Sites of Sign-Production and Interpretation

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ABSTRACT

T.S. Eliot's query in The Waste Land, "Who is the third who walks always beside you?" may be said to sum up the hermeneutic situation of any language act, whether of sign production or interpretation. Whereas traditional topoi of expressionist aesthetics, such as the artist's subjectivity, empirical psychology, truthfulness, intentionality, etc. have become irrelevant in the heteroglot discourse of the most famous dirge on the decaying West, Eliot's awareness of the matrical role of cultural semiosis allows us to place him among the founding fathers of semiotic aesthetics. Rooted in the insights of Charles Peirce Sanders and Martin Heidegger, and enlarged by post-war contributors, such as Roland Barthes, Umberto Eco, Michel Foucault, René Girard, and Gilles Deleuze, the semiotic approach to art makes interpretation dependent on a mediating third (Peirce: the Interpretant), which is variously related to context, regime of signification, episteme, schemata, triangulation of desire. Our archaeology of T.S. Eliot's contextual knowledge allows us to complete the poet's own hypertext, which functions as a key to interpretation, and to fill in the meaning structure of *The Waste Land*, whose fragmentation and abrupt shifts in space and time make it look like a puzzle. In this essay, we are interested in digging up the innermost circle of reference, which is the historical context of the poet's conversation with Marie Larisch, a cousin of Bavarian King Ludwig II, in the opening of the poem. In our attempt to retrieve the land under erasure, surfacing through allusions in the fictional "Waste Land", we are taking a journey through Neuschwanstein and environs.

1.0   Philosophical hermeneutics

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The linguistic turn took hermeneutics out of the centre of epistemologial discussions about mental forms or prelinguistic intuitions and into a hightened concern for linguistic structures and properties that transcend any individual user of the code. Post-war philosophy of language assigned meaning-making to the interpreter/ reader pole of the communication act, concomitantly bursting open the lexico-semantic level of the individual text which was seen now as flooded by currents of the entire social semiosis:

> A person who is trying to understand a text is always projecting. He projects a meaning for a text as a whole as soon as some initial meaning emerges in thetext. Again, the initial meaning emerges only because he is reading the textwith particular expectations in regard to a certain meaning. Working out thisfore-projection, which is constantly revised in terms of what emerges as hepenetrates into the meaning, is understanding what is there (Gadamer: 267).

Deconstructionists , who have taken pains to prove the existence, not only of several but of oppositional structures of meaning in any stretch of language, were in a way seconded by pragmatists, who claimed that there was no *langue,* no transcendental authoritative structures of language, but only local knowledge and codes shared by communities of speakers.

Hans Georg Gadamer (*Truth and Method*) and Martin Buber ("The Word That Is Spoken") replace communicational epistemology with the in-between ontology of dialogue. Past textuality can only be revived as selected tradition, lifted by a living speaker/writer into the sphere of the living world. By contrast, Raymond Williams (*The Long Revolution*) is sceptical of the possibility to retrieve lived culture, which is only fully accessible to contemporaries. Whereas structuralist linguistics had eliminated the referential dimension of the sign, puttin the *hors-texte* within brackets - which filled T.S. Eliot with a sense of certainty and stability as long as he stood protected within the museum space of European tradition - Deleuzian philosophy built on the idea of discontinuity between the cultures of succeeding generations, their deterritorializations into the world causing the dissolution of regimes of signification and the rise of others.

Although more famous thanks to the shocking, Nietzschean, title "Death of the Author", Roland Barthes contributed less to reader-response theory, associated with Hans Robert Jauss**,** and Wolfgang Iser, who capitalized on a primarily German tradition of interpretive understanding going back to Heidegger and Schleiermacher. In parallel to the privileged position of the observer in quantum physics, reader response (understanding: *Verstand*) was becoming after the war a matter of understanding in light of hermeneutics, not of Reason (*Vernunft*). Meaning making is (again in likeness of quantum notions of probabilistic calculus of wave function) a projective activity, working through paradigmatic displacement and multiple choices rather than filling in the gaps of a teleological, pre-given text with a unique meaning structure:

> It is precisely this "promot[ion] to the realm of metaphor" that the translational paradigm seeks to achieve. Perhaps more than any of the first three options, it is this fourth approach to questions about translation and identity – this consideration of the subject from a less prototypical and more metaphorical or paradigmatic perspective – that has the greatest potential to deepen our understanding of the effects of other intercultural, transformative processes on the formation of identity; the greatest ability to strategically position translation scholars for better engaging with current interdisciplinary dialogues; and the greatest hope of moving us somewhat further down the road toward that 'ethos of translation' envisioned byRicoeur (Schadd: 162).

The reader's appropriation of a stretch of language is triggered by various factors.There is, first of all, the distinction between natural meanings (unproblematic, whose referent is given in common), and social meanings, partaking of society's intersubjective order (Barthes: the metalanguage, words endowed with symbolic function). Here is Socrates explaining the difference to Phaedrus:

> SOCRATES: When any one speaks of iron and silver, is not the same thing present in the minds of all?
> PHAEDRUS: Certainly.
> SOCRATES: But when any one speaks of justice and goodness we part company and are at odds with one another and with ourselves? (Plato, *Phaedrus*: 98)

In statements such as the following: "With the aid of powder metallurgy, **iron-silver** alloys at the **iron**-rich end were prepared", iron and silver are natural signifieds, whereas a comparative discussion of the iron, materialist age, versus the silver age of spiritual enhancement, or of humanity's decay from the golden to the iron age transfers the two words to Barthes's metalanguage of resignified signifiers. The difference between Plato and the twentieth-century semiologist lies in the latter's functionalist approach, which defines the symbolic not in separation from but as a fold upon the first order of signification:

> But myth isa peculiar system, in that it is constructed from a semiologicalchain which existed before it: it is a *second-order semiologicalsystem*. That which is a sign (namely the associative total of aconcept and an image) in the first system, becomes a mere signifierin the second. [...] And here is now another example: I am at the barber's, and a copy of *Paris-Match* is offered to me. On the cover, a young Negro in a French uniform is saluting, with his eyes uplifted, probably fixed on a fold of the tricolour. All this is the *meaning* of the picture. But, whether naively or not, I see very well what it signifies to me: that France is a great Empire, that all her sons, without any colour discrimination, faithfully serve under her flag, and that there is no better answer to the detractors of an alleged colonialism than the zeal shown by this Negro in serving his so-called oppressors. I am therefore again faced with a greater semiological system: there is a signifier, itself already formed with a previous system (*a blacksoldier is giving the French salute*); there is a signified (it is here a purposeful mixture of Frenchness and militariness); finally, there is a presence of the signified through the signifier (Barthes: 113, 115).

Paul Ricoeur's follow-upmakes individual texts and messages dependent on the **outside of discourse** as code shared by the community of speakers: "A message is individual', he says in a gloss on Saussure, (Ricoeur: 19), 'while code is collective". And he goes on in a way reminiscent of Barthes's double-layered semiotic system:

> The sense of a message is its semantic content, its 'what', while reference is the 'about what': In the system of language, say as a lexicon, there is no problem of reference; signs only refer to other signs within the system [...] the reference relates language to the world.[...] The sense is traversed by the referring intention of the speaker" (Ricoeur: 20).

The philosopher senses bearings from his unconscious, which, as well as in Lacan, is structured like a language: signs given outside us in culture and history and inscribed in texts. The death of the author as empirical psychological subject allows of the emergence of a criss-cross of texts of various provenance on the scorched site. This is Lewis S. Mudge, in whose exegetic mirror Ricoeur acknowleged a faithful portrait:

> Here, it seems, are the conceptual roots of Ricoeur's conviction, expressed in the quotation at the head of this section, "that the understanding of the self is always indirect and proceeds from the interpretation of signs given outside me in culture and history and from the appropriation of the meaning of these signs." It is fundamental to any adequate understanding of Ricoeur to note that his phenomenology is so constructed as to be open to the "signs" generated by "counter-disciplines," and indeed to read the meaning of human existence "on" a world full of such expressions generated by the natural and social sciences, as well as in the history of culture. Ricoeur's approach, then, to disciplines such as the history of religions (as represented by his friend Mircea Eliade and others), psychoanalysis (with particular reference to Freud), linguistics (de Saussure, Jakobson), and anthropology (Levi-Strauss and various other structuralists) is set within this diagnostic relationship. The "signs" through which we constitute our being arise in

> realms of discourse which can and must be studied objectively to see how such "signs" work. Hence Ricoeur's conversation with the "counter-disciplines" is ultimately controlled by his phenomenological concern with respect to the authentic figures of the will, a concern which deserves also to be called existential (Mudge: web).

Ricoeur's originality consists mainly in the substitution of hypothetical and multiple interpretations for explanation through the hermeneutic circle, whichGeir Amdal glosses on in his doctoral thesis submitted to the University of Oslo in 2001(*Explanation andUnderstanding:The Hermeneutic Arc. Paul Ricoeur's Theory of Interpretation).* Coherence of interpretation and plausibilityof interpretation are a more modest bid for hermeneutics, but Ricoeur's model casts a bridge between different schools and traditions offering them a common ground and vocabulary. Critical theories as different as Semiotics, New Historicism, Pragmatism, Functionalism, Epistemological Positivism, or Discourse Analysis converge in the working out of relational and contextualist types of approach.

> Understanding requires an affinity between the reader and this aboutness of the text, that is, the kind of world *opened up* by the depth semantics of the text. Instead of imposing any fixed interpretation, the depth semantics channels thought in a certain direction. By suspending meaning and focusing on the formal algebra of the genres reflected in the text at various levels, the structural method gives rise to objectivity while capturing thesubjectivity of both the author and the reader (Geir Amdal: 3).

2.0   Translational hermeneutics

The "non-ostensive reference of the text" is a most fortunate expression used by Geir Amdal to refer to the "what about" of a text which is usually seen as the inside text about an outside world of discourse or of things. Actually a text is a phenomenon: the extrinsic unfolding of an intrinsic, "non-ostensive", core meaning, like a glove turned inside out or like the spreading out and contraction of the ink drop in David Bohm's famous "experiment. The translator is a mediator between what John Stanley calls "inner and outer", "individual and general" (Stanley: 18). The understanding produces a new text, "der den Sinn des ursprüngliches eindeutiger wiedergibt". The translated text is more transparent, because the enfolded core is made apparent. The author may leave things ambiguous and disconnected, while the critic or translator cannot, for what gets translated in ideal cases is a grammar of deep structure, of the "what about". Even the understanding of what is said to be the internal world of the text, of its linguistic structures, is not possible without knowledge of the outside world of discourse that fed into it, of the nebula of discursive negotiations that grant meaning to the individual text.One becomes an individual only by participation in a world not of one's own making, but a "mit Welt" (Di Censo: 45). We live in communities bonded by common codes and referential background .

John Wild, the editor of *Studies in Phenomenology and Existential Philosophy,* warns readers that literature can die through lack of perceived relationships. It lives on if it is brought to understanding through representation, explanation or translation.

We are sceptical about explanation, as we do not believe in the existence of unique structures of meaning but only in their translation from one age to another and from one place to another in light of genealogical models rooted in Deleuzian and Foucaultian regimes of knowledge and signification.In the age of quantum physics, a text appears to us as a wave function, a system with a certain initial state and parameters - the ground for its being given in common to a language community - but which collapses with each reading to one of its possible interpretations. The reader acts like the measuring equipment in quantum experiments which forces the system as matrix of possible states into one of them. The various interpretations provided by one and the same reader at short intervals, which do not give him the opportunity to become either wiser or more cultivated, are proof of the fact that the mind is a quantum system whose interference with the quantum reality of a text characterised by dissemination of meaning can only lead to unpredictable results.The radical change between the methods and vocabularies of the fifties and of the present are due to the turn to semiotic aesthetics, i.e. to the focus on meaning processes and the interferences of sign systems. No longer seen as a fashioner of

monuments but as a meaning being, the writer figure has been reclassified as a manipulator of signs, as an illocutionary source, engaged in an act of inscription and more often in one of reinscription, whose texts are sites of cross hermeneutic encounters. Born out of discursive negotiations, literary texts are approached through the genealogical or new historicist method. Being faithful is not possible in light of semiotic or pragmatic consideration, because there is no universal and eternal community of speakers. Translation is indeed dislocation and paradigmatic change (assumption of one of the possible realisations of the textual manifold) acording to the codes of the language formation appropriating it.

Moreover, the question is: "faithful to what?", since the surface of the text is only a sympton of the text's unconscious. This matrix is a virtual score whose authoring or rather inscription was a process which quantum physics calls "decoherence" (disentanglement from the wave function or from a matrix of states). The famous "reality effect" concerns the pragmatic, not the communicative function of language. The meaning of a text comes out through the interpretation of the signifier as symptom and through recourse to the text's outside world of discourse. A discourse analyst attempting nowadays a holistic approach to language in use will find that "Foucauldian discourse analysis, and "Begriffsgeschichte" can be fruitfully combined to develop a textual analysis, which takes into account both pragmatic and semantic dimensions of language":

> As a historian by training I was not taught to work with texts and textual analysis, but with documents and source criticism. Although historians do place documents within communicative contexts, they are primarily treated as monuments of past voices. Sourcecriticism is not really concerned with establishing how texts produced meaning, but rather with answering questions about who said what and why (Ifversen: 60).

Theory into practice is probably the best way of checking the validity of a critical theory. Is the translator's work subject to change over time? The time is indeed gone when Socrates's accursed race, putatively blamed for "tumbling about written words anywhere and among those who may or may not understand them" (*Phaedrus* 274b–278d), confined themselves to putting down prosodic patterns, with the accurate number of sylllables and positioning of the stressed ones. What they will set out from now, equipped with genre theory and semiotic competence, is a cognitive map, a conceptual model which probably served as the writer's pre-space of actual linguistic patterns. Magoroh Maruyama's "communicational epistemology"identified a way of detecting an incorrect interpretation: inconsistency, not between itself and another, but within itself. Such inconsistencies could not be detected if the art works were not produced through a world-building model.

> The corporate paradigm identifies desired characteristics (elements) from culture and available knowledge, which may be referred to as its parsimony that reflects on the societal value system. Rather than there being numerous values that arise from the dominant culture, only a few dominant ones count. In the same way, not all available knowledge is reflected, but rather a selection that is recognised and perceived to be appropriate. This knowledge is represented in the figurative system as the system of corporate thought, and is ultimately a manifested selection from the cultural domain of the meta-system (Yolles: 8).

The signifying battery of a text is hooked into the collective psyche, acting as a "socio-cognitive normative personality", a "collective personality style" enforcing "type values" (Yolles: 6). These are the touchstones that limit the otherwise potentially infinite hypotheses about what a text means. No individual message can escape its time's constraints on sign-production and interpretation or the mechanisms of its symbolic systems.

3.0   The land under erasure in *The Waste Land*

A new version drawing one of the virtual figures in the carpet of T S Eliot's *The Waste Land* will be an appropriate one to the extent that it resembles a collapsed state in physics, which is the result of the

interference of all the states; it is holistic, like a hologram, containing in each point the information of the whole.

An authority on the structure of modernist poetry, Rainer Emig (Emig: 61 and the following) https://books.google.ro/books/about/Modernism_in_Poetry.html?id=y7VZAAAAMAAJ&redir_esc=y), sees the Waste Land as an interplay of two tropes: the **metaphor** of the waste land is **metonymically** distributed throughout the five divisions. We would like to emphasize that they are not discrete bits of the image, but similar images reiterated in a sort of fractal geometry. How will the translator design the canvas of his translation? Will it be a chain of "broken images", or mirror images of semantic fields?

A concatenation of disconnected images is a mannerism within any hack poet's reach. There has to be more at stake in the most celebrated epic of modernism. The "panorama of futility" is a themed field. If tropes are homogeneous, so must be their referents ("objective correlatives", as Eliot called them). An efficient interpretive grid will allow as much of the text as possible to show through and build up a meaningful design.

Who is the third who always walks beside you? The mediating role played by Christ in The Journey to Emmaus passage of *The Waste Land* is a trope for Charles Peirce's Interpretant that intervenes as semiotic catalyst in the merging together of mind and world.

Modernist aesthetics - in Max Dessoir, for instances - emphasizes the autonomy of art, also manifest in the different way in which an art object is structured in comparison to nature. In the aftermath of the Great War, which had devastated lives, there was resistance to vanguard anarchy and a call to order, to rational, even mathematical models, such as that coming from Ammedée Ozenfant's review, *L'Esprit Nouveau*. French mathematician Gaston Maurice Julia had returned from combat with a mutilated face and was wearing a mask. His discovery of the equations generating fractals might have been the expression of an unconscious desire for regular and intelligible forms (Fig.1). *The Waste Land* is the literary correlative of fractal geometry, as are the incremental symbols (reiterated tropes) that sustain the spatial structure of modernist fiction.

$$z_{n+1} = f(z) = z_n^2 + c$$

In this equation, c is a constant, while Z takes value resulting from the previous calculus of the function. (Julia: "A Note on the Iteration of Rational Functions")

Figure 1: Julia set for the generative function c=(φ−2)+(φ−1)i =-0.4+0.6i
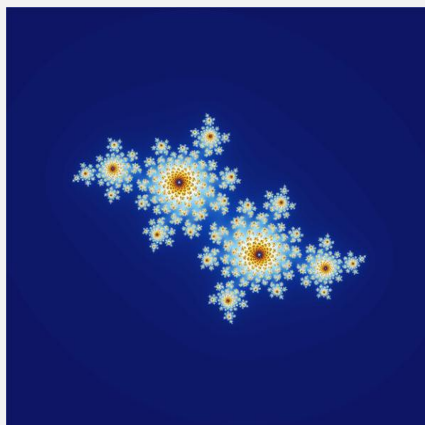
The poem seems to have been generated by a polynomous function. The constant is the Janus image of heroic idealism in contrast to its corruption in Eliot's time. The values taken by Z build semantic fields, clusters of images gravitating around this attractor. The waste land of the Grail legend receives a habitation and a name.

At the time Eliot was writing the poem, he had suffered a nervous breakdown and was living in the Starnberger See area, still haunted by the memory of King Ludwig II and the strange circumstances of his drowning in water that barely reached up to his waist. The mad king's story crosses the poem like a red thread. The romance waste land is echoed by the twilight of the gods (*Götterdämmerung*), the Wagnerian romance of Germany's heroic past. Texts and world are merged progressively, as the physical landscape gets mapped onto the symbolic. T. S. Eliot has his text signify through mediating cultural images, some of which are clarified by him in the endnotes . The poem was written as a hypertext, which means that that there is no end to the deferral of meaning in this semiotic utopia where a sign refers to others, indefinitely.

If we adopt the Swan Knight's life (*Lohengrin*) as the mediating third, we get a connected narrative with variations, or a serial structure, instead of a mix of disconnected voices and landscapes as *The Waste Land* has been interpreted so far.

The Neuschwanstein castle, Linderhof Castle and Herrenchiemsee are sites of end-of- the-century mythology, which Verlaine greeted as the work of the "only genuine king" of the century. Like Hieronymo in *The Spanish Tragedy*, Wagner's generous patron and sponsor was mixing up reality and fantasy. The bonded circle of Herren, out of which women were excluded, sharing codes of values and conduct, the castles, built by stage designers rather than professional architects, had an artificial life which the latest conquests of technology only managed to render more spectral. Marie Larisch, the king's cousin, whom Eliot actually met according to Valery, had published a book, *My Past*, that had revealed scenes from the life of the court, breaking a pledge of secrecy, as Elsa does in Richard Wagner's *Lohengrin*.

> Your arms full, and your hair wet, I could not
> Speak, and my eyes failed, I was neither
> Living nor dead, and I knew nothing,
> Looking into the heart of light, the silence.
> *Oed' und leer das Meer*(*The Waste Land*. I/ 35-40).

> ELSA
> How sweet the sound of my name from your lips!
> Will you not grant me the fair sound of yours?
> Only when we are led to the stillness of love
> shall you allow my lips to pronounce it.
> [........]

> LOHENGRIN
> *(embracing her lovingly*
> *and pointing through the open window*
> *to the flower-filled garden)*
>
> Can you not smell these sweet fragrances?
> How wondrously they delight the senses!
> Mysteriously they approach through the air,
> and unquestioningly I give myself over to this magic.
>
> Thus was the magic that joined me to you,
> when I first saw you, O fair one;
> I did not need to ask where you came from,
> my eyes saw you – and my heart understood at once.
> Just as these fragrances wondrously beguile my sense,
> though thou approach me from the enigmatic night,

so did your innocence enchant me,
even if I did find you suspected of a great crime (Lohengrin,III/2).

Another passage refers to her cousin's sleigh, which was famous for being equipped with the first electric bulb used for a vehicle, and whose function was less that of lighting the way than to render the king's figure more impressive (Fig.2):

Figure 2: Ludwig II on a night-time sleigh ride, painting by P. J. R. Wenig.

Marie confesses the initiation scene in the hyacinth garden had been wasted on her, she had understood nothing, and she found the constraint of silence over her experience oppressive. The expected bride, the longed for and true Isolde is missing. Deserted is the sea. The motif of the frustrated romantic love is reiterated through several other couples. The foundation of the Roman empire has become a topic for banquets, as in *Satyricon*, Petronius's parody of the heroic age, quoted in one of the two epigraphs to "The Burial of the Dead . The prophets have been replaced with eccentric mediums and fortune tellers, while Love, no less than faith, has been emptied out of meaning. There is a transvaluation of values.

The vicious love of Tannhäuser for Venus had been turned into a theme park of sorts. Around the turn of the century, Aubrey Beardsley, John Collier or Leonard Smithers were fantasizing about Wagner's story of Venus and her minnesinger. The following excerpts form *The Waste Land* seems to be drawing on the Grotto of Venus at the Linderhof Castle, powered by 24 dynamos (Fig. 3-5).

Figure 3: Ludwig II's Venus Grotto	**Figure 4:** Tannhäuser in the Grotto of Venus

Figure 5: Neuschwanstein: Tannhäuser in the Venus Grotto (First Act of Wagner's Homonymous Opera)

Under the firelight, under the brush, her hair
Spread out in fiery points
Glowed into words, then would be savagely still (108-110)
[....]
And bats with baby faces in the violet light
Whistled, and beat their wings
And crawled head downward down a blackened wall
And upside down in air were towers
Tolling reminiscent bells, that kept the hours
And voices singing out of empty cisterns and exhausted wells (377-384).

The artificial dripstone cave may have been the model of the rock that gives no water
  If there were water
  And no rock
  If there were rock
  And also water
  And water
  A spring
  A pool among the rock
  If there were the sound of water only
  Not the cicada
  And dry grass singing
  But sound of water over a rock
  Where the hermit-thrush sings in the pine trees
  Drip drop drip drop drop drop drop
  But there is no water(346-359).

There is one more passage in Part V that sounds like an accurate description of a real place nearby, as there are surprising coincidences between Elot's text and impressions posted in the net by tourists to Ettal Abbey nested in the "hole" of a mountain village in southern Bavaria, near Oberammergau and Garmisch Partenkirchen. Its religious meaning had been altered to that of initiation into a military culture (turned into The Knights' Academy – *Ritterakademie)*, or of aesthetic gratification, the place being built in rococo style (The " Co co rico co co rico"of line 393 is an anagram of rococo):

Between the pillars we see the windows, **feigned windows or niches** (our emphasis). The swinging door... The stucco decorations with their flickering and twitching forms as well as the altars, whose frames are thought to be **constantly swinging**, give the impression of continuing motion:[...] The Gothic structure was determined by the **number twelve**: twelve sides and twelve edges. The twelfth

east side cannot support a window because, as in the Gothic period, it is used as an opening for the choir [our emphases]. (Ettal Info: http://kjrunaas.tripod.com/ettal1.htm)

Eliot's text reads as follows:

> In this decayed hole among the mountains
> In the faint moonlight, the grass is singing
> Over the tumbled graves, about the chapel
> There is the empty chapel, only the wind's home.
> It has no windows, and the door swings,
> Dry bones can harm no one.
> Only a cock stood on the rooftree
> Co co rico co co rico (386–393).

The theme of the epic is laid in the abyss by *TheOberammergau Passion*, a play of life and death dating back to 1633. An outbreak of plague while The Thirty Years War was raging around called forth from the Oberammergauers an oath that they would perform the "Play of the Suffering, Death and Resurrection of Our Lord Jesus Christ" every ten years (''Ettal'' means the ''Valley of Vows'').

At Pentecost 1634 they performed the play for the first time on a stage put up in the cemetery above the fresh graves of the plague victims (''Dry bones can harm no one.''). In memory of the event, Ludwig's horse genuflected three times on the site of the original church building.

If we adopt Ricoeur's method of building hypotheses, an intelligible path would link Ludwig's Venus Grotto to its prototype in Tannhäuser's Venusberg and to the prophecy that the singer had no more chances to be forgiven for choosing sordid sex (thereby consorting with the goddess of carnal love and with the "lowest among the dead" as in Eliot's Tiresias passage) than the Pope's staff had of sprouting leaves:

> That corpse you planted last year in your garden,
> Has it begun to sprout? (71–72)

The artificial paradise of the Schwangau castle, on whose top stands the statue of the Knight-King, was a mix of mythological structures similar to *The Waste Land* poem, of eastern and western art, of the archaic and the latest modern inventions, of serious art, such as Wagner's music, and popular art (the Shakespearian rag). The castle itself houses The Singers' Hall, which occupies the whole of the fourth floor and is a combination of two historical rooms in Wartburg: the Festival Hall and the Singers' Hall. The Singers' Hall in the Wartburg Festival was allegedly the location of the famous Singers' Contest, which is also featured in Richard Wagner's opera whose protagonist is Minnesänger Tannhäuser.

The murals in the hall narrate the saga of Parzival and of the Holy Grail. Flayetanis and Kyot, the translators of the Grail saga, are depicted on the consoles, while the ceiling is painted with scrolls bearing the names of minnesingers. They are the pillars of a unified European culture. The only paradise is an earthly one, a paradise of stories, as in William Morris's *The Earthly Paradise*. Eiot quotes Verlaine, the author of *Parsifal*, who did indeed see in Ludwig a saviour . *Les voix dans la coupole* do echo the king's painted singers in his own literalising style

Morris, Verlaine and Wagner belong to the Schopenhauerian age of the split between will and idea, between the world and its representations which link up with one another across spaces and times. This museum space was emerging in the late nineteenth century with the help of translators, two of whom the king enshrined in his heterotopias of sorts.

The king's madness, as well as Hieromino's in Thomas Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy*, or Dorian Gray's (*The Picture of Dorian Gray* by Oscar Wilde) is the removal of the boundary between art and reality. Hieronimo kills in earnest while acting on the stage a crime scene. Dorian wants to live his life according to his idea of the beautiful. The king does not merely finance Wagner's operas, he takes characters and

scenes into the historical world. His schizoid mind diminishes the grandeur of the Arthurian world, which does not descend into history but on the stage:

> Opposite these heterotopias that are linked to the accumulation of time, there are those linked, on the contrary, to time in its most flowing, transitory, precarious aspect, to time in the mode of the festival. These heterotopias are not oriented toward the eternal, they are rather absolutely temporal [chroniques]. Such, for example, are the fairgrounds, these marvelous empty sites on the outskirts of cities that teem once or twice a year with stands, displays, heteroclite objects, wrestlers, snakewomen, fortune-tellers, and so forth. Quite recently, a new kind of temporal heterotopia has been invented: vacation villages, such as those Polynesian villages that offer a compact three weeks of primitive and eternal nudity to the inhabitants of the cities. You see, moreover, that through the two forms of heterotopias that come together here, the heterotopia of the festival and that of the eternity of accumulating time (Foucault: web).

This is the world in which Madame Sosostris issues "sortes" in between two outbreaks of flew, in which a bath, a coach and a cup of tea fill up the daily agenda of a couple in high life, wasting away their time amidst the bric-a-brac of exquisite furniture and works of art. Unbalanced by the shocking superposition, the modern world has become neurotic.

Two conteporary phlosoophies of culture are looming behind the nerves scene in Part 2. Both Sigmund Freud and Oswald Spengler complained about the decay of contemporary society but for different reasons and suggesting different remedies.

The main antagonism between man's instinct and the restrictions of civilization is the theme of Sigmund Freud's 1930 *Civilization and Its Discontents* (whose original title, suggested by Freud to Mrs Riviere, his editor, had been "Man's Discomfort in Civilization"). Man's "programme of becoming happy" is frustrated by civilization's repressive rules, acting on and inhibiting the libidinal body. This original act of violence committed by society against the individual's inborn tendency to seek pleasure had been blamed by Freud as early as 1898, when, in "Sexuality and the Aetiology of Neurosis", he held civilization responsible for the spread of neurasthenia.

The second part of *The Waste Land* is known as "the nerves dialogue", and the couple may well be characterised as representing two of Freud's human types trying to find remedies for their sense of lack in being. The male partner is a minnesinger of the Rag time, in search of immortality realised as Ariel's song about alchemical ascension from the *nigredo* of dead eyes to the *albedo* of pearls. He is a prisoner of a woman whose electric hairs carry maybe Eliot's memories of the Venus in Ludwig's Grotte and whose escape into inwardness bears an even stronger resemblance to Freud's narcissistic man:

> "The man who is predominantly erotic will give first preference to his emotional relationships to other people; the narcissistic man, who inclines to be self-sufficient, will seek his main satisfactions in his internal mental processes; the man of action will never give up the external world on which he can try out his strength" (Freud: 84).

The male partner attempts a "delusional displacement of reality", a sublimation of "a wild libidinal impulse"(26) The tamed instinct is replaced with "the life of the imagination": making himself independent of the external world, he is "looking for happiness in the inner things of the mind". Freud's note mentions that these considerations in his *Civilization and Its Discontents* had already been made public in two previous works: "Two Principles in Mental Functioning" (1911), and "Introduction to Psycho-Analysis" (1915-17). At the head of this "satisfaction through fantasy stands the enjoyment of works of art which through the agency of the artist is open to those who cannot themselves create." (27-28). The silent interlocutor of the nerves scene is striving desperately to escape the drab reality, the daily routine. He is thinking of Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, more precisely, of Ariel's song to Ferdinand. Ariel, the spirit released by the artist from nature, can create a delusional reality, in Freud's sense as well. It is one of "sounds, and sweet airs, that give delight and hurt not", which make him desire along

with Caliban (III/2) to dream again: *when I waked/ I cried to dream again*. It is a world in which death is the gate to a wondrous transformation, from flesh to precious gems (*Those are pearls that were his eyes*, as Ariel is comforting Ferdinand over the loss of his father). Whereas Freud finds art to be just "a mild narcotic", which cannot make one forget the "real misery", Eliot's mental traveller and "semblable, frère" keeps musing over "that Shakespearean rag", which, even in its music- hall guise, is still "so elegant, so intelligent"…

The female partner's "possibility of dealing with life […] takes the form of the flight into neurotic illness". Unlike Miranda and Ferdinand playing chess (in the Renaisssance world of discourse, chess was a topos for the game of love) in "a brave new world" born of Prospero's art, Eliot's protagonists of the modern world boudoir are two Freudian victims of desire: the male thinker has found his "yield of pleasure in chronic intoxication", while the female speaker "embarks on the desperate attempt at rebellion seen in psychosis" (31). He is the "narcissistic man, who inclines to be self-sufficient, [who] seeks his main satisfactions in his internal mental processes", and does not condescend to reply to her hysterical reproaches. If lexical selection making Eliot's text redolent of Freud's quite probable source is limited though efficient in sending a familiar ring to historians of the earlier twentieth century discourse, saturated with psychoanalytic vocabularies, a link in the hypertext accompanying the translation would be truly enlightening.

A woman "of action who will never give up the external world on which [she] will try [her] strength", she is forcing herself upon his attention demanding his cooperation in the meaningless routine of their bourgeois life:

    'My nerves are bad to-night. Yes, bad. Stay with me.
'Speak to me. Why do you never speak. Speak.
   'What are you thinking of? What thinking? What?
'I never know what you are thinking. Think'(111 – 114).
…………………………………………
'What shall I do now? What shall I do?'
'I shall rush out as I am, and walk the street
'With my hair down, so. What shall we do tomorrow?
'What shall we ever do?'(131– 134)

The yardstick of civilization in Freud's book varies from control over nature through tools and machinery to "the use of soap", "cleanliness and order". The life of the couple is not deprived of either:

    The hot water at ten.
And if it rains, a closed car at four.
And we shall play a game of chess,
Pressing lidless eyes and waiting for a knock upon the door (135 – 138).

Eliot sets Sigmund Freud and Oswald Spengler in polarity. According to the latter, this civilized but anti-metaphysical man of the decadence turns everything he touches into something inert, inorganic, like the rock that casts no shadow, the dead tree that gives no shelter, the cricket of no relief. The heart of light is silent, the Word inside it is dead.

Here is the topography of decadence, whose characteristic space is sketched by Spengler and illustrated by Eliot:

    "*World-city and province*--the two basic ideas of every civilization--bring up a wholly new form-problem of History, the very problem that we are living through today with hardly the remotest conception of its immensity. In place of a world, there is a *city, a point,* in which the whole life of broad regions is collecting while the rest dries up. In place of a type-true people, born of and grown on the soil, there is new sort of nomad, cohering unstably in fluid masses, the parasitical city dweller, traditionless, utterly matter-of-fact, religionless, clever, unfruitful,

deeply contemptuous of the countryman and especially that highest form of countryman, the country gentleman [...] To the world-city belongs not a folk but a mob. Its uncomprehending hostility to all the traditions representative of the culture (nobility, church, privileges, dynasties, convention in art and limits of knowledge in science), the keen and cold intelligence that confounds the wisdom of the peasant, the new- fashioned naturalism that in relation to all matters of sex and society goes back far to quite primitive instincts and conditions, the reappearance of the *panem et circenses* in the form of wage-disputes and sports stadia [...]" (Spengler: 25).

[...]

"The next phase I call the *Second Religiousness*. It appears in all Civilizations as soon as they have fully formed themselves as such and are beginning to pass, slowly and imperceptibly, into the non-historical state in which time-periods cease to mean anything. The Second Religiousness is the necessary counterpart of Caesarism, which is the final *political* constitution of Late Civilization... It starts with Rationalism's fading out in helplessness, then the forms of the springtime become visible and finally the whole world of the primitive religion, which had receded before the grand forms of the early faith, returns to the foreground, powerful, in the guise of the popular syncretism that is to be found in every Culture at this phase" (Spengler: 347).

Ludwig II had devalued the heroic past by "smuggling" it into a version of personal Caesarism. He was not the Grail Knight, his coveted "selfie", to use a buzz word of the moment. He was the sick Fisher King whom Eliot the singer heals in the only redeemable world a modernist poet could think of. Instead of the dry roots being revived by spring rain, the redeemed Fisher King seeks a Spenglerian spring of metatextuality (a cluster of images embedded in bits of texts **about** spring). Literalised romance is schizoid Quixotism. The letter kills, only the spirit gives life. True spiritualism is transcendent. It is always "beside" or beyond, a participation in otherness and expansion into the commonly shared, inter-subjective order of culture.

The end is the mirror image of the beginning The false idols, the fallen spirit of control over nature vanish behind that of the better creator (*il miglior fabro*) whose last word is repeated as in the ritualistic ending of the Upanishads. The "Second Religiousness", juxtaposing Christianity and Hinduism, is the breakthrough to syncretic, holistic spirituality, and out of the dead materialist, technological, Caesarian or bureaucratic modern civilization. Matter as such cannot sprout into meaning. The Saviour's body is resurrected as a text, bearing the signs of the crucifixion. He is revealed to his disciples, and so is Brahman revealed in centres of consciousness. The closed sphere of the affined fire unites the same to the same, light spreading out without diminishing in both religions.

A translator approving of this interpretation of *The Waste Land* , which emphasizes connectedness instead of fragmentarianism at all the layers of the poem's realization, will control the distribution of semantic fields, of incremental symbols, will reproduce verbal ecoes from the texts alluded to and will wlso provide a hypertext allowing the reader to reconstruct the discursive nebula out of which the poem was born.

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