of language within language. This was an oversight that Mauthner attributed to the rationalist philosophy of Kant and Descartes as well as proponents of the scientific world-view: “Kant missed this point and did not realize that it is beyond our power to talk or to think about reason or language” (Weiler 1958, 86). Mauthner’s resignation, his suicide in language, “follows from realizing that he cannot be at once on both sides of the epistemological border” (*ibid.*).

Metaphors are typically literally false, yet there is clearly a way in which metaphors are not false: For all of Mauthner's professed pessimism of language, he wrote copiously and seemed to share with Nietzsche a view of philosophy as a process rather than a product, approaching philosophical problems by a literary means.⁵⁸ Nietzsche's works – made up of fragments and aphorisms somewhere between philosophy and literature, process and production – defy classification by traditional standards. "What kind of philosopher is Nietzsche?" asks J. P. Stern, "His philosophical consciousness never comes to rest, is never reconciled to the restrictions of any one method, yet a discernible unity of some kind informs his philosophizing. There is no system, yet there is a very distinct style of thinking" (1978, 59). Nietzsche toys with metaphysics, draws up incredible metaphors and writes in a highly rhetorical style. In 'Description of Ancient Rhetoric' (1872-3), another essay prepared for his lectures at Basel, Nietzsche asserts that there is "no unrhetorical "naturalness" of language to which one could appeal; indeed language itself is the result of audible rhetorical arts" (21). His use of the rhetorical mode is therefore "a further development, guided by the clear light of understanding, of the artistic means which are already found in language" (ibid).

In the second part of 'Truth and Lying in an Extra-Moral Sense' Nietzsche confronts philosophy and science with myth and art. By drawing upon the examples of the "mythically excited" ancient Greeks for whom "any tree may begin to speak like a nymph," or the actor in a drama who "plays the king more regally than any monarch does" he points to forms that "deceive without harm" (255). This is not to suggest a dominance of one form over the other but to suggest an interaction between the "the rational man" and "the intuitive man" who stand side by side "one in fear of intuition, the

other with mockery for abstraction” (256). The artistic without the rational runs the risk of decadence; “the domination of art over life” which equally occludes life, as the aesthete considers “only life, disguised as illusion and beauty, to be real” (256). On the other hand, the rational without the artistic becomes a slave to abstract concepts. Knowledge requires a measure of both; not as opposing forces, but as complementing ones. This alliance is one of the central parallaxes of Ulysses, as Joyce characterizes Stephen and Bloom in the following way:

What two temperaments did they individually represent?

The scientific. The artistic. (798.29-31)

The meeting of Stephen and Bloom in the Ithaca episode seems to coincide with this way of conceiving knowledge. The chapter itself, a parody of positivism, is laid out in its catechism of scientific reports foregrounds the figurative and rhetorical nature scientific language. It also seems to address the discursive formation of late-Habsburg Vienna, in which scientific materialism and philosophical irrationalism worked in tandem toward a clearing ossified language away from their vision of the world. The narrative of ‘Ithaca’ reports in detail on measurable phenomena in a scientifically positivist language, but the attention to those phenomena is entirely, as Nietzsche would call it, “an *aesthetic stance*” (252). Heinrich Hertz, who was critical of Mach’s principle of economy of thought argued that in addition to being “logically permissible” and “empirically correct” they also had to be “communicatively appropriate,” or in other words, rhetorically adequate (see Janik 2001, 153). Unreflective uses of words like “force” in science say nothing about what they speak of and Hertz tried to gain clarity “not about some specific object before us, but about the ways in which *our preconceptions* about said object

systematically confuse us by leading us to ask inappropriate and impossible questions” (Janik 2001, 168). The objects depicted in Joyce’s scientific catechism are conditioned by subjective preconceptions about the objects, thus restoring to scientific discourse a rhetorical awareness of itself in a parody of its forms. Nietzsche recommends that the “liberated intellect” use available discourses in a subversive spirit as a critique against language in a passage seems to address the very essay he is writing:

That enormous structure of beams and boards of the concepts to which the poor man clings for dear life, is for the liberated intellect just a scaffolding and plaything for his boldest artifices. And when he smashes it apart, scattering it, and then ironically puts it together again, joining the most remote and separating what is closest, he reveals that he does not need the emergency aid of poverty, and that he is now guided not by concepts but by intuitions. From these intuitions no regular roads lead to the land of ghostly schemata, of abstractions. The word is not made for these intuitions; man falls silent when he sees them, or he speaks in sheer forbidden metaphors and unheard of conceptual compounds, in order at least by smashing and scorning the old conceptual barricades to correspond creatively to the mighty present intuition. (255-6)

Nietzsche offers two responses to intuitive understanding guided by “the liberated intellect:” One is a mystical silence, like the kind that Mauthner exhorts his readers to and that Wittgenstein speaks of at the end of the *Tractatus*. But silence is as philosophically unconvincing as tautology if one wants to show that intuition to others. The alternative is a rhetorical and ironic use of “forbidden metaphors;” words that have been understood as

metaphors, but are used to “smash and scorn” the edifice of language. According to Patricia McBride: “The Nietzschean demand to restore authenticity to human life by reclaiming the unerring guide of instincts and the senses finds an echo in the pointed suspicion against language and thought that is peculiar for Viennese culture” (44). Nietzsche’s articulation of the program for writing in language crisis – to take the existing language, to smash it and to ironically reassemble it in order to correspond to intuitive knowledge – described philosophical critiques like those of Mauthner who writes that he has to smash the ladder to put it back together again, and Hofmannsthal who states very baldly, in letter that is otherwise very eloquent, and replete with metaphors and similes, “My case, in short, is this: I have lost completely the ability to think or to speak of anything coherently.” Stephen’s symbol for Irish art is also Joyce’s method: “The cracked lookingglass of a servant” (U 6.10-1) reflects and breaks apart discourses which impose strictures upon the liberated intellect, before reassembling these discourses in his “mocking mirrors the obscure soul of the world, a darkness in brightness that the brightness could not comprehend” (U 34.3-5).

Perspectivism / the dissolution of the subject

The idea that Nietzsche claimed with ‘the death of god’ through his famous madman in The Gay Science is that all the fundamental ideas or goals for the Enlightenment enterprise have failed in some catastrophic way: “It is not that a number of beliefs have been proven untrue, that a discovery has been made, or that some criticism of a doctrine has proven effective or convincing, but that somehow the authority of such ideals has now collapsed” (Pippin 498). “God is dead” compels one to confront the fact

that 'truth' had always been a matter of perspective, and therefore leads a radical perspectivism. There are no absolute truths because our experience and knowledge are linguistically based, and language is always partial. There is no absolute ethic or universal knowledge system; there are only linguistically based perspectives.

Furthermore there is no subject, since the tradition of Western metaphysics had always relied upon the illusory sense of subjective coherence. However, he realized that the death of God was not complete because the subject still assumed a metaphysical unity in the ordinary grammatical constructions of language, when he remarked "I am afraid that we have not got rid of God because we still have faith in grammar..."

As Joseph Valente writes in an essay entitled 'Beyond Truth and Freedom: The New Faith of Joyce and Nietzsche,' "Nietzsche founded his anti-metaphysic on a decentered construct of subjectivity, the subject as a multiplicity of cellular drives or perspectives whose struggle for dominance produces thought" (90). In 'Truth and Lying in an Extra-Moral Sense' Nietzsche writes that full and essential knowledge of the world cannot be had at all: consciousness does not grasp things, but 'impulses' or imperfect copies of things; a theory that Mach would develop in his empiriocriticism, as well as the perspectivist notion that the images are not the things but "the manner in which we stand toward them." Knowledge and ethics for Nietzsche were functions of language as we brought them to bear in our perceptions and experiential stances; "at most an *aesthetic* stance" (252). It should be noted that many Viennese intellectuals received Nietzsche's "death of god" and perspectivism in the context of "Ernst Mach's dismissal of the ego; not just of the Cartesian self, but of any essential core of subjectivity" (Hickman 21).⁶⁰

Mach came to perspectivism through a radical epistemological atomism, whereby he had come to view reality as being constituted solely within perception, and in an automatic procedure that involved the arbitrary organization of free-floating “elements” of sensations. Mach thought that most of the fundamental concepts of science were habitual unities, including the “object,” which served as the basis particularly for physics, and the “subject” which was cluster of sensations with economical rather than ontological unity. From the premise of Mach’s ‘elements’ of sensations, it followed that neither the perceiving self, nor the outside world were self-contained, stable entities, independent from the event of perception. The self, Mach declared, is nothing other than a relatively stable cluster of sensations which can be analyzed as elementary biophysical processes. While denying it any ontological or psychological grounding, Mach insisted that it retains an important place within epistemology and science as a pragmatic, economic construct. Jacques Le Rider attests to the provocation of Mach’s psychology:

For Young Vienna this ‘integral phenomenalism’ was the cruelest possible demystification of all their certainties about identity. It was the inspiration for Hofmannsthal’s *The Lord Chandos Letter*; Weininger felt obliged to ‘refute’ Mach so as to save Culture; and Musil, as is well known, was to be profoundly influenced by the doctrine to which he devoted his doctoral dissertation, completed in 1908. (42)

The “unsavable subject” that emerged from Mach’s psychology, however, came to be the shibboleth of the Viennese literary Impressionists, as Hermann Bahr proclaimed Mach’s theories as “the philosophy of impressionism.”⁶¹ Viennese Impressionism attempted to capture Mach’s model for consciousness which “consists of sensations

coming and going in an orderly, continuous flow, while memory involves reawakening a previous constellation of sensations” (Johnston 184). This literary movement interpreted Mach’s scientific psychology to emphasize the fleeting, evanescent and impermanent nature of life. Katherine Arens writes, “For Mach, empirical evidence was recoverable only as a phenomenal presentation to a consciousness and as such, it is subject to the inherent limitations of that consciousness and the organism which supports it” (210). Mach’s physiology of the senses was intended for the development of science, since he believed that “relative projections of identical empirical data could be reduced to the same neutral field of evidence” (ibid). However, as Arens explains:

Mach’s neutrality of evidence is not absolute in the sense guaranteed by Platonic forms; it presupposes rather dynamic relation between the unknown and unknowable constitution of the “real” world and the field of evidence recoverable from any particular epistemological construct, which is never stable or self-identical (210).

Mauthner and Mach agree that all knowledge is derived from sense experience, that the senses are a faulty guide for knowledge of the world, and that some things are completely unknowable. Mauthner’s hypothesis for the contingency of the senses (*Zufallsinne*) radicalizes Mach’s empiriocriticism. *Zufallig* occurs in conjunction with the limits of perception, or as Mauthner writes: “The term *Zufallsinne* is nothing more than a provisional name for the vague conviction that there are definitely forces at work in the real world that will never be able to generate sense impressions in us” (*Beiträge* 1:360, qtd. in Bredeck 40). *Zufallsinne* has a direct impact on the metaphorical nature of language: “We hold that our five senses are accidental and that our language, which came

about from the memories of these Zufallsinne and was extended through metaphorical conquest of everything knowable, can never give us insight into reality” (Bietrage I, 114, qtd. in Ben-Zvi 190). If we can imagine the senses organized in ways other than their existing arrangement, we can also imagine other arrangements of language. Therefore the propositions of natural science can only be written as poetry, partly because the senses can’t inform language and partly because poetic cognizance comes closer to communicating knowledge than literalist uses of language. If the senses are organized by chance (e.g. Evolutionist “chance”) and then they could be different from how they are (e.g. like that of a bird), then why was one possibility for the senses realized instead of another? Why is one sensation noticed rather than another?

Zufallsinne as a challenge to knowledge gained through empirical means is manifested in the ‘Proteus’ episode of Ulysses, as Stephen looks for the “signatures” of experiences “thought through my eyes” (45.6). These “signatures” become the material for art as he transforms sense impressions into metaphor, and the philosophical empiricist speculations which begin the chapter give way to a chain of associations whereby his sense impressions are distorted for the reader by metaphor, making only poetic sense. Stephen also acknowledges that there are other organizations of the senses. One of his first metaphysical experiences is to walk with his eyes closed, to experience the world with senses. He is acute to the “signatures” that he can “read” and those that he cannot as he watches the dog sniff a rock and then urinate on it: olfactory signs are signatures, or “bladderwrack” (55.30) which exist for dogs and he replicates them with his own micturation. Stephen leaves a ‘signature’ in a language that he cannot read; only the dog can. What this gesture indicates is beyond the limit of his language, beyond his world

and into that of the dog. In 'Calypso' Bloom contemplates how he must appear to his cat. These contemplations highlight the fact that Stephen's senses and those of Bloom are human senses and are limited thereby. Stephen has no access to the olfactory realm of the dog, nor does Bloom have access to the visual field of the cat. Bloom and Stephen also contemplate the world through other organizations of the senses, i.e. blindness. After his Berkleyan experiment, Stephen tests what it would be like to be blind, tapping his way with his ashplant. For Nietzsche one perspective cannot assert to be true, and for Mach the triangulation of perspectives can give us the ability to make predictions, but for Mauthner the contingency of the senses alone is enough to say that all sensation and intuition are inadequate foundations for knowledge.

Hofmannsthal responds to Mach's empirical psychology as Chandos, experiencing the world through his senses describes feeling that "it is as though my body consists of nought but ciphers" (138). Chandos, like Dedalus, sees himself as a reader of "the signatures of all things" (U 45.7-8). As a "cipher" Chandos experiences sensations as "a blissful, never ending interplay, and among the objects playing against me there is not one into which I cannot flow" (138). The play of "signatures" affects him as a sense of vertigo. He was initially drawn to the "whirlpools" formed by language, but as Nietzsche would have it, Chandos is "guided not by concepts but by intuitions" from which "no regular road leads to the land of ghostly schemata, of abstractions. The word is not made for these intuitions; man falls silent when he sees them" (255-6). Chandos is perturbed by the fact that he is compelled to speak in spite of his conviction that he cannot put this intuitive sense of the world into words: "I feel compelled by a mysterious power to reflect in a manner which, the moment I attempt to express it in words, strikes

me as supremely foolish” (140). His quotidian existence and social affairs assume a “barely believable vacuity” (138) because of his language crisis. This leads him to the dissolution of self that Mach’s psychology entails: As he is unable to differentiate himself from his sensations of objects around him, his sense of self is an economical contrivance organized by the “elements” of sensations. It is not that he perceives no difference between words and the world any longer, but rather that he feels his own particularity lost in a world of multiple particularities; of “individual differences” (Nietzsche 249) and circulating evenly among objects that challenge his subjective sense of ontological superiority:

It is then that I feel as though I myself were about to ferment, to effervesce, to foam and to sparkle. And the whole thing is a kind of feverish thinking, but thinking in a medium more immediate, more liquid, more glowing than words. It too forms whirlpools, but of a sort that do not seem to lead into the whirlpools of language, into the abyss, but into myself and into the deepest womb of peace. (140)

The whirlpools are not those of idealism and realism, but of the public sphere and the private. ‘Lord Chandos Letter’ is a study of the empiricist hypothesis, as if the Machian idea of a self that only exists as elements of sensations could not lead us otherwise. The traffic of language involves a communication with other people, and here he is responding to a letter to Francis Bacon, but we also learn that it had been “two years of silence” (129) since his last letter. In his sympathetic comparison of himself with the orator Crassus, weeping over the death of his lamprey, Chandos finds an historic figure who finds his own relativistic particularity in the acknowledgment of other perspectives.

Nietzsche asserts that the question of whether a man or a bird or an insect perceive things differently, or that the question of which one was the right perspective was “completely senseless... since it could be decided only by the criterion of the *right perception*, i.e. by a standard *which does not exist*” (252). Chandos’s role as a cipher for impressions makes the unity that he must temporarily assume in order to compose a letter “an *aesthetic stance*.” If Chandos is true to the letter then once he falls silent, so will his ego, thus the loss of a metaphysical cohesion in language is the loss of a stable unity for the self.

Nietzsche’s likening of the subject to “Regents at the head of a communality of force” (*Will to Power* 492; qtd. in Valente 90) has a particular resonance to the many perspective engendered by the languages and cultures of the Empire. The philosophical tradition that had preceded the demise of the already unstable Empire produced a discourse on the status of the self and the relation of language to knowledge whereby one could identify the Empire by its faults, and see in the self a synecdoche for the Empire. Valente writes of this “regency” what could have been said about the Empire, “Far from cognizing cellular drives, this aristocratic perspective governs by simplifying and falsifying their activity to suit its needs” (90). Like Chandos after his disillusionment with language, the Empire seems analogous with that lost sense of a unified self; a grammatical confusion designated by the word, so the authority of the inherited language now assumes “a life of barely believable vacuity.” The Habsburg Empire projected an image of unity and exigency, but Musil mocked this image in The Man Without Qualities, as the Parallel Campaign that assembles to celebrate Franz Joseph’s reign completely lacks any unifying ideas or values. Rather, broken down into its cultural, ethnic or linguistic particular groups, demanding to be recognized as such, the Empire

could assume no sovereignty over itself. Rational language comes identified with the paternal Habsburg Empire, in the figure of Franz Joseph, and his authority a matter of convention or idolatry; a concept standing in for something that doesn't exist.

The literature and the ethical philosophy of the *Sprachkrise*, on the borderlines between literature, philosophy and political ideology, emerge from a sense of crisis in the human sciences, paralleled with the declining Habsburg empire; the only governing system that most of these writers had ever known. In Nietzsche, Mach, Mauthner and Hofmannsthal we see the intertwining of perspectivism with a historical critique of knowledge that would have consequences for metaphysical thought and the concepts of self that it organized. They also demonstrate how (in spite of Nietzsche's rejection of scientism as "Socratic optimism" or Mach's rejection of Nietzsche's "Übermensch" as the antithesis to his "unsavable subject") language critical ideas arrived at through positivist thought and irrationalist thought did not necessarily contradict each other.

Nietzsche's ethical and epistemological perspectivism, rooted in its connection to the will to power, and his historical critique of philosophy and rhetoric undermined *logos* in the classical order. Mach's economy of thought which excluded all that language could not comment upon from the scientific domain, *via* what could not be empirically observed as elements of sensations, strove to purge scientific language of its metaphoric content, and in essence, to purge it of culture. Mauthner's critique of language proceeds from the contingency of the senses, and metaphors of sense as attesting to the unreliability of *logos* in relation to knowledge. The language crisis of Hofmannsthal's Chandos occurs when he discovers that what he held to be knowledge turned out to be no more than a delusion made possible by his disregard of the Baconian 'idols' of language.

Significantly, in their historical critiques of language all four authors demonstrated an historical self-consciousness, regarding the limits of their own episteme and expression.⁶²

The philosophical attitude of language pessimism created tensions within the order of the human sciences that undermined the entire Enlightenment enterprise of Cartesian ratiocination. It contributed to a mood of modernity that Robert B. Pippin identifies as one of loss and failure; “a culture of melancholy, profound skepticism, intense self-criticism,” and “disenchantment – the general failure of modern ideas to inspire the hope and allegiance necessary for the sustenance and reproduction of a civilization” (496). Wittgenstein summarized the condition of current philosophy at this crossroads while setting the stage for the Philosophical Investigations with a motto chosen from Nestroy’s comedy The Protégé: “Überhaupt hat der Fortschritt das an sich, daß er viel größer aussieht, als er wirklich ist. (Anyway, the thing about progress is that it looks much greater than it really is.)”⁶³ Three things are significant about this quotation for us: for one, its message, which is an aside and not a thesis, suggests that what had been called “progress” until then, i.e. the entire Enlightenment enterprise of knowing the world through language, had been illusory. Secondly, Wittgenstein’s choice of a quotation from Nestroy as a paratext for his work is significant,⁶⁴ since Nestroy was arguably Austria’s first language philosopher. Nestroy’s use of language, often conflating high German with the Viennese dialect for subversive comical effect, showed the pretensions of his characters toward learning and culture. This was the pattern of language critique suggested by the philosophy and literature that resonates in his suggestion that philosophy “ought really to be written as a *poetic composition*” (CV 24). Thirdly, Karl Kraus revived Nestroy as the Austrian conscience and hailed Nestroy as the

first language philosopher. Wittgenstein was an avid and sympathetic reader of Karl Kraus, with *die Fackel* shining even in his darkest Norway.

3. Literature of the *Sprachkrise*

The symbols of the true artist are not allegories, to be translated back into personifications of sharply defined, unambiguous philosophical concepts bearing proper names, and in the language of a particular philosophical system, just as soon as the key to the code is discovered. What the poet immediately saw and felt in his symbols, the philosopher is only able to discover slowly and with much forethought.

– Otto Weininger. On Last Things.

Realizing that language was inadequate to convey experience, Vienna's language critical writers sought to find ways of "bringing literature as close as possible to a form of knowledge" (Rabaté 136) that broke with the illusory transparency of classical language. Foucault writes of this period in The Order of Things: "It is the task of words to translate the truth if they can; but they no longer have the right to be considered a mark of it" (56). Aside from the Vienna Circle philosophers who pursued the positivist fantasy of an integral referential language, philosophers and writers realized that language was inadequate if taken as the unquestioned foundation of all knowledge. The poetry and prose arising from the *Sprachkrise* exercised a radically skeptical attitude to all absolutes in order to exorcise the enslaving structures language imposes upon experience. Viennese writers were thus engaged in an epistemological challenge set for them by their philosophical predecessors in realizing that the intuition available to them was marred by the inadequacy of the senses as well as the paucity of language.

Nietzsche's emphasis upon the cooperation between distinct forms of discourse (i.e. the rhetorical and the philosophical) finds a counterpart in the works of several Austrian writers; notably in the tension between the verbally expressible in human experience and that which lies beyond language in their works. Viennese writers saw themselves as involved in language critical discourses on knowledge, and the tension

between the sayable and the ineffable paralleled the tension between scientific and irrationalist discourses. Innovations in language skeptical literature reacted against the positivist discourses of the natural sciences, or adapted their principles to forms of art; attempted to reform language as a reliable witness to experience, or employ a radical language skepticism that led to a positive celebration of the ineffable. It seems that Viennese writers deliberately blurred the distinction between these discourses as Schnitzler and Altenberg, often identified with Viennese literary impressionism, could have been said to display the scientific tendency, yet they call into question the categorical and unifying impulses of language. Hofmannsthal and Musil, the emblematic writers of *Sprachkrise*, tended toward the ineffable, and yet they engaged scientific questions. Joyce's theory and praxis of epiphany takes on remarkably varied dimensions when seen in light of the *fin-de-siècle* Austrian literature's engagement of irrationalist and positivist language skeptical discourses. Joyce's preoccupation with the tension between the language of science and that of art were never far from those of his Austrian contemporaries.

Theodor Ziolkowski asserted that many German speaking writers at the time were engaged in portraying frames of mind that resembled Joycean epiphany in which the timeless shows through in the quotidian, and that the language crisis provided a significant context for this development: "all these attempts stem ultimately from the same language skepticism, while the young Joyce found his answer in his own unique and very specifically defined secularization of the epiphany" (73). For the authors that I will be discussing in the first two parts of this chapter, Schnitzler, Altenberg, Hofmannsthal, Musil and Rilke, some form of epiphany was integral to their works. In

Hofmannsthal's *Ein Brief* and Musil's *The Confusions of Young Törless* language is opposed to silence, and ontic reality to that of experience, without reference to a noumenal real, or as Wittgenstein later expressed at 6.522 of the *Tractatus*: "There is indeed the inexpressible. This *shows* itself; it is the mystical." By drawing a limit to the sayable and insisting that things which cannot be put into words make themselves manifest, Wittgenstein shared with his literary predecessors a way of conceiving the ineffable in a way that was *not* negative, or as Massimo Cacciari explains,

Theirs is the plane of epiphany, which is the mystical. ... Epiphany is recognizable. To understand it requires a true "intensity of recognition" that Baget-Bozzo and Benvenuto find in Saint Augustine. (Not by chance is Augustine a primary influence on Wittgenstein.) This recognition cannot be communicated or demonstrated in language. It can, however, be shown... Wittgenstein glosses Augustine listening to silence: the only way to unsilence the ineffable is to recognize its limits. (98-99)

Just as Wittgenstein showed a lifelong fascination with Augustine that he would turn toward his *Philosophical Investigations*, Joyce before him borrowed the theological concept of epiphany from Christianity and invested it with secular meaning.⁶⁵ In the years of Joyce's development as an artist in Dublin, he took notes on everyday interactions and images and many of them were integrated into his later work. Joyce's consciousness of language is evident in these short reports of heard speech, dream images and personal vignettes that he called 'epiphanies.' Cacciari is right to make the association between the religious and the secular epiphany and also to emphasize the "intensity of recognition" required for such moments of mystical showing forth. What

Joyce calls 'epiphany' begins as a recognition of certain moments of showing-forth but evolves into a recognition that has similar conditions to the concept of mysticism that Wittgenstein writes about near the end of the *Tractatus*. In the context of Gianni Baget-Bozzo's strictly theological frame of the speech or silence of God,⁶⁶ Wittgenstein's insistence on the ethical purpose of the *Tractatus* can be seen in this theological light; by means of his "elucidations" he hopes that his reader might "see the world rightly." For Wittgenstein nothing meaningful can be said about the world; the epiphany is something that is shown, and of it one cannot speak, because nothing of it can be said: "Not *how* the world is, is the mystical, but *that* it is" (6.44), or as Cacciari understands it, "The mystical is the dimension of self-manifestation and of the "intensity of recognition" that invests it... The ineffable is a presence, and it is the premise of speech" (99-100).

As Richard Ellman comments, "The epiphany was the 'sudden revelation of the whatness of a thing', the moment in which 'the soul of the commonest object... seems to us radiant'" (83). Ellman comments that the use of epiphany in Joyce's fiction, "claims importance by claiming nothing; it seeks a presentation so sharp that comment by the author would seem an interference" (85). Each epiphany is offered as an index of the unutterable *quidditas*. Jean-Michel Rabaté observes that "epiphanies happen when one lets the Real intrude at every street corner: the Real beckons, it is just a matter of capturing the sign it flashes" (127). In *Ulysses*, Stephen Dedalus's gesture toward "God" outside the window of Mr. Deasy's office, demonstrates that "A shout in the street" is available for such moments of recognition, but he says it with a resigned shrug because he knows that his interlocutor can only respond to such moments by crying "continuously without listening", "What is it now?" (U 35.7-8)

In this way we can see that the epiphany is not only the image presented, but the consciousness that is tuned to recognize it. Joyce's epiphanies were an attempt to "see the world rightly," but Stephen's aesthetic theory, at the centre of which was the apprehension of *claritas*, as well as his transmutation of the epiphany into the material for art, may have consigned it to the wrong side of Wittgenstein's limit. They nonetheless *showed* those limits, pointing to, as Rabaté suggests, "a constitutive gap in language" (127). He writes that, "The capture and reflection of the epiphanies were presented as mimesis of the barest possible kind and engaged a crucial concept in Aristotle's *Poetics* (126). Aristotle contradicts Plato's negative view of *mimesis* which forces upon art a profound ontological alienation from true reality, and appeals to the emotions rather than to the intellect. For Aristotle all forms of mimesis come into being because of a profound intellectual impulse felt by human beings. Yet if we recall Nietzsche's theory of language, man's impulse to transform impressions into metaphor, simile and anthropomorphism also leads to the alienation of the intellect from intuitions about the world. In Aristotle's *Poetics* mimesis is that very toothless 'deception without harm' that Nietzsche speaks of: "It copies human life, taking it for a good thing, and seems quite satisfied with it" (255). Mimesis, for Aristotle, describes a process involving the use by different art forms, of different means of representation, different manners of communicating that representation to an audience, and different levels of moral and ethical behavior as objects of the artistic representation. However, Aristotle specifies that the function of literary mimesis is to represent a complete and unified action consisting of a beginning, middle, and end linked by necessary and probable causes, so it is clear that

the Joycean epiphany, when isolated from every context, is not strictly mimetic in the Aristotelian sense.

With regards to the relationship between language and thought by turn-of-the century Austrian writers, mimesis was a significant factor in conditioning these epiphanies, while the language itself, no longer a transparent medium, substituted the complete action of a narrative teleology. Richard T. Gray, writing on the literary genre of the aphorism, which flourished among Viennese intellectuals at the turn of the century, makes a distinction between the receptive moment of the aphorism: “the stimulating thought, the *aperçu*, which takes the thinker by surprise, occurring beyond all acts of willing and intending” (81), and the creative response to this moment. He describes the aphoristic moment in Franz Mautner’s terms “*Einfall*” and “*Klärung*”⁶⁷ and asserts such moments involve a parallelism of the two in that “most aphorisms are informed by the interaction of these active and passive moments” (82). The response, or the aphorism produced, is employed as a means to an end, but that end has already been obtained in the moment of reception (82). Often the insightful recognition is accompanied by a trivial variant, as one cannot be conceived without the other: “The aphorism of the period archetypically reflects the parallelism of the profound and the trivial” (84). Grey distinguishes the aphorism of ‘epiphany’ from that of ‘impression’, in the sense that they are made to leave an impression on someone. This common use of clever short expressions as a kind of intellectual ornamentation in Viennese society is playfully dramatized in Schnitzler’s *Anatol* (see Gray 87). Peter Altenberg distinguishes true aphoristic creation from this form by its epiphanic character: “Aphorismen sollen nicht ‘ausgedachte’ Wahrheiten sein, sondern momentane Erleuchtungen aus dem

Unterbewußtsein. (Aphorisms should not be 'invented' truths, but momentary illuminations from the subconscious)" (qtd. in Gray 88; my translation). Gray could have had Stephen Hero in hand when he defined "the aphorism of epiphany:"

Epiphany is a kind of mystical experience which occurs when some everyday object suddenly and unpredictably takes on an indescribably meaning, becoming in a momentary flash, and indicator of transcendental significance. In the aphorism of epiphany everyday language functions as that commonplace object which is suddenly infused with a profound significance... In its applicative function the epiphanic aphorism, in stark contrast to the aphorism of impression, becomes a critical tool. These aphorisms are structured in such a manner as to reproduce for the reader the epiphanic experience that led to their creation... Where the Viennese public might expect innocent humor or a game of stunning verbal acrobatics, the epiphanic aphorism served it a healthy dose of self-critique, laying bare its degenerate verbal pomp. In this manifestation the aphorism became the ideal medium for a critique of the "Sprachgebrauch" of this society. (88-9)

Much of this definition resonates with Joyce's definition of the epiphany, and the premise that it becomes a tool for language critique in the late-Habsburg Viennese context can inform a reading of Joyce. A cursory look through Joyce's 'Epiphanies' reveal a writer engaged in a critique of his society's pretensions and cultural paralysis. Grey rightly observes that Kraus wrote numerous aphorisms "as a polemical weapon in his crusade against shallowness and self-deception" (89), and these are characteristics

that one observes in Joyce's portrayals of verbal interactions between Dubliners. However, Kraus and Joyce worked these things out differently; where Kraus's aphorism was inherently didactic and presupposed a dialogue with a reader, Joyce's epiphanies hold language up for private scrutiny; and one finds in this representation of a public utterance, a barrier between the purely private sphere of reception and the epiphany presented as a creative act. As Grey indicated, the epiphany is complete in the reception, but in Joyce it replaces, conceals it behind the very language he uses to report on it, or in the words of Peter Altenberg: "Ich halte dafür: Was man 'weise verschweigt,' ist künstlerischer, als was man 'geschwätzig ausspricht.' Nicht?!" (I hold for it: What one indicates 'conceals' more artistically, than that which one expresses in 'idle chatter.' Is it not?!)" (qtd. in Gray 90; my translation) For Joyce this "idle chatter" was the material for a critical art.

Epiphanies / Viennese Impressionism

Joyce's epiphanies were often isolated records of overheard speech and images offered as they were remembered by the author without an explicit narrative context. In their succinct, telegraphic use of language and their attention to fleeting, evanescent trivialities, 'epiphanies' shared a common form with the literary tradition of Viennese Impressionism. Characterized by a fascination with the fleeting and impermanent, Viennese Impressionism was an aesthetic attitude that reveled in constant shifts of perspective, qualifying such writers as Peter Altenberg, Arthur Schnitzler, Richard Beer-Hofman, Joseph Roth, Richard von Schaukal, and even Hugo von Hofmannstal and Italo Svevo as impressionistic in this distinctly Viennese sense (see Johnston 169-174).

Emerging as a protest against the sterile formalism and overwrought complexity of aestheticism, Viennese Impressionism rebelled against pomposity, falseness, historicism, salon culture, the comfortable conventionality of classical modes, and any kind of absolutism.⁶⁸ It employed linguistically compact lyric and prose forms and its primary genres were the aphorism, the feuilleton, the short story, and the prose sketch.⁶⁹ It was generally a mode of writing, rather than a movement with adherents that you could call “Impressionists” as Pamela Saur argues, “With the exception of thorough-going literary impressionists such as Peter Altenberg, it is usually best to apply the word to texts or passages and refrain from using the word to describe an author's whole *oeuvre*.”⁷⁰ Its distinctive trait, as William Johnston suggests, was a melding of the subjective emotions of the author with the surrounding objective and social world. For Joyce the selection of a moment as an epiphany saw language as an object of experience that affected a silent understanding in the mind of its receiver. In Stephen Hero epiphany is described as “a sudden spiritual manifestation, whether in the vulgarity of speech or of gesture or in a memorable phase of the mind itself. He believed that it was for the man of letters to record these epiphanies with extreme care, seeing that they themselves are the most delicate and evanescent of moments” (188). Peter Altenberg’s view toward the revelatory power of “little things” resembles Joyce’s view toward the “common objects” and utterances that ‘achieve epiphany.’ Altenberg’s vignette ‘Little Things’ reads like an aesthetic theory:

For a long time now I’ve judged people only according to minute details.

I am, alas, unable to await the ‘great events’ in their life through which they will ‘disclose’ their true selves. I am obliged to predict these

‘disclosures’ in the little things of life.... The significant things in life have absolutely no importance. They tell, they make known nothing more about being than we ourselves already know about it! Since when you get down to it everything works by and large in the same way. But the important differences are only manifest in the details... One must be inclined to allow a symphony of ordinary life to resound in the sum of the “little things”! One cannot wait for big events to happen! All the least consequential things are monumental!... Little things in life supplant the “great events.” That is their value if you can fathom it! (84-85)

Altenberg resists the impulse to look into grand historical narratives for a concealed, profound significance, preferring to glean his knowledge from the superficial and immediately apparent world, and similarly for the protagonist of Stephen Hero, “Its soul, its whatness, leaps to us from the vestment of its appearance” (190). These moments which *achieve* epiphany originate in the “marketplace” and attain a transcendent place in the “literary tradition.” Altenberg and Joyce call attention to such ‘throwaways’ as “stray remarks, neglected gems, pearls of the soul that roll under the table and are picked up by no one” (Altenberg 84)! Altenberg invests ordinary and inconsequential events with significance and records them in a kind of off-the-cuff sketch, whereby the “great events” by contrast are subsumed under a generality akin to the “meaningless” (in Wittgenstein’s sense) propositions of natural science; tautologies which tell us what “we ourselves already know...” Altenberg found all of his inspiration in the city and by any definition, Viennese Impressionism was an *urban* art:

Vignettes of rootless persons in cafes illustrate the symbiosis of impressionism with the metropolis. Encounters are fleeting; life consists of glimpses and of conversations overheard; experience occurs *in mediis rebus*, where nothing is undertaken and nothing completed. Altenberg's fragments reflected his existence as a *clochard* or *Schnorrer*, the eternal Bohemian who spent each day strolling from one café to another.

(Johnston 120)

The urban element in Joyce's work is undeniable; from Dubliners to Finnegans Wake we follow his characters through the city. According to the Hungarian-born art historian, Arnold Hauser (1892-1978), Viennese Impressionism "describes the changeability, the nervous rhythm, the sudden, sharp, but always ephemeral impressions of city life" (qtd. in Johnston 120). Bloom's meetings, observations, and his constantly roving attention have an impressionistic quality, and identify him as the consummate *clochard*. His career as a canvasser for ads and his attention to what some would consider insignificant details demonstrates a historical relativity that inverts the emphasis on "big events," to foreground the role of subjective prejudice and attention in one's historical understanding the past. As external events or details became occasions for the exploration of subjective emotions and attitudes, no experience, however unimportant on a historical scale, was considered by Viennese Impressionists to be too lowly (or lofty) to banish from the record of man.⁷¹ Impressionism entails an approach to experience that collects triviality and gives equal value to all sensations. As Joyce writes in Stephen Hero, "This *triviality* made him think of collecting many such moments together in a book of epiphanies" (188). Walter Benjamin might say that the impressionist is a

“chronicler who recites events without distinguishing between major and minor ones.”⁷²

The historicist dimension of Viennese Impressionism was indebted to late nineteenth-century perspectivism and genealogical critiques of the human sciences:

Although sectarians may impugn openness to multiplicity as puerile, it offers the safest guide to the past, especially when amplified by an impressionist's flair for detecting hidden structures. In order to envision the entire past as contiguous with the present, the historian must transmute prejudices into perspectives and biases into tools... In order to understand the past on its own terms, each specialist must relive the preconceptions of each age before integrating them with abiding premises. (Johnston 387-88)

Joyce was indeed this kind of a historian, holding up a “cracked lookingglass” to Dublin on June 16, 1904, centuries of history come to the surface. In the epiphanies this is realized in a monadic fashion where the dialogues and pauses are the smallest units of a narrative contiguous with the unconscious metaphoric ossification of centuries. Viennese Impressionism is reconciled with mimesis where it offers its medium – language – as a complete unit of history. As Hermann Broch observes:

Joyce eavesdrops on language and languages, in order that they out of gratitude might supply him with the correct word-symbol and with this the essentials of reality, and such linguistic mysticism (by contrast with which Flaubert's becomes schoolmasterly pedantry) is nothing but the resumption of the medial method invented by impressionists – and is every bit as rational. For all true mysticism is rational, and linguistic mysticism is mysticism of the medium. And, just as with the

impressionists, the breakthrough into the irrational emerges here; it is to be seen and felt everywhere in Joyce's work. (Broch 162)

Arthur Schnitzler's Lieutenant Gustl was the first example of interior monologue in the German language, and Joyce had it in his Trieste library, however it is just as likely that Joyce first read this style where Schnitzler did: in Edouard Dujardin. Second to Altenberg, Schnitzler was remembered as an impressionist writer for his representation of consciousness as a continual intermingling of sensations and thoughts in novellas like Lieutenant Gustl and Fraulein Else. To refer again to Arnold Hauser's definition of Viennese Impressionism, Schnitzler brooded on "the coincidence of the near and the far, the strangeness of the nearest, most everyday things, the feeling of being for ever separated from the world" (qtd. in Johnston 172). He was also identified with an impressionist lifestyle: one that he dramatizes in his plays Anatol and Riegen, whose characters are driven by pleasure and sensation-seeking elements.

Schnitzler believed that every impression imparted at once knowledge and illusion, arguing that words can echo but never truly convey the substratum of experience, agreeing with Mach's view that the perspectival impressions on a neutral field of evidence stood in a dynamic relation to an unknown and unknowable Real. This view made Schnitzler skeptical of the language he was using to describe experiences and thought: "We do not think in words or pictures, but in something we cannot grasp. If we could grasp it, we would have a world language" (qtd. in Johnston 173). Because words fail to accurately express what we intend, we are hindered, Schnitzler maintains, in our ability to reach truth. His drama *Fink and Fliederbusch* was a bitter commentary about journalists engaged in a hilarious game of betrayal and deception and like Kraus,

Schnitzler strikes out against journalists who deceive, cheat, lie and manipulate facts.

However, the play also has a lot to say about language and communication:

We talk around ideas, because we are not able to express any idea in words completely; otherwise there would long since have been communication – at least between people who understand. But we also think around words, and this is the alarming thing. If we had the strength or the courage or the opportunity to eliminate words more completely from our thinking, we would be further along than we are.⁷⁴

Schnitzler sees language as an obstacle to understanding, and recognizes that the knowable stands in a dynamic relation to the unknowable, but departs from the identification of thought with language that Mauthner and Nietzsche express with the implication that we have thought before and beyond language. Broch's hypothesis that the rationalism of impression breaks into the mysticism of the irrational is exemplified by this Impressionist view.

For the Viennese Impressionist, the event of death afforded a supreme arbiter to symbolize at once the latent content of life – the unconscious and emotions that words cannot transmit. In Schnitzler's novellas, for instance, the death of a friend exerts impact enough to shatter pretenses of everyday life and heighten their reflections on their immediate sensations (see Johnston 173). The interior monologues of Schnitzler's Fraulein Else and Lieutenant Gustl assume a heightened immediacy because they are both thinking of suicide. Preoccupations with death impact upon the thoughts and impressions of many Joycean characters: in Ulysses the funeral of Paddy Dignam as well as that of his son eleven years ago affects Leopold Bloom's thoughts and impressions,

and Stephen Dedalus is haunted by the *agenbite of inwit* surrounding his mother's death. Among Joyce's epiphanies, the reports of speech and gesture surrounding his brother Georgie's sickness and death point to a profound failure of language, where ellipses take up as much space as the words and icy and impersonal stage directions stand in for the awful emotional power of the experience. It is Georgie's death as much as it is that of Joyce and Mrs. Joyce: "The hole in Georgie's stomach" is "The hole we all have ... here" (No. 19). The last words are not dialogue but a stage direction "Joyce: [stands up]. Joyce revises this epiphany and places it into Stephen Hero with the death of Stephen's sister Isabel (SH 147). The effect of the dead upon the living was a critical issue for Viennese Impressionism since reverence for the dead, the historicizing of architecture (i.e. the Ringstrasse) and the astonishing prevalence of suicide in Vienna seemed to cultivate, as Johnston suggests, "indifference to the living" (168). In the short stories of Dubliners, the effect of the dead among the living is largely responsible for the paralysis of Irish culture.

Epiphanies / 'das mystik'

Joyce composed the Epiphanies in Dublin, and in his proto-portrait, Stephen Hero, Joyce is at great pains to outline the theory of the epiphany. Yet, as Jean-Michel Rabaté points out in an interesting discussion of Joyce's epiphanies as theory, the term 'epiphany' is entirely absent from A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man, even though many of the epiphanies from his notebook appear there (Rabaté 128). Moreover, the book seems to be structured around these epiphanies. It seems that the later Joyce saw them more as praxis than theory. Joyce incorporated these sketches into his works and

though he may have spoken of publishing a book of these prose sketches,⁷⁵ readers did not come to know them in that form until after his death. In Joyce's epiphanies language is no longer the transparent instrument by which one could record history, but an obstruction to the apprehension of the real. Wittgenstein writes in the *Tractatus*.

6.44 Not *how* the world is, is the mystical, but *that* it is.

6.45 The contemplation of the world sub specie aeterni is its contemplation as a limited whole.

The feeling that the world is a limited whole is the mystical feeling.

Joyce's epiphanies demonstrated the "intensity of recognition" that was required to apprehend moments of showing forth, however if the epiphany in its subjective mode attempted to portray *how* the world is, whether successful or not, it showed *that* the epiphany was recognizable. The epiphany; a 'showing forth' recorded in language, you could say, lost something in the transition. The epiphany stood for the loss of reality; symbolized a former presence, the revelation lost, and the writing that took its place. The more exacting the recording of the epiphany, the more would be lost of its contingent particularity and emotional significance. In The Confusions of Young Törless, Musil's protagonist reflects that language used to describe a real experience was doomed to a loss of its mystical *quidditas*: "It was a failure of words that tormented him then, a half-awareness that the words were merely random excuses for what he had felt" (72).

Wittgenstein conceived of his *Tractatus* as two books: one that was written and one that was not; and it was the book that was not written that mattered most. One can easily read Joyce's epiphanies as having two parts, as the text called an "epiphany" stands in the place of the emotional experience apprehended and demarcates the silent

void it leaves behind it. The loss of reality that the textual trace of the epiphany conceals is symbolized by a wordless syntax. The spaces and ellipsis in many of Joyce's epiphanies draw attention to the latent, real content which is beyond language. The epiphany proffered in Stephen Hero, before Stephen explains of the concept of epiphany is exemplary of this latent content:

The Young Lady – (drawling discreetly) ... O, yes ... I was ... at the ...
cha ... pel ...

The Young Gentleman – (inaudibly) ... I ... (again inaudibly) ... I ...

The Young Lady – (softly) ... O ... but you're ... ve ... ry ... wick ... ed
(188)

The dots and ellipsis count for more than the text in this case, gesturing toward the silent Real that eludes words. Jean Michel Rabaté looks upon the lack of words in this passage as constitutional of the epiphany and how it “condenses a fascinating mixture of Irish paralysis and sexual innuendo” (127). He also looks at how this suggestive emptiness spreads: “not only has it to be repeated so as to generate a serial concept, but it also points to a constitutive gap in language. Having captured less a moment of plentitude than a void in a voice or loopholes of dialogues, Stephen decides to compose a book made up of such cuts, swoons, fadings” (ibid). Yet in Ulysses, Stephen's projected book to be printed on “oval leaves” and sent to the Alexandrian library is derided along with his precocious writerly posturing, or as David Hayman suggests “Stephen is trying to release himself from the spell cast by outworn modes of the *fin de siècle*, especially of the sort of aestheticism exemplified by Oscar Wilde and Algernon Swinburne, a tendency that he also identifies with the other-worldly esoterism

of the Dublin Theosophists" (636). In this respect he shares with Musil, Hofmannsthal, Schnitzler and Altenberg a presentation of the emergence of mystical moments in ordinary experience without resorting to decadent or aesthetic forms.

Hofmannsthal, as *Loris*, was considered by Karl Kraus to be the exemplar of such decadent reactions to experience; the euphoric stage of Chandos letter described as misled and illusory was nonetheless concerned with knowing. In the stages of crisis and epiphany, Chandos eschews the aesthetic tendency for seeking resemblances as a mode of knowledge for an apprehension of the world unclouded by the ordering principle of language. Chandos would prefer to think in a more direct medium than words; a language spoken by mute matter. In the dual world of identity and difference, Chandos concludes that words have failed him and their use must be abandoned, yet his form of abandoning language is astonishing. The loss of his ability to use conceptual language is the price that Chandos pays for a greater authenticity experience both of the objects about him and of the mystical epiphany that they reveal. What might seem as an outright rejection of language (and yet the letter itself is a masterful piece of prose) allows Chandos a kind of insight that resembles a Joycean epiphany, as Claudio Magris asserts:

Lord Chandos vive, com'è stato notato di Ziolkowski, la nitida e pura epifania dell'oggetto nel senso joyciano: l'oggetto è immobile, sottratto alla fuga del tempo, ed appare integro nei suoi limiti chiaramente tracciati, armonioso nella sua immagine equilibrata, luminoso nella sua essenza. Lo stile, osserva Wolfram Mauser, abbandona ogni ricchezza metaforici per concentrarsi nell'essenzialità di aggettivi nudi, che dicano soltanto la qualità dell'oggetto. Come nello *Stefano eroe* di Joyce, anche qui

l'epifania è puro e assoluto presente, improvviso momento
d'illuminazione, autonomo di ogni contesto. Lord Chandos parla di
"rivelazione", di "un fiotto straripante di vita più alta", che riempie
l'esistenza quotidiana "come si colma un vaso."⁷⁶

Although *Chandosbreif* shares with Joyce's epiphanies an almost mystical sense of immediacy, aspiring to a clear perception of experience; there are important differences between their epiphanies. The image that strikes such an exalted figure for Chandos is visual, whereas for Joyce it is auditory. Chandos epiphanies are, as Magris describes them, "mute, giungono dal fondo del silenzio, e Lord Chandos non può parlarne" (ibid),⁷⁸ whereas for Joyce, the epiphany is manifested in language, and he must write them. Although Chandos does not record his silent epiphanies, he is compelled to speak of them in his letter, giving his epiphanies an interpretative context as Joyce does through Stephen Dedalus's ostensive definition of epiphany in *Stephen Hero*. It is possible that Wittgenstein had the epiphany described by Chandos in mind when he wrote about the mystical (especially in the two propositions presented above), the interpretative context he offers for the recognition of the mystical is probably closer to that of Musil's Törless.

During the time that Musil was writing his *Bildungsroman*, The Confusions of Young Törless (1906), the Belgian writer Maurice Maeterlinck exerted as strong influence in Austria (Hickman 11). As a motto for his novel Musil quoted from Maeterlinck's The Treasures of the Humble:

'As soon as we put something into words, we devalue it in a strange way.
We think we have plunged to the depths of the abyss, and when we return

to the surface the drop of water on our pale fingertips no longer resembles the sea from which it comes. We delude ourselves that we have discovered a wonderful treasure trove, and when we return to the light of day we find that we have brought back only false stones and shards of glass; and yet the treasure goes on glimmering in the dark, unaltered.’⁸⁰

This quotation shares with Mauthner, Nietzsche and Hofmannsthal the view that some experiences are real when lived and known intuitively; however, when one tries to define them through words, the result is a loss of that intuition. Musil signals such moments in *Törless* by ellipsis denoting where the narrative encounters the limits of language. The ellipses at the end of many sentences come to signify sustained intuitions that do not surface in the narrative. Such epiphanies had become a trope of language critical literature as Patricia McBride notes in her monograph on Musil entitled The Void of Ethics:

Törless’s preverbal glimpses into an alternate mode of being intimate the possibility of an intuitive existence that, in eluding the mediation through language and thought, is able to disclose an altogether different picture of the real – a mystical experience that closely recalls the mute epiphanies experienced by Hofmannsthal’s Lord Chandos. These epiphanies cast into doubt the ability of language and thought to encompass what is most precious in human existence. (44)

This last observation is one that Wittgenstein expressed in the proposition “We feel that even if *all possible* scientific questions be answered, the problems of life have still not been touched at all” (6.52). Hofmannsthal and Musil saw language as a force

that occludes or distorts the absolute vision of the Real. Hannah Hickman looks at the theme of magnification in both works and compares them:

Thus for Hofmannsthal, loss of words and concepts, expressed in the image of magnification, leads to disintegration. Only in the last section of the essay is a possible solution indicated: direct knowledge of the world through emotion, without the mediation of words. For Musil on the other hand, magnification produces distortion: the insistence on using words in situations where their use is inappropriate leads, it is true, to greater definition, as in a magnified image; but ipso facto the resulting excessive precision results in the falsification of the original emotional experience.

(50)

The distinction that Hickman draws between Musil and Hofmannsthal; between a focus on the object that leads to disintegration of the subject and distortion of the object, might come from the educational backgrounds that informed their views. Musil was not a writer from the café-cultured *Jung Wein* literary circle. He made his way to literature through the theoretical physics and engineering. The radical skepticism with regard to the adequacy of language as a medium for representing and negotiating experience differed in its regard toward language and knowledge from that of Hofmannsthal's *Chandosbrief* owing to its scientific purview. Musil wrote *Törless* while he was working on a dissertation on Mach, and this was most relevant to his literary project. Musil agrees with Mach's empirical and economical principles, but he finds much fault in how Mach applied those principles. Musil articulates the void opened up by Mach's principle of economy of thought as an irrational faith in the power of language, and "attacks the

comfortable assumption of literary realism and nineteenth century empiricism that maintains that the observable, i.e., what is open to experience, can be reduced to language and propositional claim” (Varsava 188).

One of Törless’s “confusions” is a theoretical impasse in mathematics regarding imaginary numbers: how can measurable results arise, as they do, from calculations involving imaginary numbers? Törless’s young professor of mathematics exhorts his precocious student to “accept that such mathematical concepts are purely mathematical logical necessities” (86), or otherwise to simply take the principles of mathematics on faith. One wonders if this mathematics teacher is for Törless what Mach was for Musil when he explains in The Science of Mechanics, “My conception of economy of thought was developed out of my experience as a teacher, out of the work of practical instruction” (591). But for Törless it was not Mach, but Kant, the spiritual father of Enlightenment rationalism. The mathematics teacher points to a volume of Kant and says,

‘You see this book, this is philosophy, it contains the defining aspects of our actions. And if you could feel your way to the bottom of it, you would encounter only such logical necessities, which define everything despite the fact that they themselves cannot be understood without further ado. It’s very much the same thing with mathematics. And yet we’re constantly acting according to those necessities; and there you have proof of how important these things are.’ (86)

Musil continues Maeterlinck’s motif of the treasure at the bottom of the sea into this speech: whatever Törless would find in Kant, at the bottom of it, the necessity of mathematics and of our actions, would be completely useless should it be brought to the

surface. For Musil, Stephen Dedalus's mock definition of a 'pier' as "a disappointed bridge" (U 29.4) would describe the way that Törless feels about the logical necessities of mathematics.⁸¹ He sees logic as a bridge with the middle part missing or obscured in a fog: "Isn't that like a bridge consisting only of the first and last pillars, and yet you walk over it as securely as though it was there?" (82) The imaginary number, the notation whereby a number is replaced with a symbol seems to be analogous with language for Törless. The number sign loses its rapport with objects in the world, as Claudio Magris notes, and loses its reference but not its function in the system of mathematics. The linguistic sign is similarly preceded by some preverbal element; and insufficiently replaces the ontic void that it indicates (1984, 219).

In The Confusions of Young Törless, Musil sets the themes of the language crisis squarely in the centre of an allegory about the Austro-Hungarian Empire.⁸² Törless, as "the rationalist" has ethical confusions that parallel his logical ones. His ethical "confusion," is provoked by the sadistic treatment and homosexual abuse of a fellow student who had stolen money from another's locker by his two friends Beineberg and Reiting. He finds language inadequate to the task of expressing or filling the gap between the moral pretension and the real cruelty of the punishers, and equally between the humanity and the self-degrading behavior of the victim, Basini. Beineberg and Reiting are two sides of the same coin represented by carrying out of liberal and military views to their end: Reiting is a systemic sadist, whereas Beineberg justifies his cruelty by a rhetoric of bourgeois morality and eastern mysticism. Musil sees Beineberg as the most insidious danger of the two since "his irrationality is masked by his ability to use words" (Hickman 50). In this situation Törless feels the power of the irrational and the

unconscious and finds out that the ethical foundations of his rational world view do not exist.

The heuristic journey that Törless makes is not one whereby he gains something, but rather whereby he loses something; like a sixth-sense that only serves to show him we are not supposed to understand what it is that reality seems to express. As Jerry Varsava writes, Törless “sees through and beyond the logical verbal structures that frequently mask the protean splendour of experience. Alternatively, his peers and superiors allow the limits of language to contain and reduce experience, bringing experience into line with verbal possibility” (189). Törless never develops that “simplifying eye of habit” (Hofmannsthal 134) with which his superiors seem to see things, or the repository of habitual categories of thought with which they make sense of the world. Törless’s moments of clarity resemble Wittgenstein’s “reminders” prohibiting him from going past the limits of language, and with this he accepts, equally with the exile that his pedagogues consign him to. Törless realizes that there is a void in language corresponding to intuitions that precede language; and that conceptual language is inimical to mystic understanding.

What cannot be said is beyond the limits of language, and this is the inexpressible that Musil acknowledges in the dialogue and the final images of Törless: pregnant silence (or ‘holy silence’ in Maeterlinck’s terms) in the place of explanations, composure instead of confusion, epiphany (“intensity of recognition”) instead of description.⁸³ Törless is described having a kind of wordless epiphany without the ‘confusions’ that he had previously experienced. It is possible that Wittgenstein had Törless in mind when he wrote in the *Tractatus* the comment in parentheses following the proposition at 6.521:

“The solution to the problem of life is seen in the vanishing of this problem.” In other words, when one understands that formulating the problem of life as a question is impossible, “there is no question left, and just this is the answer” (6.52). Then philosophy’s problems become “no problems” (4.003). Whatever can be thought can be thought clearly, and whatever can be said can be said clearly. “Is not this the reason why men to whom after long doubting the sense of life became clear, could not then say wherein this sense consisted” (6.52)?

Like Mauthner, Törless realizes that in spite of the failure of language as a referential function, people nonetheless generate an understanding from it. As Hannah Hickman suggests: “Musil is concerned, both in Young Törless and in his later work, to establish those areas of life in which words play a useful part, and those in which they cannot” (40). The preverbal experience of Törless resonates in the critique of language that seeks to clear away language from the pre-verbal, or mystical level of experience. Both Chandos and Törless acknowledge the availability of epiphanic moments in experience: Hofmannsthal’s Chandos feels himself “filled to the brim with this silent but rising flood of divine sensation” (136), and Törless feels this silence “like the certainty of an impregnated body,” however they both suggest a real pessimism about the possibility of revivifying language indicating that the future lies with a language which is no language and that, until this language is found, the only possibility is silence. As Chandos confesses:

I felt... that neither in the coming year, nor in the following nor in all the years of my life shall I write a book, whether in English or in Latin:... because the language in which I might be able not only to write but to

think is neither Latin nor English, neither Italian nor Spanish, but a language none of whose words is known to me, a language in which inanimate things speak to me and wherein I may one day have to justify myself before an unknown judge. (140-141)

Chandos expresses the desire for an entirely new language, a language in which mute things speak, since existing language cannot express the content of authentic mystical vision. Hofmannsthal and Musil posit “an antinomy between language and life, on the one hand,” as Ada Schmidt writes, “and language and mystic vision, on the other: language constitutes a hedge against the power of life, and at the same time dims mystic understanding” (443). Conceptual language falsifies reality for Chandos and Törless, since their moments of epiphany come about when they confront phenomena without the interpretive structures with which they are ordinarily passed over, “thus continuing the tradition of mystic thought which maintains that mystic vision touches on the ineffable” (A. Schmidt 443). Both authors show the influence of Mach’s empiriocriticism in that the language of sensations, rather than the language of conceptual thought seems to show the way to the world, and their debt to Nietzsche who opposes the instinctual appreciation of life to the paralyzing conceptual apparatus of concepts.

‘Names are impostures’: Sprachskepsis in Trieste

Nietzsche’s ‘Truth and Lie in an Extra-Moral Sense’ takes on a new and almost refreshingly literal meaning when compared with the Triestine author’s propensity for self-conscious and artful lying. Magris suggested, in an essay entitled ‘Svevo e la cultura tedesca a Trieste’ (1988), that the most distinct Austrian element in Svevo’s writing was

the influx of its *Sprachskepsis*, informed by Machian and Nietzschean ideas and their revolt against the traditional physiognomy of the bourgeois subject.⁸⁴ A reading of Triestine writers in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries will suggest that language skepticism was a major preoccupation of Triestine literature in general. “Indeed,” as Massimo Cacciari writes in *Posthumous People*: “Trieste at times took Vienna’s enigma into account with even more sobriety and detachment, if that is possible, and with greater intelligence” (170). Cacciari is right to characterize Trieste’s reception of Viennese ideas this way: More sobriety, since they were less inclined towards mysticism or positivism as they towards the aporias and paradoxes of ordinary language through relaxed everyday misuse. More detachment, not only because its geographical position made it “a very sensitive precursor to the crisis of culture and this culture of crisis” (Ara and Magris 7), but because they could see how much culture determined the language crisis, and how this crisis impacted upon their culture; a view that Viennese writers adopted over time as Musil’s later work suggests. Like their Viennese counterparts they realized the inadequacy of language for conveying experience and adopted a language critical outlook in their works, with what Roberto Bazlen considers to be “disagio di fronte a tutto ciò che ha già un nome [discomfort before everything that already has a name]” (86). One of Bazlen’s cryptic ‘footnotes’ to a conspicuously absent text that would have been written about the ‘Problema dell’epoca [Problem of the times],’ seems to condense the major preoccupation of Austrian language critique into three words: “Ordine invece di verità [Order instead of truth] (183).

The three “Vorrei dirvi...” [I wanted to tell you...] that begin Scipio Slataper’s *Il mio Carso*, refer to the plurality of cultures that form a crucible or a crossroads in

Triestine conceptions of identity. It roughly corresponds to what Slataper writes to his wife Gigetta “Tu sai che io sono slavo, tedesco e italiano... [You know that I am Slavic, German and Italian...]” This comixture, Magris writes “è un po’ il simbolo, quasi la cifra o l’etichetta della struttura composita della letteratura triestina [is partly the symbol, almost the cipher or the label of the composite structure of Triestine literature]” (1988, 40). This kind of self-definition, according to Ara and Magris, has a particular cultural connotation: Nowhere is *triestinità* more apparent than in its literature; that perhaps more than any other city, Trieste *is* literature; it’s own peculiar “antiliterature” (Ara and Magris 8). Trieste, described by Jan Morris as a place that one might as well call ‘*nowhere*,’ was otherwise a microcosm of *everywhere*. Angelo Ara and Claudio Magris write that Trieste is a concentrate of the Empire and is made of contrasts (7), and as Richard Robinson notes, “Trieste, with its ‘many-spirited life’ (‘*vita multanime*’ – a coinage) or ‘double spirit’ (‘*doppia anima*’, in Scipio Slataper’s phrase) is an intensely European but distinctly singular place” (245).

Slataper’s three “Vorrei dirvi...” reveal an impulse to begin his story with a lie, but it is a lie that would arise from an even deeper impulse to be sincere. The impulse to lie is a reaction to the paradox of Trieste; to pass over the complexity of the Triestine identity that is “reale ma indefinibile, autentica quando viene vissuta nella pudica interiorità del sentimento e subito falsata quando viene proclamata ed esibita [real but indefinable, authentic when lived in the modest interiority of sentiment and immediately falsified when proclaimed and on display]” (Ara and Magris 3). In other words, for Slataper to speak about his reality within clear categories of language implies untruthful expression. In the same year as Slataper published his only novel, the philosopher-poet

Carlo Michelstaedter completed his dissertation Persuasion and Rhetoric, wherein he claims that all language is *unredliches*, in the sense that language, being unequal to the task of describing experience, works under false pretenses.⁸⁵ This sentiment is echoed in Svevo's La coscienza di Zeno, turning his protagonist into an unreliable narrator when he proclaims to his therapist: "With our every Tuscan word, we lie!" However, rather than positing one language as an authentic one and the other as false, as the juxtaposition of Italian (or German in Roberto Bazlen's case), and *Triestino* might suggest, these writers emphasized in subversive irony, estranging brevity of form, or in paradox, the foreignness of all language.

This form of language skepticism is significant in the 'Eumaeus' episode of Ulysses, since it is the only place in the book where Joyce mentions Trieste.⁸⁶ 'Eumaeus' is a multilingual episode with words in Latin, German, French, Italian, Spanish and Russian, and it would not have been unusual to have heard any of these languages being spoken in the free-port of Trieste. Joyce's posthumously published prose sketch Giacomo Joyce also contains such a mixture of languages. A conversation between Bloom and Stephen is provoked by an overheard argument in Italian, which may allude to a kind of experience that Joyce would have likely had in Trieste: the sound of a foreign language. Bloom comments on the musical quality of the language, without being aware of its semantic content. Upon having the argument interpreted for him he reflects on what would have been a complaint some Triestines, "there being more languages to start with than were absolutely necessary" (717.5-6). In Trieste, the language of culture was Italian and the language of the Empire was German, the language of the street was *Triestino*, and the surrounding countryside spoke Slovene.

Stephen's remark: "Sounds are impostures... Like names..." (717.19-20), points to the self-consciousness of most language skeptical critiques. An imposture is a fraudulent imposition upon others, so when the narrator describes Bloom "surreptitiously pushing the cup of what was temporarily supposed to be called coffee nearer him" (717.16-18) it is the narrator who is "surreptitiously" offering the word "coffee" to describe an object that he knows it would be untruthful to call by that word. The narrator who has difficulty describing the aliments provided to Stephen and Bloom in the cabman's shelter assumes an almost apologetic tone when he describes common objects (posing as a Fritz Mauthner who laments the fallacy of undertaking a critique of language in and with words) that language is an action or practice of imposing fraudulently upon others. Names are impostures, since the Nominalist takes words as normative, and whereby an imposture would be the deception of using an assumed character, or identity. Stephen saying "Shakespeares were as common as Murphies. What's in a name?" (717.21-2) provokes the impostor of a sailor who goes by the name of W. B. Murphy to ask Stephen what his name might be. Bloom silently warns Stephen not to respond because he is aware that a foreign sounding name, as he was reminded in the Cyclops episode, can be loaded with much cultural meaning and can trigger antagonisms. Triestine writers were all too aware of this: Scipio Slataper, whose name means "golden pen" in Slovene, identified him as a Slav among increasing anti-Slav Irredentists. The stigma of his name, led some Italian reviewers of Il mio Carso to consider that his book "could only have been made possible by some Slav benefactor" (McCourt 170).

Ettore Schmitz's pen name Italo Svevo, or "Italian Swabian" referred to his Italian and Austro-Hungarian heritage and the hybridity which it entails. Many of his

characters bear significant names that identify their heritage such as the protagonist of Senilità (1898), Emilio Brentani. This surname, derived from a that of a city, suggested to Italian readers Jewish origin, since Jews often changed their surnames in this fashion upon conversion to Christianity. Bloom's surname is the result of a similar conversion. Of course, names were significant for Joyce, and he reveled in names that juxtaposed nationalities, as we can see with his Irish-Greek Stephen Dedalus, or his Italian-Irish Giacomo Joyce. Slataper's vision of Trieste, as a place without cultural traditions, and thus of uncertain identity, left the door open for such forged identities. John McCourt writes, "If a more secure identity was to be created, it could only be achieved by drawing on the rich cultural mix of people that made up the city's human fabric" (170).

Opposed to this idea was the Irredentist program of making Trieste culturally Italian. Slataper writes to his Italian reader in Il mio Carso: "Le vostre obiezioni mi chiudono a poco a poco in gabbia, mentre v'ascolto disinteressato e contento, e non m'accorgo che voi state gustando la vostra intelligente bravura. [Your objectives shut me in a cage when I listen to you contentedly and disinterestedly, and it doesn't occur to me that you are relishing your intelligent bravura]" (4). Slataper expresses the resentment that some Triestines felt toward the political situation which polarized their city into cultured, civilized Italians and barbarian Slavs, as well as resentment at being expected to emulate the florid prose styles of a D'Annunzio. Alberto Abbruzese writes: "Con Svevo ha inizio anche la valutazione 'contenutista' e la svalutazione 'stilistica' di una produzione letteraria, che non solo portava con sé la difficoltà della lingua nell'uso corretto del lessico, ma si mostrava sempre 'esterna' allo stile nazionale."⁸⁷ Svevo's early novels and that of Slataper were generally received with indifference or scorn, but the rejection of

Svevo by reviewers of La coscienza di Zeno (1925), led by critics from Trieste was generally couched in such terms as 'civilized', 'barbaric' and 'hybrid' as this review from the Triestine critic Bruno Maier demonstrates:

The 'barbarian' Triestine, the Italo-German writer who betrayed his hybrid origins in his very pseudonym, could not, with his unpleasant, clumsy jargon, full of Germanic traces and of dialect remnants, bristling with ungrammatical constructions and with incorrect vocabulary and syntax, be admitted to the noble castle of Italian literary tradition. (qtd. in Robinson 321)

As linguistic groups were equated with cultural groups and stable nationalism, Irredentism demanded that you choose one or the other. Leopold Bloom's fumbled attempts to define a nation in the 'Cyclops' episode of *Ulysses* attest to the tension between his national identity and his sense of self, much like the tension confronted by Svevo and Slataper in Irredentist Trieste. Bloom's exclusion from the Irish nationalist patrons of Barney Kiernan's reflects the theme of homelessness within one's homeland, and this is echoed in the 'Eumaeus' episode. "The condition of homelessness that characterizes the entire text" as Gregory Castle explains, finds its ultimate expression in the character of W. B. Murphy, "the old seadog" and Bloom "who must constantly reinvent himself in order to constitute himself as the home to which he forever returns" (320). Perhaps W. B. Murphy's claim to having visited Trieste is significant, since as Ara and Magris claim, it was in literature that Triestine identity was best articulated and where the particularity of the city could be configured as home for a linguistic community. W. B. Murphy's ostensible visit to Trieste is more compelling when one

looks at the work of Scipio Slataper and Italo Svevo who constituted a cultural and political sense of self, but at the cost of a great epistemological instability, since their complex linguistic reality compelled them to lie.⁸⁸ Unless the Triestine identity could be articulated in its contingent and multilingual reality, the use of Italian entails an epistemological instability when recounting a narrative. One finds the central linguistic paradox of Triestine literature in a passage from Svevo's La Coscienza di Zeno:

The doctor puts too much faith also in those damned confessions of mine, which he won't return to me so I can revise them. Good heavens! He studies only medicine and therefore doesn't know what it means to write in Italian for those of us who speak the dialect and can't write it. A confession in writing is always a lie. With our every Tuscan word, we lie! If he knew how, by predilection, we recount all the things for which we have the words at hand, and now we avoid those things that would oblige us to turn to our dictionary! This is exactly how we choose, from our life, the episodes to underline. Obviously our life would have an entirely different aspect if it were told in our dialect. (404)

Svevo reveals the asymmetry of Triestine and Italian identity in the gap between local dialect and national language. Like his author, Zeno is problematically caught between speaking his familiar Triestine mother tongue and writing in the distant form of Italian. In an insightful essay entitled 'From Border to Front: Italo Svevo's *La Coscienza di Zeno* and International Space' (2006) Richard Robinson rightly observes that "This supposedly 'regional' *triestinità* is finally seen to be central to the complex and destabilized epistemology of the novel" (247). He also points out that the name of the

central protagonist and first person narrator whose *coscienza* is in question, should bring to mind Zeno of Elea who was known for creating paradoxes. Svevo's own particular version of the "liar's paradox"⁸⁹ should be apparent in the above passage: If he lies with "every Tuscan word," therefore even this admission must be a lie. He opposes to his written Tuscan a language that he cannot write but only speak, and while accusing the doctor of an inappropriate faith in language, he wants to go and revise what he has said thus far, thereby attesting to an inordinate faith in the language in which his claims cannot be true. He omits mention of things that he does not have "words at hand" for, which is to say that his *thinking* in Tuscan is limited, and yet his omissions speak volumes about his *coscienza*.

For instance, Zeno devotes much of the narrative to the business failures of his Tuscan speaking amorous rival Guido Speier, yet when his therapist finds out that Guido has a successful lumberyard, he claims that he failed to mention it because he only knows the names for the trees according to their local idiom: "*zapin*, for example which is by no means the equivalent of *sapin*" becomes for Zeno what the 'tundish' was for Dedalus in *A Portrait*: a mark of his contingent identity. As reflections on the strangeness of language begin with a single word in a more localized language all kinds of misconceptions about language can be found. Where the 'tundish' becomes another word for the Stephen's imperial interlocutor to assimilate into his language, another object of knowledge, *zapin* points to a constitutive gap in the fabric of his narrative, proving the doctor correct in what he will glean from this omission: Zeno's contempt for Guido. Zeno considers the omission "proof that a confession made by me in Italian could

be neither complete nor sincere” (414), but by now we are already familiar with his tendency toward self-delusion.

Guido plays the violin and speaks pure Tuscan; a ‘necessary’ language, as compared with Zeno’s ‘contingent’ Triestino with its “barbarously named wood” (414). Robinson notes that Zeno “can switch between the two, but the co-existence of a stern ‘big’ language and a more natural ‘little’ dialect creates inhibiting social dilemmas, even amongst Triestines of the same class.”⁹⁰ Robinson points out a further irony in Zeno’s constant reference to Italian as Tuscan, showing that he considers it a special case of Italian:

Zeno repeatedly refers to *toscano* as synonymous with *italiano*, drawing attention to the very regionality of the national standard language. The historical disposition of space had, over the centuries, placed one language at the core, and the other at the periphery: Tuscany now stands for Italy. But as Samuel Beckett pointed out in his essay on *Finnegans Wake*, the *toscano* written by the Florentine Dante – in his attempt to resist Latin and pave the way for a communal language of state – was itself an ideal, synthetic language, which had imported elements from the other dialects of the peninsula.⁹¹

As Zeno berates his *dialettaccio* he forgets that the Tuscan of Dante was also such an admixture of diverse languages as his own. Zeno’s reflections on language make presuppositions similar to Augustine’s erroneous understanding of language, which Wittgenstein highlights at the beginning of his Philosophical Investigations: that one came into the world with a language already.⁹² Zeno’s Triestine and the Tuscan of his

rival were both acquired languages, as was English even for the dean of studies and his countryman Ben Jonson in *A Portrait*. Stephen's Anglo-Irish 'tundish' was in fact an English word, and Joyce as someone who had often looked through Skeat's etymology, would have known this. Zeno, the consummate *schlemiel* on the other hand is put off by the prospect of referring to a dictionary in order to make himself understood, so the movement between the two languages contain epistemological gaps.

This also points to the epistemology of literature in the Triestine dialect; the language user is most at home in his language when he is least aware of it. Zeno's meditations on health are an allegory for personal integrity: "Health doesn't analyze itself, nor does it look itself in the mirror. Only we sick people know something about ourselves" (Svevo 163). The very reflexivity of language critique presupposes a lost authenticity of speech, and thus the condition of sickness. Robinson glosses Alain Robbe-Grillet, who identified dialect as another form of sickness in *La coscienza*:

The narrative insincerity and ill health of Zeno reflect on the lost innocence of the novel which must speak false to ring true. Robbe-Grillet, perhaps suprisingly, connects Svevo's sick language to its provenance in the imperial borderlands, reminding us that irredentist Trieste is comparable to 'Kafka's Germano-Czech Prague, and Joyce's Anglo-Irish Dublin – the birthplace of everyone who is not at ease with his own language.' (Robbe-Grillet 1965, 105; Robinson 263-4.

It would seem that by this logic, those who are at ease in their language are healthy, which is also to say that they don't know what health is. If dialect is construed as a sick language by our wry, cigarette-smoking Svevo, it is certainly a healthy language

in Slataper. According to Gianni Stuparich, Il mio Carso is also “un esame di coscienza” (123). The first-person narratives of Svevo and Slataper are both prolonged recollections which turn a conscience and a consciousness in both meanings of that are implied by the Italian *coscienza*. Slataper’s autobiographical account contrasts the rustic culture of the Karst which he belongs to without reflecting upon it and the cosmopolitan and mercantile city of Trieste which he confronts questions of culture, with the identity crisis generated by national ideas and Kultur. His disdain for the Italian emphasis on ornate style is evident in this letter to his wife Gioietta:

Le parole dei poeti che non aggiungono una bellezza che stia come strana nuvola sospesa davanti agli occhi, ma che aggiungono un durezza, una soavità radicate nella terra, che tutti i nostri sensi possono toccare (questa è l’*arte*, Gioietta, che tante volte m’hai domandato che cos’è: quando sa distruggere la parola-involucro e viver nel sangue degli uomini, dunque non può *dir* bugia, perché è). Marzo del 1910 (qtd. in Stuparich 144).⁹³

To speak of the transitive culture of the Carso, he takes its historical contingency out of time and gives it back in a more durable form. Joyce often said that one could reconstruct Dublin out of Ulysses, and this would be no less true for Slataper’s *Carso*. Zeno claimed that his confession would take on a different aspect if it was told in his dialect, but also that with every *written* word he lies. Slataper’s truth, destroying the “word-shell” of language, its referential function, is essentially a tacit participation in a linguistic community that is indigenous to Trieste and the Karst. This is where Triestine literature approaches Wittgenstein’s later thought and more natural ideas about identity. The silent content of one’s discourse – that which one doesn’t speak of – comprises the

unreflective linguistic practices of a culture. The encounter with nationalism, for Slataper's narrator, creates a schism in that safe construction. As Jean-Michel Rabaté notes, Joyce's epiphanies lost their status as epiphanies when they were integrated into subsequent works, but they retained their 'indexical function'⁹⁴ by transforming the historically contingent speech of Dublin into something more durable. Scipio Slataper's dialogues in *Triestino* have a similar effect in another highly personal context. With its playful local idiom for the objects of the Karst and its dialogues in *Triestino* it would have necessitated for most Italian readers a glossary or a set of footnotes.⁹⁵

The text is conspicuously absent from Roberto Bazlen's Note senza testo; footnotes which refer to an entirely unwritten oeuvre, of which he writes: "Almost all books are footnotes swollen into volumes (*volumina*). I write only footnotes" (cited in Cacciari 171). According to Massimo Cacciari, Bazlen's critical disdain for narrative text arose from an empathy for language, delicate and flawed which was too often directed toward distorting, homogenizing master narratives (172). Bazlen's unfinished novel Il capitano del lungo corso adapted the *Odyssey* years after Joyce had completed Ulysses, and his narrative, instead of growing in linguistic complexity, gradually disintegrated into fragments; chapters headings no longer crowned texts but notebooks, and even these headings were replaced by alphabetical indicators, giving way to Note senza testi [*Footnotes without text*]. Bazlen's critics generally indicate that he was more of a reader than a writer. Massimo Cacciari notes, "Bazlen's critical perspective involves reading, not interpretive teaching. It does not furnish the key to mastery of the work, but it shows the work, indicates it, and reveals it. These are glosses, comments, and footnotes" (171).

The absence of the text in Bazlen's work brings to mind the collection of "prose sketches" by James Joyce, which was posthumously published under the title of Giacomo Joyce. Written sometime between the publication of Dubliners, the completion of A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man and the beginning of Ulysses, Giacomo Joyce is at the centre and at the same time nowhere in Joyce's oeuvre. Like the Epiphanies it was not published during Joyce's lifetime, nor did he express the desire to see it published; rather, he pilfered from it like his epiphanies for his subsequent works, so in a very real sense, they were also "footnotes." As with the Epiphanies, there are many ellipses, suggesting silent spaces in between the words, but the fragmentary layout of the manuscript, with empty spaces between written text fragments, often taking up more space on the page than the fragments themselves, suggest that there the writing arises out of a vast silent void. It is a dissonant and transitional text, wherein the protagonist/narrator, is neither as young as Dedalus or as old as Bloom and the narration combines epiphanies, paraphrases, quotations and impressionistic descriptions. Throughout the narrative, he records impressions that seem like glances at an image, the young lady at the center of the text is described in a migratory manner, details that seem to be lifted out of time and held still, outlining this detail and filling in another, achieving a fragmentation of the young lady's body as well as the chronological narrative of the text. He teaches English to a young Triestine lady, and like Stephen in Ulysses, this does not imply mastery but servitude and class hierarchy. This is significant to Bazlen's critical perspective, since the footnote can be seen as submission to the *volumina*, but as Cacciari notes Bazlen's perspective "is not a matter of falling to one's knees before

fetishized language, but of preserving it as a weak and precious gift before the attack of great intentions, the visions of the world, the judgments” (172).

On April 9, 1917 Joyce wrote to Ezra Pound from Zurich, “As regards stories I have none. I have some prose sketches, as I told you, but they are locked up in my desk in Trieste.”⁹⁶ In all likelihood, he intended to leave them there. Its finely handwritten, and aesthetic quality on the page suggests “a precious gift” and the scholars who have debated as to whether it belongs in Joyce’s oeuvre have, in effect, attacked it with their “great intentions”. Therefore this work occupies a peripheral position in the Joycean canon; a recognizable work by Joyce, but in many respects it belongs to the Triestine tradition of *non-literature*. Bazlen the *writer* was invented by editors who collected his writings together into an oeuvre. The fact that he published nothing under his name, save for some book reviews, prefaces and newspaper articles is frustrating for those who want to examine Bazlen as a writer. However, Roberto Calasso suggests in the introduction to Bazlen’s collected writings that the absence of a body of work was consistent with the work itself: “Ma quella specie di elusione e stata proprio una delle massime scoperte. ... Fa dunque parte – ed è una parte decisiva – dell’opera di Bazlen *non aver prododotto un’opera* [But this kind of elision was really the greatest discovery... It is a part – and it is a decisive part – of Bazlen’s opus *not to have produced an opus*]” (18, 19). Giacomo Joyce, locked away in a desk in Trieste, seemed to be a decisive silence on the part of Joyce in more ways than one.

Conclusion

Language shall attain the limit of absolute persuasiveness, what the prophet attains by miracle. It shall arrive at silence when each act has absolute efficiency... For the life of man shall truly have become the divine 'medium,' that from the night of future ages shone forth to Aristotle's societal soul. Men shall speak but 'say nothing.'

Carlo Michelstaedter⁹⁷

Whether or not we choose to identify Joyce with his fictional avatar, Stephen Dedalus, it seems that Joyce left Ireland with the intention of forging an Irish *conscience* in his writing. Considering his years in Trieste we must understand this 'conscience' in a double sense, as the Italian *coscienza* suggests: as consciousness and as a sense of ethical responsibility. A critical sensibility similar akin to some of the late-Habsburg Austrian writers that I have described above can be discerned in Joyce's rejection of the Irish Revival and his creation of a *Weltliteratur* about Ireland. In his works, he did not endorse national programs for resurrection of a dead language, nor subservience to the Imperial one. Nationalists in Ireland, as well as the cultural-ethnic-linguistic groups in the Austro-Hungarian empire, had no problem affirming or self-validating the authority of their local customs; however, the thought of applying their specialized idiom to knowledge would never occur to them, partly because they were unaware of those problems. Joyce's ironic critique of language drew attention to this dilemma, as did the language conscious writing of Svevo, Musil and Kafka.

The disintegration of Habsburg order and authority took place in an intellectual atmosphere that challenged and displaced *logos* with ways of thinking that were based on multiplicity instead of unity, contingency instead of tradition and mystical silence instead of language. Joyce's subversive use of the language that he learned in Ireland undermined the illusion of stability that came from assured referential and social uses of that language.

Consequently, he showed up all language as being saturated with myth, rhetoric and ideology by a variety of unveiling strategies: the compulsive reorganization of sentences; the unfinished thought that still conveyed the thought; the removal of an archimedean point of view from utterance (e.g. the dispersal of the narrating subject in 'Wandering Rocks'), the foregrounding of language in its printed materiality on the page, various unreliable narrators, parodies of scientific and journalistic languages, and by posing historical limitations on language.

Joyce equated language learning in A Portrait of Artist as a Young Man with Stephen's ethical and aesthetic inheritance, yet though ironic distancing in the narrative he could expose language as one of the "nets" thrown at the emerging artist who participates in his own submission. Stephen Dedalus heuristically adopts and refutes various overarching approaches to experience: social, sensuous, religious and aesthetic worldviews, yet to all of these views there is an approach to language. In Ulysses, Joyce reintroduces us to Stephen as a thoroughly disenchanted aesthete who sees language as dangerous, decayed and deceptive: He fears "those big words... which make us so unhappy" (38.4-5); contemplates "Coffined thoughts around me, in mummycases, embalmed in spice or words" (248.6-7) and considers "Sounds" to be "impostures, like names" (717.19-20). As Stephen realizes that he cannot rely on language in order to understand how to live in the world, we are introduced to the character of Leopold Bloom who seems to be Joyce's way of *showing* Stephen an ethical life; one that involves a perspectival, nonviolent, and compassionate view of the world. Ulysses dramatizes the relationship between language skepticism and ethics in Joyce's ironic characterization of Stephen as the "Uebermensch" (27.1-2) and Leopold Bloom who embodies a certain 'wise passivity.'

Trying to make ethical sense of the world through scientific language alone, or through metaphysical language in any case, was the problem of philosophy that Wittgenstein attempted to dissipate. Joyce critiques philosophy in the 'Proteus' episode of Ulysses, where he parodies language of metaphysics, and in 'Ithaca' which parodies positivism. In order to 'see rightly' in Wittgenstein's terms, one had to resist the urge toward conceptual structures that had clouded one's view of immanent things, and this was the ethical imperative of the *Sprachskepsis* from which Wittgenstein's *Tractatus* was born. The epiphany as a material for Stephen's art, and for that of Joyce were signaled by a kind of excitement with the immanent, with the eternal showing forth in the everyday; an intensity of recognition. Joyce's epiphanies showed up the paucity of language with a faithfully rendered sketch, with ellipses that alluded to what remained beyond the limits of language. At the same time, the cultural production of artists and philosophers in Austria during the twilight years of the Habsburg Empire employed unique versions of epiphany alluding to a preverbal, ineffable world and this kind of awareness comprised an important part of their theoretical crisis with language. With Wittgenstein's conception of ethics in mind, the epiphany takes on an ethical dimension.

Ludwig Wittgenstein's proposition that "Ethics and aesthetics are one," followed by his assertion that ethics and aesthetics belong to the realm of what can be shown but not spoken of would have seemed a bit mystifying to his Cambridge contemporaries. But to anyone brought up on the music-drama of Richard Wagner or the twelve-tone system of Arnold Schönberg, the polemics of Karl Kraus and Adolph Loos, the literary tradition of such authors as Hugo von Hofmannsthal, Arthur Schnitzler, Peter Altenberg, Robert Musil, Georg Trakl and Rainer Maria Rilke, this stance would have made more sense. Those who

practiced the discourse of language critique had removed ethics from the purview of rational theorizing because of their growing mistrust for language. In an atmosphere of scientific positivism that would marginalize literature's comment on the world in the rest of Western Europe, language skeptical philosophers in Austria consistently privileged literature as the only medium through which knowledge and ethics could be communicated.⁹⁸ This had exceptional consequences in late Habsburg Austria that stimulated alternative visions of language, and to some extent, these are reflected in Joyce's works. Declan Kiberd writes that Joyce's Ulysses

addressed a central problem of modern writing: the breakdown of the old equation between the structure of a language and the structure of the known world. In simple terms, the zones of scientific and technical knowledge had expanded massively in the modern period, while the resources of language seem to lag behind. Such developments as the analytic exploration of the conscious and unconscious had been confronted, only belatedly, by the makers of literature; and Joyce was one of the first to face this challenge.⁹⁹

Kiberd's assessment is consistent with the epistemic role of literature in late-Habsburg Austria, as the poetic possibility for communicating knowledge considered to be 'inexpressible,' and he is right to assert that Joyce was *one* of the first. It is therefore possible to speak of Joyce's engagement with a philosophical language critique, but it might be better understood as the role of literature in an *episteme* that had transformed the conditions that determine what counts as knowledge. At this time, according to Foucault, language had lost its status as a transparent bearer of truth, and was

reconstituted, or demoted, to an object of knowledge. Fritz Mauthner and Ludwig Wittgenstein, who were critical of discourses (i.e. those of philosophy and science) which had claims to knowledge of the world, declared the impossibility of philosophy (which is nonsense) and the natural sciences (which is senseless) to be meaningful. Neither showed their typical disdain for language when it came to literature.¹⁰⁰ Wittgenstein, who often cited narrative and poetic texts in his seminars, reflects this *episteme* (and indeed to a great extent defined it) in his famous remark; “philosophy ought really to be written only as poetic composition” (CV 24).

The discourse of language critique in late-Habsburg Austria, in its many different and interrelated configurations, self-consciously limited and censored language, while it nonetheless produced a discourse particular to itself, whereby one could identify when language critique was being carried out. At the same time, it demanded alternate visions and uses of language in order to generate a praxis of “critical attention” to language. Whether or not we find the particular theoretical terms of language critique in Joyce’s works, his innovative uses of language identify him with late-Habsburg Austrian language skepticism. Hermann Broch insisted in his essays that Ulysses was a unique product of the times, and the works of Hugo von Hofmannsthal, a product of the times that had preceded them. What this far from exhaustive study hopes to suggest is that the supplementary hypotheses I have attempted to elucidate can be investigated further, that late-Habsburg Austrian intellectual culture is a rich and varied context for future Joyce scholarship, and that studies in Mitteleuropean intellectual history can benefit from adding some of Joyce’s works to its canon of primary texts.

Notes

¹ Johann Wolfgang von Goethe writes « La littérature nationale ne représente plus grand-chose aujourd'hui, nous entrons dans l'ère de la littérature mondiale (*die Weltliteratur*) et il appartient à chacun de nous d'accélérer cette évolution » qtd. in Milan Kundera, Le rideau: essai en sept parties (Éditions Gallimard, 2005) 50. In his argument for the international character of the novel Kundera uses these terms and compares Goethe's idea of *die Weltliteratur* to his own idea of the *petit contexte* of national canons (43-72). My previous comment about Broch overlooking Vienna in his analysis of Joyce so as not to seem provincial is speculative, but it is an opinion informed by the connection that Broch makes between Joyce's Ulysses and Goethe's understanding of culture: "Today the writer is compelled to accept the challenge of Goethe and to assume the responsibility of the heritage handed down to him by humanity's striving for cognition ... For this new seriousness, this new metaphysics, the ethical work of art itself – all this new responsibility of the writer – had to be preceded by generalized dissolution, which relates it back not only to Goethe, but to Kant. Joyce has taken all this enormous responsibility on his shoulders. To be sure *Ulysses* is not a cultural novel in Goethe's sense, its only common feature being that it presumes the most extensive culture and the most fundamental universality on the part of the author" (1936, 91). I take Broch's notion of the *cultural novel* as another articulation of the *petit contexte* and *the most fundamental universality* to correspond to *die Weltliteratur*, and that Broch had taken on this responsibility in his own work.

² Qtd. in McCourt 92. The columnist Vespertino in L'Emanicpazione, 5 December 1908.

³ Many of the studies I am thinking of here will be used in this study. I am thinking of by Massimo Cacciari, Posthumous People: Vienna at the Turning Point (Trans. Roger Freidman. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996), William M. Johnston, The Austrian Mind: an Intellectual and Social History 1848-1938 (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1972), Stephen Toulmin and Allan Janik, Wittgenstein's Vienna (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1973), Carl E Schorske, Fin-de-siècle Vienna: Politics and culture (New York : Vintage Books, 1981), Jacques Le Rider, Modernity and Crises of Identity : Culture and Society in Fin-de-siècle Vienna (Trans. Rosemary Morris. New York: The Continuum Publishing Company, 1993), Claudio Magris, Microcosmos and Il Mito Absburgo nella

Letteratura Austriaca Moderna and other studies that focus on the intellectual and social context of late Habsburg Vienna. Joyce is sometimes mentioned by these authors for his tutoring of Italo Svevo, and the fact that he resided in Pola and Trieste, yet his work is rarely looked upon as representative of turn-of-the-century Austrian ideas, as, for example the work of Svevo.

⁴ Chandak Sengoopta, Otto Weininger : Sex, Science, and Self in Imperial Vienna (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2000).

⁵ Stephen Toulmin and Allan Janik Wittgenstein's Vienna (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1973): "If any factor can be singled out to account for the special character of Vienna's bourgeois society... it is the failure of liberalism in the political sphere" 49.

⁶ For instance, I could have used Gustav Gerber instead of Nietzsche, Franz Brentano instead of Mach, Adolph Stöhr instead of Mauthner, and Leopold von Andrian instead of Hofmannsthal, however I have chosen the authors who figure most prominently in contemporary assessments of the Austrian language crisis.

⁷ For example, after Trieste realized its Irredentist aspirations and became a part of Italy the economic and cultural decline of the city gave rise to such nostalgic expressions as the concept of "Mitteleuropa," an even more polymorphous counterpart to the Habsburg myth that emerged and during its time of crisis to counter the image of the dissolving empire. In an article entitled "'Imperial Nostalgia: mythologizing Habsburg Trieste' (Journal of Modern Italian Studies. 8(1) 2003: 84-101), Pamela Ballinger questions the Triestine nostalgia for the Habsburg Empire: "Is this yearning a variation on the 'imperialist nostalgia' analyzed by Renato Rosaldo? (For literary analyses of such a phenomenon, see Berger 1995; Said 1993; Wood 1998.) In *Culture and Truth*, Rosaldo identified a 'particular kind of nostalgia, often found under imperialism, where people mourn the passing of what they themselves have transformed' (1989: 69). Focusing on agents of colonialism, notably anthropologists, Rosaldo demonstrates the ways in which a stated fondness for or defense of the past (in this case, usually that of 'indigenous cultures') works to absolve the agent of blame for the destruction of the past... Whereas Rosaldo focuses on the nostalgic agents of colonial suppression, in the Habsburg case many of those 'oppressed subjects' who sought the empire's dissolution later regretted their choice. Although the generation who lived through these events has largely

disappeared, it appears to have left heirs among those intellectuals dedicated to the memory of Mitteleuropa" (94-5).

⁸ Gilya Gerda Schmidt, Martin Buber's Formative Years : From German Culture to Jewish Renewal, 1897-1909 (Tuscaloosa : University of Alabama Press, 1995) 5: "According to sociologist Max Burckhard (1854-1912), the word *modern* was given currency by Hermann Bahr and came to signify progress." Hermann Bahr wrote in an essay: "There is wild suffering in our time and the pain is unbearable. The cry for the redeemer is common and we can everywhere find crucified individuals. Has the great death enveloped the world? It is possible that we have reached the end, and that this is the death of exhausted humanity, and that these are merely the final struggles. It is possible that we are at the beginning, the birth of a new humanity, and these are merely the avalanches of Spring. Either we climb up to the Divine or we tumble, tumble into darkness and destruction – but there can be no continuation. Modernity believes... in this resurrection, glorious and blissful; [it believes] that salvation will result from suffering and that grace will follow despair, that the light of day will return after this terrible darkness and that art will return [to humanity]" (Gotthard Wunberg, Die Wiener Moderne: Literatur, Kunst, und Musik Zwischen, 1890 und 1910 (Stuttgart: Phillip Reclam Jun., 1981). p. 189; trans. Schmidt). Ctd in Schmidt 131.

⁹ Kraus, Werke, Vol. III, p. 341. qtd. in Toulmin & Janik 89.

¹⁰ Daniel O'Leary notes that Joyce would have been familiar with such ornate expository prose styles from "the euphuistic revival wrought by Cardinal Newman, Walter Pater, and by the plethora of decadent enthusiasts of Walter Savage Landor, Thomas Browne and Robert Burton who flourished at the *fin de siècle*. By the time Joyce entered this literary culture in the late 1890s, elaborate prose models were ubiquitous... In *Ulysses* Joyce, having matured beyond an unselfconscious use of it, affects and satirizes this style again and again. In "Aeolus," for instance, Joyce uses Dan Dawson's speech as an example of the common pseudo-literary bombast that attempted to imitate the periodic prose measures of more accomplished writers of the time" Daniel O'Leary, Modulations of voice and translations of text : the Victorian background of James Joyce's Ulysses (Dissertation thesis (M.A.) Dept. of English, Concordia University, 1994) 28-29.

¹¹ Kraus also praised such early practitioners of the genre as Freidrich Kürnberger and Peter Altenberg whose works he considered integral with their character (Toulmin & Janik 81-82)

¹² Thornton Wilder. Foreword to Three Comedies by Johann Nepomuk Nestroy (Translation and introduction by Max Knight and Joseph Fabry. New York: F. Ungar Pub. Co., 1967) ix.

¹³ Egon Freidell, *Das ist klassisch* (Vienna: Die Wiener Drucke, 1922). Qtd. in Max Knight and Joseph Fabry. Introduction to Three Comedies by Johann Nepomuk Nestroy (New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., 1967) 5.

¹⁴ For instance, in one scene in which an uneducated tailor tries to impress a lady to recover a dog that she has lost in Italy. He dictates a notice: "Hund verloren. Piccolo Viech mit Quattro Haxen. Keine Zähne: Zani kani... (Cane perduto. Piccolo pooch with Quattro footsies. Denti Plenti)" (Knight and Fabry 21, translation theirs).

¹⁵ Stern, J. P. "'Words are also Deeds': Some Observations on Austrian Language Consciousness." New Literary History. Vol. 12, No. 3 (Spring 1981) 513.

¹⁶ Lorna Martens. Shadow Lines : Austrian Literature from Freud to Kafka (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1996) 201-204. Martens reads into this parable to introduce the themes of Austrian language crisis in Austro-Hungarian literature.

¹⁷ "Cultivated Triestines shared the cultural traditions of their contemporaries in the Empire, and moreover in their original language, in a way that we can say with Ara and Magris that "in this type of linguistic attitude one can recognize the roots and the essence of a *Mitteleuropean education*." Brian Moloney, Italo Svevo narratore: Lezioni triestine (Gorizia: Libreria Editrice Goriziana: 1998) 21; Ara & Magris 1982: 19).

¹⁸ *Prager Judendjahre* 30-31; qtd. in Elizabeth Bredeck, Metaphors of Knowledge: Language and Thought in Mauthner's Critique (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1992) 17.

¹⁹ John McCourt, The Years of Bloom: James Joyce in Trieste, 1904-1920 (Dublin: Lilliput Press, 2000) 49-56.

²⁰ "Therefore, this city that spoke a Venetian dialect, and the countryside that spoke a Slavic dialect, were entrusted to an unexceptionable Austrian bureaucracy, except that it spoke German" (Bazlen 250; my translation). His explanation of language multiplicity elsewhere in 'Intervista su Trieste' is more complex: "E la situazione era delicata: una città che parla un dialetto Veneto, circondata da un campagna nella quale non si parla che una lingua slava, la parte più intellettuale della borghesia, che si sente staccata dal paese cui

credete di appartenere per lingua e per cultura (benché non conoscano il 'toscano' e benché la cultura... ma della cultura non parliamo), e che è dunque costretta, in pieno ventesimo secolo, a ricorrere a un frasario rettorica ottocentesco da Risorgimento, che tiene alta la fiaccola, che crede che l'italiano sia l'idioma gentil sonante e puro. [And the situation was delicate: in a city that spoke a Venetian dialect, surrounded by a countryside where a Slavic language was spoken that, the most intellectual members of the bourgeoisie, that felt detached from the country to which their language and culture belonged (although they do not know the 'Tuscan' and although the culture... but of the culture we do not speak), and therefore it is forced, well into the twentieth century, to resort to a nineteenth-century rhetorical phrasebook from the Renaissance, that holds the torch high, that believes that the Italian is a lyrical, refined and pure language. (246-7, my translation).

²¹ Musil offers a comical metaphor for the Austro-Hungarian and Austrian sense of national identity in The Man Without Qualities: "Imagine a squirrel who doesn't know whether it is a squirrel or a chipmunk, a creature with no concept of itself, and you will understand that in some circumstances it could be thrown into fits of terror by catching sight of its own tail" (491). This seems to express the predicament of articulating and assuming a stable national identity in Musil's *Kakania*.

²³ McCourt 98. Source: Giorgio Negrelli, "In Tema di Irredentismo e di Nazionalismo", in Roberto Pertici, ed., Intellettuali di Frontiera: Triestini a Firenze 1900-1950, (Milano: Olschki Editore) 1985. 291.

²⁴ Colin MacCabe writes, "In 1907 he delivered a public lecture entitled 'Ireland, Island of Saints and Sages'. The lecture was the result of the interest aroused by three articles that he had written on Irish politics and culture in *Il Piccolo della Sera*, a local Triestino newspaper. Trieste, an Italian city living under Austro-Hungarian rule, had an immediate interest in accounts of Irish attempts to throw off British imperial domination and when Joyce came to address his audience, he was greeted by a full house" (xviii).

²⁵ James Joyce, 'Ireland: Island of Saints and Sages', Occasional, Critical and Political Writing (Ed. Kevin Barry. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000) 118.

²⁶ This issue has been explored in depth in various studies, notably in Enda Duffy, The Subaltern Ulysses (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994) and Andras Ungar, Joyce's Ulysses as National Epic: Epic Mimesis and the Political History of the Nation State (Gainesville : University Press of Florida, 2002).

²⁷ McCourt 118. McCourt follows this statement with part of a letter written by Burton from Trieste in 1886 to the editor of the *Morning Post*:

Every province of Austro-Hungary enjoys the greatest amount of 'Home Rule' by means of its own Landstag or Diet. The little volumes, each in the local dialect, containing the rules and regulations for the legislative procedure are broadcast over the country; and I would especially recommend those which concern the Diet of Istria and – a thing apart – the Diet of Trieste City to the many who are now waxing rabid with alarm at the idea of an Irish Parliament in the old house on College Green. (Isabel Burton, *The Life of Sir Richard Burton* (London and Belfast: Mullan, 1891(306-7).

²⁸ Franz Kafka, *The Diaries of Franz Kafka, 1910-1913*. Ed. Max Brod. Trans. Joseph Kresh (New York: Schocken Books, Inc., 1965) 111.

²⁹ "The culture of Trieste, which Slataper proclaims inexistent, was a peripheral fringe of the traditional knowledge than rigidified and died in Europe: *Kultur*, the knowledge that organized and classified the world, smashed its immanent tautology, irreparably cut off from experience, this mechanism that reproduced itself, imprisoning within its own schemes the multiplicity of life. The culture of fin-de-siècle is constituted in the first place in the wake of Nietzsche, from the revolt of life against culture, against the knowledge that Flaubert had already rendered fatally imbecilic; Slataper's *Il mio Carso* is a voice of this protest" (Ara and Magris 6; my translation).

³⁰ Un-self-conscious health and hypochondriac sickness are motifs that run throughout the novel. These motifs generally represent a full and present life, which has no need to articulate itself, and culture which is a series of endless articulations. At the very end of the novel, Zeno's meditations on health and sickness strike one as polemic that could have been written by Nietzsche: "Any effort to give us health is vain. It can only belong to the animal who knows a sole progress, that of his organism... But bespectacled man, on the contrary, invents devices outside of his body, and if health and nobility existed in this inventor, they are almost always lacking in the user. Devices are bought, sold, and stolen, and man becomes increasingly shrewd and weaker. His first devices seemed extensions of his arm and couldn't be effective without his strength; but, by now, the device no longer has any relation to the limb. And it is the device that creates sickness, abandoning the law that was, on all earth, the creator. The law of the strongest vanished, and we

lost healthful selection. We would need much more than psychoanalysis. Under the law established by the possessor of the greatest number of devices, sickness and the sick will flourish" (Svevo 436).

³¹ "And as a unique triestine type does not exist, there isn't even a triestine creative culture; to create a homogenous work with similar premises would have been impossible... And think also of the foreign artists to hit Trieste that were all among the classifiable, that strange line Burton Lever Joyce... and Stendahl, and Hamerling and the strange infancy of Feruccio Busoni." Roberto Bazlen, *Scritti* (Milano: Adelphi, 2002) 250, 53; my translation.

³² Scipio Slataper, *Il mio Carso* (Firenze: La Nuova Italia editrice, 1966) 3.

³³ Quoted in Biagio Marin, "Scipio Slataper e l'anima di Trieste", *Rivista Trieste*, Jan.-Feb. 1956, no. 11.

³⁴ David S. Luft, *Eros and inwardness in Vienna: Weininger, Musil, Doderer* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2003). Toulmin and Janik, Sengoopta, Schorske, Cacciari and Foucault as well as several others seem to share this view.

³⁵ Philology, and literature are designated in the Gilbert Schemata as the sciences/arts of Proteus and Scylla and Charybdis. Several of the natural sciences are listed, corresponding with other chapters: Chemistry, Mechanics, Medicine, Astronomy and Geology, corresponding to Lotus Eaters, Wandering Rocks, Oxen of the Sun, Ithaca and Penelope. Other arts listed were part of the language critical discourse of late-Habsburg Vienna, as language criticism could fall under the purview of critical writings on Architecture (Lestrygonians), Rhetoric (Aoleus), Painting (Nausicaa) and Music (Sirens) by Adolph Loos, Karl Kraus, Vasily Kandinsky and Arnold Schoenberg among others. The exclusion of philosophy from the arts and sciences in *Ulysses*, a book which contains so many references to philosophy, shares with the Viennese critique of philosophy a penchant to discredit philosophy because of its grounding in metaphysical ideas.

³⁶ Although the influence of Ernst Mach on turn of the century Viennese thought cannot be overestimated, it can certainly be debated as to whose influence was most prevalent among Vienna's positivist philosophers of science. Mach took over the chair of professor of the history and theory of the inductive sciences at the University of Vienna in 1895 from Franz Brentano whose scientific philosophy stressed clarity and precision, and whose influence (some historians call it the *Brentano Effect*) was still very strong. Unfortunately, Brentano wrote very little and many of his lectures notes are lost. I chose to focus on Mach instead of Brentano because of the popularity of Mach's psychology in *fin-de-siecle* Vienna, as well as

economical considerations for this paper. Brentano's legacy and influence on Mach is given a thorough commentary in Kevin Mulligan's essay 'The Expression of Exactness: Ernst Mach, the Brentanists and the Ideal of Clarity.' Decadence and Innovation: Austro-Hungarian Life and Art at the Turn of the Century. Edited by Robert B. Pynsent. London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1989.

³⁷ Patrizia C. McBride, The Void of Ethics: Robert Musil and the Experience of Modernity (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 2006) 41.

³⁸ The reception of Mauthner by intellectuals is inextricable from commentaries on his work, as any study will show. Gershon Weiler's study delves into this, as well has Tomas Kuhn's biographical assessment of Mauthner's work. Katherine Arens comprehensively summarizes the reception of Mauthner by his contemporaries: "The reviews of Mauthner's works tend to stress similar points; recurrently, he is called a dilettante, overly skeptical or negative, disorganized, a wrecker of scientific philology, methodologically inadequate/interesting, a philosopher past his prime, hostile to language [c.f. Lindau], "geistlich" [Lindau again, Jacobs and Spitzer], a forerunner of a new social critique [Hermann Wein and Wiegler], and "specifically Jewish in outlook" [Bahr and Räuscher]. These claims appear in virtually all the secondary literature available... R. E. Ottmann approaches the rhetorical limits represented here: after deciding that Mauthner is more negative than Nietzsche, he calls him "der Geist, der verneint" Katherine M. Arens, Functionalism and fin de siècle: Fritz Mauthner's Critique of language (Stanford German studies; v. 23. New York: P. Lang, c1984) n. 53: 83.

³⁹ This is attested to by several existing studies of Austrian language critique. Toulmin and Janik examine it in Wittgenstein's Vienna (114-117). Claudio Magris devotes a chapter to it in L'anello di Clarisse ('La ruggine dei segni. Hofmannsthal e la Lettera di Lord Chandos' pp. 32-62) J. P. Stern considers it to be "the classical statement of a poet's linguistic doubt." The treatment of 'Lord Chandos Letter' in texts by Richie Robertson, Jaques Le Rider, Lorna Martens, Thomas Harrison and Massimo Cacciari also acknowledge the centrality of Hofmannsthal's text to Austrian language critique.

⁴⁰ One of the reasons why I make this assertion is because Vienna was very small: Hofmannsthal had a correspondence with Mauthner, and had attended lectures by Mach and Brentano. Mauthner, who was often being disparaged by philosophers for his lack of proper academic credentials, received an encouraging letter from Ernst Mach amidst a very negative reception of his *Beiträge*. Bredeck n. 8: 128.

⁴¹ Christian J Emden, Nietzsche on Language, Consciousness, and the Body (Urbana; Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2005): "By locating the cultural origin of rhetorical discourse in fifth-century B.C. Greece, and therefore in the context of specific historical circumstances characterized by a decisive shift from orality to literacy, he already hints at the historical intertwining of rhetoric and philosophy... Considering his descriptions of the intellectual constellations that mark the development of rhetorical consciousness in ancient Greece, from it becomes clear that Nietzsche was interested in drawing rhetoric back into the realm of philosophical thought, and this approach clearly separates him from the main intellectual trends in nineteenth-century Germany..." 26-27.

⁴² Sander L. Gilman and Carole Blair, introduction, Friedrich Nietzsche on Rhetoric and Language (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989) xii.

⁴³ Kevin Mulligan, 'The Expression of Exactness: Ernst Mach, the Brentanists and the Ideal of Clarity,' Decadence and Innovation: Austro-Hungarian Life and Art at the Turn of the Century, ed. Robert B. Pynsent (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1989) 41-42.

⁴⁴ Ernst Mach, The Science of Mechanics: A Critical and Historical Account of its Development, trans. Thomas J. McCormack. (La Salle, Illinois: The Open Court Pub. Co., 1960) 552. In Chapter IV, entitled 'The Formal Development of Mechanics' (516-595) Mach discusses the formal development of physics, and criticizes what he saw as scientific language mired in theological terms. He credits Copernicus and Lagrange as the first scientists to make a distinction between theology and physics (552).

⁴⁵ Michel Foucault, The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences (London: Tavistock Publications, 1970) 263. Foucault marks the end of the 19th century as the end of the classical *episteme*, citing Nietzsche as the figure who brought that end into relief. "The great dream of an end to History is the utopia of causal systems of thought, just as the dream of the world's beginnings was the utopia of classifying systems of thought... This arrangement maintained its firm grip on thought for a long while; and Nietzsche, at the end of the nineteenth century, made it glow into brightness again for the last time by setting fire to it" (263).

⁴⁶ Considering the time in which Hofmannsthal set the letter, which describes his present (even autobiographical) predicament, in addition to the three successive stages of Chandos disillusionment with language, those of euphoria, crisis and epiphany, the letter takes on a remarkably rich significance when

compared with Foucault's historical archaeology of the human sciences. *Ein Breif* is set between the Renaissance episteme of *resemblance* to the episteme of the Classical age, which was one of *representation*; of ordering structures of identity and difference. The change which takes place in Chandos's view of language is in accord with Foucault's assessment of the transition between *epistemes*, yet Hofmannsthal points to a previous epistemic shift and attributes it to Lord Francis Bacon's critique of scientific method.

⁴⁷ Gary Gutting. Michel Foucault's Archaeology of Scientific Reason. (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989) 197.

⁴⁸ Hugo von Hofmannsthal, Reden und Aufsätze, vol. 3 1925-1929, 390-1; qtd in Le Rider 49. LeRider refers to Gotthart Wunberg's study of Bacon's influence on Hofmannsthal, 'Mach und Hofmannsthal', in Der frühe Hofmannsthal. Schizophrenie als dichterische Struktur (Stuttgart/Berlin, 1965).

⁴⁹ Richie Robertson, 'Language and the Unsayable in German Thought and Poetry from Nietzsche to Celan.' <<http://info.sjc.ox.ac.uk/research/images/downloads/RR1.pdf>>

⁵⁰ Foucault might see in Chandos's crisis a testimony to a change whereby "signs, words now belong to a separate ontological realm. Language is no longer intertwined with the world, a reality of the same nature as the thing it signifies. It ceases to resemble and instead represents, which means that "discourse was still to have the task of speaking that which is, but it was no longer to be anything more than what it said" (Foucault 43; Gutting 153). This seems to be what Hofmannsthal, and through him Chandos, saw in the unhinging of language from reality, whereby the criteria of *resemblance* had come undone. According to Foucault, in the transition between Renaissance and Classical epistemes, words no longer had the right to be considered the mark of truth: "Language has withdrawn from the midst of beings themselves and has entered a period of transparency and neutrality" (56).

⁵¹ This kind of wordplay foreshadows their lack of self-awareness in adult life, reflected in the dialogue among the men in Barney Kiernans in the 'Cyclops' episode:

That's so, says Martin, or so they allege.

Who made those allegations? says Alf.

I, says Joe, I'm the alligator (U 438, 5-7).

⁵² “This economical office of science... is apparent at first glance; and with its full recognition all mysticism in science disappears” (*Mechanics* 610).

⁵³ Mulligan writes: “Mach attempts to show how the phenomenal concepts can do all the work needed for science; where they are not to be found as in the case of absolute space or the ego, Mach simply ditches the concepts concerned. In every case what we find is a concerted effort to strip away every sort of superfluous commitment” (41).

⁵⁵ “Colours, sounds, temperatures, pressures, spaces, times and so forth are connected with one another in manifold ways; and with them are associated moods of mind, feelings and volitions. Out of this fabric, that which is relatively more fixed and permanent stands prominently forth, engraves itself in the memory, and expresses itself in language” (Mach 1886, 2).

⁵⁶ In this way, Mach’s endeavor resembled that of Bertrand Russell. Toumin and Janik write: “Russell’s program required one to assume, at one and the same time, *both* that the “true structure” of language is “propositional” in the required, formalizable sense, *and* that the real world is describable by means of such a language” (189).

⁵⁷ It is also possible that both Nietzsche and Mauthner derived the notion of language as metaphor from the same source: Gustav Gerber Language as Art (1872).

⁵⁸ Arens 56. Katherine Arens looks to reviews of Mauthner’s by Leo Spitzer Literaturblatt für germanische un romanische Philologie, 40, No. 7/8 (July/Aug. 1919) who asserted the literary value of Mauthner’s work while denying that he was feuilletonistic, as well as Ric Von Carlowitz-Hartitzsch, “Zur Sprachkritik,” Grenzboten, 72, Bd. 3, Nr. 27, (1913)

⁶⁰ Hannah Hickman, Robert Musil and the Culture of Vienna (La Salle, Illinois: Open Court Publishing Company, 1984) 21: “These are the basic premises of Mach’s The Analysis of Sensations which was first published in 1885, and attracted little notice at the time outside of scientific circles, however between 1900 and 1902 it was published in three new editions which indicated the widespread interest that Viennese intellectuals had for it at this time.”

⁶¹ Hickman 22: H. Bahr, ‘Impressionismus’, in *Zur Überwindung des Naturalismus*, ed. G. Wunberg, 1968, pp. 192-8, p. 198.

⁶² If Nietzsche and Mach were critical of the state of the human sciences, Fritz Mauthner's criticism of the *fin-de siècle* worldview and Hugo von Hofmannsthal's placement of Lord Chandos Letter in another *fin-de-siècle* context assume a historically recurrent critical attitude. Mauthner's assessment of 'fin-de-siècle' as a concept warrants some attention: Two of Mauthner's elegant feuilletons derided the *fin de siècle* context as a collective illusion based in language by "analyzing its source, then demonstrating that its eventual meaning developed only after the word began its life. "Fin de siècle" then gained currency in society as a mark of self-importance, whereas it had really only attracted and focused the remnants of a vague anticipation of change associated with the last decade of the century" (Arens 21). "Fin-de-siècle" means nothing at all, since it is a term that only tries to tied together the loose ends of a perceived historical epoch. Mauthner thereby diminishes mythical proportion of the term, and the privileged place in history that it seems to offer.

⁶³ Qtd. in David G. Stern, Wittgenstein's Philosophical Investigations: an introduction (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004) 64. Stern devotes a chapter of his book to this motto (56-71).

⁶⁴ D. G. Stern 61. Stern offers an interpretation of Nestroy's motto as a guide to the Philosophical Investigations as a whole and borrows from Gérard Genette's *Paratexts* (1997) for his interpretation.

⁶⁵ Richard Ellman, *James Joyce* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1959) 83.

⁶⁶ Massimo Cacciari, *Posthumous People: Vienna at the Turning Point* (Trans. Roger Freidman. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996) 97.

⁶⁷ Gray explains what these these terms mean to Franz Mautner: "Einfall" refers to the stimulating thought, the aperçu, which takes the thinker by surprise, occurring beyond all acts of willing and intending, and which becomes manifest in the insight the aphorism expresses... His second term, "Klärung," describes the aphoristic thought as the long-sought solution to a dilemma" (81-82).

⁶⁸ Pamela S. Saur, 'Viennese *Fin-de-Siècle* Impressionism in International Context.' *Trans: Internet-Zeitschrift für Kulturwissenschaften*. Ed. Donald G. Daviau. No. 15, 2004.

<<http://www.inst.at/trans/15Nr/05_09/saur15.htm>>

⁶⁹ In many ways Impressionism resembled another reactionary literary form to which Joyce was probably exposed in Trieste: that of Italian Futurism, which also "sought to convey the "simultaneity" of impressions which characterized modern life" (I. Cope Jackson, ctd. in McCourt 161) Joyce's later work was to display

techniques and characteristics associated with Futurism, like the elimination of traditional syntax and the deforming or remodeling of words, but his epiphanies often took the form of short prose sketches.

⁷⁰ Saur <<http://www.inst.at/trans/15Nr/05_09/saur15.htm>>

⁷¹ Walter Benjamin 'Theses on the philosophy of history.' *Illuminations*. Trans. Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken Books, 1968). Walter Benjamin may have had such writers in mind when he wrote that "only for a redeemed mankind would the past has its past become citable in all its moments" 254.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷⁴ Arthur Schnitzler. *Aphorismen un Betrachtungen*, ed. Robert O. Weiss (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer, 1967, qtd. in Berlin 173).

⁷⁵ Stephen Dedalus mocks this impulse in the 'Proteus' episode of *Ulysses* (50.13-20).

⁷⁶ Magris 1984, 51. [Lord Chandos lives, as Ziolkowski noted, the pure and clear epiphany of the object in the Joycean sense: the object is immovable, removed from the passing of time, and appears integral in its clearly traced limits, harmonious in its balanced image, luminous in its essence. The style, Wolfram Mauser observes, abandons all of its metaphoric richness in order to concentrate itself in the essentials of the bare adjectives that bespeak only the quality of the object. As in Joyce's *Stephen Hero*, the epiphany is pure and absolutely present, an unexpected moment of illumination, independent of every context. Lord Chandos speaks about "revelation", of "an overflowing flood of higher life", than replenishes daily existence "as a vase is overfilled."] (my translation).

⁷⁸ Chandos's epiphanies are "mute, coming from the depths of silence, and he cannot speak them" (my translation).

⁸⁰ Maurice Maeterlinck. qtd. in Robert Musil, *The Confusions of Young Törless* (Trans. Shaun Whiteside, Penguin Books, 2001) 1.

⁸¹ A comparison between *The Confusions of Young Törless* and *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* and/or the 'Nestor' episode of *Ulysses* would yield many interesting parallels and differences. Both Joyce and Musil are aware of the problems of language, but only one of their protagonists shares in that awareness. Both are set in private schools for boys: one military the other religious. Musil's novel operates as an allegory of Austro-Hungarian mentalities, whereas Joyce satirizes the development of Irish and artistic mentalities. The theme of pedagogy in *Törless* (an almost indispensable element of the

Bildungsroman genre) would certainly bring to mind the education of a young Stephen Dedalus in *Portrait* as well as his role as a teacher of sums in the Nestor episode of *Ulysses*. Törless and Dedalus are critical of the systemic structures, precociously aware of the “nets” that their society flings at their souls: for Dedalus, they are those of nation, language and religion, for Törless they are of a logical and linguistic nature. Where the epiphany merges with the Joycean text, it is as an ellipsis in that of Musil, leading to a reflection on the impossibility of reconciling the private world of epiphany (subjective selection, reaction to a manifestation of the world) to the social, logical or universal character of language. Dedalus attempts to reconcile reality with a Thomist aesthetic theory that Joyce makes a subject of derision and irony. Instead, Törless gives up theorizing.

⁸² At a boarding school Törless meets the young prince H. “a member of one of the most influential, oldest and most conservative aristocratic families in the empire” (7) who seems to represent the aesthetic, ritualistic and religious Aristocracy. Recommended to the school by “a doctor of theology and a member of a religious order” (7) he is figured as “sentimental and affected,” and “a very different kind of person” (7) with a religious nature that Törless finds “quite alien, coming as he did from a free-thinking, bourgeois family” (8). The two friends experience a falling out in an argument over religious matters as Törless, “smashed the filigree structure in which the boy’s soul was housed” (8) with “the wooden ruler of rationalism” (9). Törless experiences the Habsburg Myth in a kind of nostalgia for Prince H. when he leaves the school: “A kind of longing for the past remained with him, and probably would for ever, but he seemed to have entered a different stream which was carrying further and further away” (9).

Törless finds himself at the military college where the teachers and administrators who have authority are associated with Enlightenment reason and Habsburg bureaucratic formalism. As such they are represented as powerless and uncomprehending over the sadistic and irrational conduct of the students, always ready to reduce what they do not understand to their limited conceptual structures. Beineberg and Reiting seem to represent Austrian bourgeois and military figures, Božena the prostitute as the exploited Slav peasant, and Basini the Italian as the pariah Jew.

⁸³ Musil, *The Confusions of Young Törless*, 159:

He was unable to explain a great deal of it. But that silence felt delicious, like the certainty of an impregnated body that feels in its blood the gentle pull of the future. And confidence and weariness mingled in Törless...

And so he waited quietly and thoughtfully for his farewell...

His mother, who had thought she would find an overwrought and confused young man was struck by his composure. (...)

‘What is it, my son?’

‘Nothing, Mama, I was just thinking about something.’

And he breathed in the faintly perfumed fragrance rising from his mother’s waist.

⁸⁴ Magris writes: “Se volessimo chiederci quale elemento culturale specificamente austriaco si può riscontrare in Svevo, direi che si tratta dell’influsso della *Sprachskepsis*, di quello scetticismo del linguaggio o critica del linguaggio che in Austria – non certo soltanto, ma particolarmente in Austria – aveva ricevuto un decisivo impulso dall’insegnamento di Mach, il grande filosofo e scienziato meccanicista... L’influsso di Mach verrà recepito in sede specificamente letteraria, suggerendo a molti autori alcuni motivi che s’intrecceranno a quelli svolti poi dalla riflessione psicoanalitica sul linguaggio, e si incontreranno con la lezione di Nietzsche, cioè con un’analoga critica rivolta da Nietzsche alla tradizionale fisionomia del soggetto borghese... Per studiare questo problema dei rapporti fra il segno e la vita, forse la direzione migliore sarebbe quella di aver presente proprio il filone della *Sprachskepsis*, la critica del linguaggio fiorita in Austria a diversi livelli, dal meccanicismo machiano alla consapevolezza di scrittori quali Musil o Kafka, a un filosofo del linguaggio come Fritz Mauthner, sino a Wittgenstein a circolo viennese [If we wanted to ask which specifically Austrian cultural element can itself be found in Svevo, it could be said that the influence of *Sprachskepsis*, of the language skepticism or critiques of language that in Austria – not only, but particularly in Austria – had received a decisive impulse from the instruction of Mach, the great mechanical philosopher and scientist... The influence of Mach was received in a specifically literary context, suggesting to many authors some themes that they would then interlace with those carried forth from the psychoanalytic reflection on the language, and these were met with the lessons of Nietzsche, that is, with an analogous critique turned from Nietzsche to the traditional appearance of the bourgeois subject... Perhaps in order to study this problem of the relationship between the sign and

life, the better direction would be that one than to have present just the tradition of the *Sprachskepsis*, the critique of language bloomed in Austria at various levels, from the mechanics of Mach to the knowledge of writers like Musil or Kafka, to a philosophers of language like Fritz Mauthner, to Wittgenstein to the Vienna Circle]" (1988, 49; my translation).

⁸⁵ Carlo Michelstaedter writes: "Whatever the scientist *indicates* as part of science, in the infinite correlativity of what lacks being, he will always say *unredliches*, something that, in being inadequate to the demand, is dishonest to say" (98).

⁸⁶ It is also somewhere else in *Ulysses*: right after Molly Bloom's resounding "Yes" (933.8). The inscription, "Trieste-Zürich-Paris, 1914-1921" (933.10) refers to another Odyssey: that of Joyce and his family during World War I. Other paratextual considerations can be made, but I will not make them here.

⁸⁷ "With Svevo began the appreciation of 'content' and the devaluation of 'style' in a literary production, that not only took with it the difficulty of language in the correct use of the word, but showed itself to be 'outside' of the national style" (Abruzzese 17; my translation).

⁸⁸ Another indication that W. B. Murphy might be fabricating his yarns might be seen in his account of a stabbing in Trieste. "And I seen a man killed in Trieste by an Italian chap. Knife in his back. Knife like that" (U 725.18-9). The Triestine manner was relatively civil, however Trieste earned a bit of notoriety because it was where Johann Winckelmann, the celebrated 18th century antiquarian who famously praised the simplicity and clarity of the Greeks in his writings, was stabbed to death in his hotel by "an Italian chap" to whom he had imprudently displayed some medals that he had received from Maria Teresa. Winckelmann was traveling incognito and alone, returning to his native Dresden after spending ten years in Rome, so a Homeric allusion is possible, especially in this episode, but Joyce doesn't seem to encourage it. Nonetheless, with W. B. Murphy who makes some dubious associations and misses others, it is hard to tell when he is telling the truth, but the fact that Winckelmann's murder was a notorious part of Trieste's history seems to make his account of having been there a bit suspicious.

⁸⁹ Robinson notes that this was not one of Zeno of Elea's paradoxes, but rather one of Epimenedes (247). It has been debated by philosophers for centuries, and notably in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century context by Bertrand Russel and Alfred Tarski. Solutions have been proposed by Saul Kripke and Alfred Gödel, and has been taken as proof by proponents of dialethism and paraconsistent logic.

⁹⁰ Robinson 248. Elsewhere in the essay, Robertson considers the difficulty of everyday tasks for dialect speakers, and particularly for those in Trieste: "Though a member of the commercial upper-middle class, Zeno is nevertheless a dialect speaker, though he can gingerly venture into standard Italian. For example, hurrying to the *Tergesteo* in order to meet his prospective father-in-law, Zeno intends to ask for Ada's hand in marriage, but rather than worrying whether he will be accepted or not, he occupies himself solely with the choice of asking the all-important question in *lingua* or in *dialetto*" (252).

⁹¹ Robinson includes Beckett's statement in a footnote:

Dante did not adopt the vulgar out of any kind of local jingoism nor out of any determination to assert the superiority of Tuscan to all its rivals as a form of spoken Italian ... He did not write in Florentine any more than in Neapolitan. He wrote a vulgar that could have been spoken by an ideal Italian who had assimilated what was best in all the dialects of his country, but which in fact was certainly not spoken nor ever had been.' For Beckett, this ideal Italian, constructed in defiance of the medieval Latin audience's intolerance of innovation, is analogous to the modernist language of *Finnegans Wake* and its hostile reception; both Dante and Joyce 'saw how worn out and threadbare was the conventional language of cunning literary artificers, both rejected an approximation to a universal language' (Beckett, 1961: 17–18 qtd. in Robinson, n.5, p. 264)

⁹² Wittgenstein begins Philosophical Investigations with a passage from St. Augustine's Confessions as a *picture* of language and introduces us to his mode of philosophical inquiry by presenting commonly accepted ideas about language: "When they (my elders) named some object, and accordingly moved toward something, I saw this and I grasped that the thing was called by the sound they uttered when they meant to point it out. Their intention was shewn by their bodily movements, as it were the natural language of all peoples: the expression of the face, the play of the eyes, the movement of other parts of the body, and the tone of voice which expresses our state of mind in seeking, having, rejecting, or avoiding something. Thus, as I heard words repeatedly used in their proper places in various sentences, I gradually learnt to understand what objects they signified; and after I had trained my mouth to form these signs, I used them to express my own desires" (§1). "One has to know (or be able to do) something in order to be able to be capable of asking a thing's name. But what does one have to know?" (§30) "And now, I think, we can say: Augustine

describes the learning of human language as if the child came into a strange country and did not understand the language of the country; that is if it already had a language, only not this one" (§32).

⁹³ "The words of poets do not add a beauty that is like strange cloud suspended in front of the eyes, but a hardness, a sweetness rooted in the earth, that all of our senses can touch (this is *art*, Gioietta, of which you asked me many times what it is: when it knows how to destroy the word-shell and to live in the blood of the men, therefore it cannot *tell* a lie, because it is). March 1910" (Slataper; my translation).

⁹⁴ My use of the term "indexical function" regarding Joyce's epiphanies is adapted from Jean Michel Rabaté's discussion of Joycean epiphany in *The Future of Theory* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Ltd., 2002). "These texts [Epiphanies] seem to play the function of a computer's Index, like keyed prompts needed to retrieve files that have been distributed randomly in a disk. Enigmatic as they may be, these recurrences should not veil another factor: when these pre-written fragments are reintroduced into all the novels' narrative texture, they lose their own status as epiphanies, they just merge into pure text" (128).

⁹⁵ The edition that I am reading (Scipio Slataper, *Il mio Carso* (Firenze: La Nuova Italia, 1966)) has footnotes, exclusively devoted to translating Slataper's Karst idiom and Triestino dialect into Italian.

⁹⁶ Ezra Pound, *Pound/Joyce*. ed. Forrest Read (New York: New Directions, 1967) 105. Cited in Murray McArthur, 'The Image of the Artist: Giacomo Joyce, Ezra Pound and Jacques Derrida.' *Giacomo Joyce: Envoys of the Other*. Ed. Louis Armand, Bethesda, 2002. pp. 60.

⁹⁷ Carlo Michelstaedter. *Persuasion and Rhetoric*. Translated with an introduction and commentary by Russel Scott Valentino, Cinzia Sartini Blum, and David J. Depew (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2004) 137-38.

⁹⁸ This hypothesis is suggested by the involvement of several of Vienna's most notable writers in the contemporary human sciences. Some had backgrounds in "serious" scientific disciplines, such as Robert Musil, who wrote his *Törless* while writing a dissertation on Ernst Mach. Arthur Schnitzler, the author of impressionist dramas and novels such as *Anatol* and *Lieutenant Gustl*, was trained in medicine. Many of Late Habsburg Austria's aesthetes, such as Hugo Von Hofmannsthal and Carlo Michelstaedter were as well read in the physics and empiriocriticism of Ernst Mach as they were in the *Lebensphilosophie* of Nietzsche and Schopenhauer.

⁹⁹ Declan Kiberd. Introduction to James Joyce, *Ulysses* xlv.

¹⁰⁰ Mauthner argues that the use of language for poetry offers a certain kind of knowledge, that of “motive content” and “subjective states” whereas language used for science offers nothing at all because it operates under false pretenses. He believed that the metaphorical nature of language precludes all univocity and thereby makes precise scientific knowledge impossible: “Science too is, at best, poetry.” Thus, precisely because it is essentially metaphorical, language is well adapted to poetry, but ill adapted to science and philosophy: “It is impossible to arrest the conceptual content of words permanently. Therefore knowledge of the world through language is impossible. It is possible to arrest the motive content of words. Therefore art is possible through language; verbal art, poetry” (*Beiträge* Vol. 1 p. 92: ctd. in Toulmin and Janik, 129)

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