

published in: *Newsletter Moderne. Zeitschrift des Spezialforschungsbereichs Moderne – Wien und Zentraleuropa um 1900* 7/2 (September 2004), pp. 17-24.

* An earlier version of this paper was presented at the symposium *Moderernity and European Artistic Integration in Moscow* (October 2003) and published as: Munc, Volker: Ernst Mach i venskij modern. Per. s angl.: Valerij Erokhin. In: *Modern i evropejskaja chudožestvennaja integracija: Materialy meždunarodnoj konferencii. Moskva 2003. Sostavitel' i otvetstvennyj redaktor: Igor' Svetlov, Moskva 2004, 263-274.* I would like to thank Igor Svetlov, who organised the conference and Valery Yerokhin for his translation. They both were of inestimable value during my stay in Moscow.

1 Cf. Stadler, Friedrich: Ernst Mach – Zu Leben, Werk und Wirkung. In: Haller, Rudolf/Stadler, Friedrich (Eds.): *Ernst Mach – Werk und Wirkung.* Wien: Hölder-Pichler-Temsky 1988, pp. 29-31.

2 Mach, Ernst: *The Analysis of Sensations and the Relation of the Physical to the Psychical.* Transl. by C.M. Williams and Sydney Waterlow. London: Routledge/Thoemmes Pr. 1996 [Reprint of the 1914 ed.].

3 Cf. Thiele, Joachim: Ernst Mach-Biographie. In: *Centaurus International Magazine of the History of Science and Medicine* 8 (1963), pp. 189-237, here p. 193.

4 Cf. Csáky, Moritz/Feichtinger, Johannes/Karoshi, Peter/Munz, Volker A.: Pluralitäten, Heterogenitäten, Differenzen. *Zentraleuropas Paradigmen für die Moderne.* In: Csáky, Moritz/Kury, Astrid/Tragatschnig, Ulrich (Eds.): *Kultur, Identität, Differenz. Wien und Zentraleuropa in der Moderne.* Innsbruck: Studienverl. 2004 (Gedächtnis – Erinnerung – Identität 4), pp. 13-43, here p. 13.

5 Cf. Le Rider, Jacques: *Das Ende der Illusion. Die Wiener Moderne und die Krisen der Identität.* Wien: ÖBV 1990, p. 25; Csáky, Moritz: *Die Wiener Moderne. Ein Beitrag zu einer Theorie der Moderne in Zentraleuropa.* In: Haller, Rudolf (Ed.): *nach kakanien. Annäherung an die Moderne.* Wien, Köln, Weimar: Böhlau 1996 (Studien zur Moderne 1), p. 48.

6 Cf. Csáky/Feichtinger/Karoshi/Munz 2004, p. 16.

Introductory Remarks

Ernst Mach was undoubtedly one of the most influential thinkers within the intellectual discourse in Vienna around 1900. Not only was he greatly influential within the philosophical context around that time but he also affected psychology (e.g. Christian Ehrenfels, Ernst Jodl, Alexius Meinong), sociology (e.g. Wilhelm Jerusalem), economics, politics (e.g. Joseph Schumpeter, Friedrich Adler, Otto Neurath, Philipp Frank), literature (e.g. Robert Musil, Hermann Bahr, Hugo von Hofmannsthal) and arts.¹

His famous *The Analysis of Sensations and the Relation of the Physical to the Psychical* from 1886² had its ninth reprint in 1922, and Mach's influence was most effective between 1900 and 1910 when four new editions were available within only six years.³

This paper attempts to explain *how* this impressive reception was possible. First, I shall argue that the particular socio-economic situation in Vienna around the turn of the century played an important role since it provided a scenario that was almost ideal for some of the central arguments Mach developed in his *Introductory Remarks: Antimetaphysical (Antimetaphysische Vorbemerkungen)*, the beginning of the *Analysis of Sensations*. Therefore, it is necessary to give at least a short outline of the lifeworld-context in the urban milieus of the Habsburg monarchy around 1900.

Secondly, it was not so much Mach's influence within the philosophical context that bestowed such a success onto him but rather the way he was interpreted – and I would like to add partly wrongly interpreted – in the intellectual circles outside philosophy, most notably in the literature of the *Young Vienna*. One reason why this could and did happen is again connected to the way in which a certain reflective consciousness – both individual and collective – was expressed in various forms of art production. Within this peculiar account of a rather widespread pessimistic mood, two of Mach's central theses were especially appropriate to depict this particular spirit which dominated Vienna at that time. Therefore those two aspects shall be introduced briefly.

A rough sketch of some of the leading literary and artistic movements shall finally underline Mach's role in those contexts. The focus will thereby primarily be put on the question *why* Mach influenced some of the representative thinkers and not so much how this took place.

Two Concepts of Differentiation

Heterogeneity, fragmentation and delegitimation of traditional value systems count as some of the characteristic elements of Post-Modernity. The loss of holistic concepts, however, already took place at the end of the 19th century. A life-world that was essentially determined by pluralism and permanently changing referential systems did thereby raise the question of new determinants concerning individual and collective identities.⁴ The reflection on the basic conditions of this particular socio-economic context essentially points out two notions of differentiation:

Essential processes of various economic and social transformations within the industrial revolution led to a new socio-economic situation in Europe and those changes had a massive impact on everyday life, particularly in the urban milieus. Besides technical innovations and a high surplus of market goods, we can also diagnose quite opposite effects that were basically caused by the drastic growth of the cities. In Vienna's case, for instance, the population explosion can be seen by the sheer numbers: it had more than 1.9 million inhabitants in 1910 as opposed to 840,000 in 1870.⁵ This equals an increase of 80% in the urban districts and 253% in the periphery. Poverty, unemployment and social dissents were only logical consequences that conveyed an extensive status of uncertainty and disorientation. This – Moritz Csáky calls it »vertical differentiation« (»vertikale Differenziertheit«⁶) within the course of a highly accelerated social diversification – counts as one of the dominating phenomena of European modernity in general. What characterises Vienna and Central Europe as somewhat different from those global changes was its peculiar ethnic-cultural and linguistic heterogeneity. For instance, whereas in Paris, the »foreign rate« amounted to only 6,3%, it was up to over 50% in Vienna⁷

7 Cf. John, Michael/Lichtblau, Albert: Schmelztiegel Wien – einst und jetzt. Zur Geschichte und Gegenwart von Zuwanderung und Minderheiten. Wien, Köln: Böhlau 1990, p. 14.

8 Cf. Csáky/Feichtinger/Karoshi/Munz 2004, p. 17.

9 Cf. Kraus, Karl: Vorwort zur *Fackel*. In: Wunberg, Gotthart (Ed.): Die Wiener Moderne. Literatur, Kunst und Musik zwischen 1890 und 1910. Stuttgart: Reclam 2000, p. 112; Schick, Paul: Karl Kraus. Reinbek: Rowohlt 1993, p. 37f. – About nine years later, Karl Kraus wrote: »Er [der Satirenschreiber] versinkt im Heute und hat von einem Morgen nichts zu erwarten, weil es kein Morgen mehr gibt, und am wenigsten eines für die Werke des Geistes. Wer heute noch eine Welt hat, mit dem muß sie untergehen.« In: Kraus, Karl: Apokalypse. In: Die Fackel 261/2 (13.10.1908), p. 1.

10 Cf. Musil, Robert: Stilgenerationen oder Gegenstandsstil. In: Musil, Robert: Prosa und Stücke. Ges. Werke 1. Reinbek: Rowohlt 1983, p. 662.

11 Cf. Musil, Robert: Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften. Ed. by Adolf Frisé. Reinbek: Rowohlt 1987, p. 451.

12 Lyotard, Jean-François: La condition postmoderne. Paris: Ed. de Minuit 1979, p. 68.

13 »As soon as we have perceived that the supposed unities ›body‹ and ›ego‹ are only makeshifts, designed for provisional orientation and for definite practical ends [...], we find ourselves obliged, in many more advanced scientific investigations, to abandon them as insufficient and inappropriate. The antithesis between ego and world, between sensation (appearance) and thing, then vanishes, and we have simply to deal with the connexion of the elements $\alpha \beta \gamma \dots, A B C \dots, K L M \dots$, of which this antithesis was only a partially appropriate and imperfect expression. This connexion is nothing more or less than the combination of the above-mentioned elements with other similar elements (time and space). Science has simply to accept this connexion, and to get its bearings in it, without at once wanting to explain its existence.« In: Mach 1996, p. 14. – »A B C« refers to the complexes commonly called ›body‹, »K L M« to our own body as a particular case of the first type and » $\alpha \beta \gamma$ « to our inner experiences.

14 »If we regard the ego as a real unity, we become involved in the following dilemma: either we must set over against the ego a world of unknowable entities [...], or we must

including immigrants from Bohemia, Moravia, countries from the Hungarian Crown, Galicia, Bukovina and the nowadays Austrian federal states. The multi-ethnicity and multi-linguality that were characteristic for Central Europe and its urban milieus in particular basically determined a peculiar development of *horizontal differentiations* and it is important to note that these horizontal ethnic-cultural differentiations also potentiated vertical asymmetries that resulted from various processes of modernism.⁸

The variety of different languages and religions, as well as the multicultural pluralities did, however, not only cause positive and creative impulses for they also evoked many conflicts of all kinds both on an individual, as well as a collective level. Interestingly enough, we can observe a rather peculiar way this pessimistic scenario was reflected upon in various intellectual circles in Vienna around 1900. In the first edition of his *Fackel*, Karl Kraus, for instance, ascribes Austria an acute boredom, immobility, apathy and an absolutely empty-headed way of life⁹ and Robert Musil describes the situation as standing around a hole or »nothing«¹⁰ or speaks about a particular »*Sprachfehler*« or »*Unaussprechlichkeit*« that caused the decay of the Habsburg monarchy.¹¹

In his famous *La Condition Postmoderne*, Jean-François Lyotard explicitly names Ernst Mach next to others as being representative of a generation that was nourished by a peculiar form of pessimism around the turn of the century.¹²

One of the consequences those different forms of crises led to was a quite radical change in various ways of perceiving both oneself and the »outer world«. And this is, I think, where Mach comes in. So, let us have a brief look at some of his basic arguments in the introduction of his *Analysis of Sensations*.

Some Remarks on Mach's Anti-metaphysics

It is basically two of Mach's central theses which he elaborates in his introduction to the *Analysis of Sensations* that are of relevance in our context:

1) The first argument concerns the classic subject/object dichotomy: Mach's strict rejection of Kantian ›things in themselves‹ (›*Dinge an sich*‹) holds both for bodies outside of us, as well as for the first person. According to Mach, all that is given to us by immediate experience is just a bundle of qualities such as colours, sounds, smells, spaces, times, etc., what he calls ›Elements‹ (›*Elemente*‹) or ›Sensations‹ (›*Empfindungen*‹) and those elements appear to us in all different kinds of combinations. This applies for both our inner experiences and the experiences of our body and the objects outside of us. What is relevant for scientific research is just their *functional* connexion to each other. Concerning their ontological status, Mach claims them to be *neutral*.

Expressions such as »object«, »body« or »I« refer to nothing but different bundles of perception which are more stable than others and therefore make us think that they refer to some Cartesian substances. But indeed, the Ego is as little permanent in an absolute manner as are all objects including our body.¹³ In consequence, the dichotomy between appearance and reality, as well as between the »I« and »the world« vanishes. Ontologically speaking, all bundles are of the same nature. Whether we regard a particular combination of elements as psychic or physical is therefore no more a question about their status of existence but solely about the particular *perspective* that is involved in different experiments. For instance, if we are interested in the dependency of a certain colour from the luminous source, we take it as a physical object. If we, however, put our focus on its relation to the retina, we regard it as psychological. As we shall see later, this dissolving of the opposites »appearance and reality« also had some impact on the production of art in Vienna around 1900.

2) The same holds true for Mach's treatment of the first person: As a consequence of his bundle theory of perception, the expression »I« does not refer to some mental substance as its meaning, since, as is the case of our inner experiences, we can never come across anything like a Cartesian Ego. Introspection only shows us a collection of different elementary complexes and this does of course remind one of David Hume's famous definition of the self. Mach's notion of the »I« is nothing but a *logical* outcome of his analysis of sensations within a sensualistic-positivistic tradition of empiricism.¹⁴ What followed from his treatment of the first person can certainly be seen as a kind of paradigm expression for the individual self-conception, at least

regard the whole world, the egos of other people included, as comprised in our own ego [...]. But if we take the ego simply as a practical unity, put together for purposes of provisional survey, or as a more strongly cohering group of elements, less strongly connected with other groups of this kind, questions like those above discussed will not arise, and research will have an unobstructed future.« In: *Ibid.*, p. 28.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 24.

¹⁶ Haller, Rudolf: Zur Philosophie der Moderne. In: Haller 1996, pp. 103-155, here p. 132: »Wenn es zu den Symptomen der Orientierungslosigkeit gehört, daß die Fragen nach der eigenen Identität unausweichlich in den Mittelpunkt rücken, dann zeigen uns die Jahrzehnte um die Wende von 1900 am allerdeutlichsten eben diese Symptome in dem Gegensatz zwischen Mach: Es gibt keine reale Einheit des Ich, und in diesem Sinne ist das Ich unrettbar, und seinen Opponenten, welche die Existenz des Ich gewissermaßen als die Bedingung der Möglichkeit von Erkenntnis und Entscheidung verteidigen.« As Mach's opponents, Haller counts Brentano as well as Marty, Twardowski, Reininger, Riehl and Siegel (Reininger holds a particular middle position), as his followers he mentions Stör, Hahn, Frank, Neurath and up to a certain degree Jerusalem and Ehrenfels. Cf. *ibid.*, p. 132f.

¹⁷ Notes of the discussion were written down by Zuckerkandl's wife Bertha. Cf. Zuckerkandl, Bertha: Hermann Bahr, Ernst Mach und Emil Zuckerkandl im Gespräch, Wien 1908. In: Wunberg 2000, pp. 171-177.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 171.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ Cf. Wunberg, Gotthart: Der frühe Hofmannsthal. Stuttgart et al.: Kohlhammer 1965, p. 39.

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 30-33 and Le Rider 1990, pp. 66-67.

in the intellectual circles in Vienna around 1900, namely: »The I is unsaveable« (»Das Ich ist unrettbar«).¹⁵ What the above remarks should have shown is, that Mach himself did not take this philosophically internal consequence of his bundle theory as a kind of comment on the different individual crises around the turn of the century. This can easily be justified by the fact that he had finished the first draft of the *Analysis of Sensations* as early as the late sixties, whereas the different transformation processes as a distinguishing mark of Viennese modernity took place not before the last three decades of the 19th century. Nonetheless, as already mentioned, Mach's statement that almost turned into some kind of slogan had an enormous influence on Viennese thinkers at that time. And this brings us to our last chapter and the question about the role Mach played for the production of art around 1900.

Some Aspects Concerning the Reception of Mach's *Analysis*

Generally speaking, the philosophical discourse in Vienna around 1900 was characterised by a strict rejection of Kantian and neo-Kantian idealistic movements that took place in Germany. Influenced by the paradigm of natural sciences, most philosophers were arguing anti-metaphysical. The philosophical method was in accordance with scientific operations and the philosophical content restricted to what is given to us by immediate experience. In this respect, Mach was clearly an important representative of the philosophical community around the end of the century. Within the generally positivistic turn, both the relation between the »I« and the world, as well as the connexion between our sensory perceptions and the particular objects of our present experience determined the philosophical discourse. Furthermore, it can be argued that precisely these two issues may help to mirror at least the reflexive intellectual understanding of the life-world situation in the urban milieus of the Viennese modernity. It is important to note, however, that particularly with regard to the »First person« discussion, we find a wide range of different positions, leading from Mach's bundle theory of perceptions to various forms of subject/object relationships as well as to quite radical defences of a substantial »I«.¹⁶ Even though the various philosophical theories themselves were determined by their inner-scientific context, the dependency of the intellectual discourse on the particular socio-economic situation in Vienna around 1900 becomes especially obvious in the different forms of receptions outside of the philosophical discourse that support the assumption of a close relation between the everyday world and the process of scientific and artistic production. The following remarks shall therefore offer a short overview, how some of Mach's central theses, developed in his *Analysis of Sensations*, influenced precisely those processes.

In a discussion between Mach, Hermann Bahr and Emil Zuckerkandl in Vienna in 1908,¹⁷ Viennese literature was one of the central subjects. Mach thereby gave another explication of his idea of the »unsaveable I«, arguing that the ego consists of nothing but an empathy (*Einfühlung*) in all things, appearances, and that the »I« dissolves itself into everything that is visible, audible, touchable and sensible. In this context, Mach particularly points out the aspect of eternal movement: »Alles ist flüchtig; eine substanzlose Welt, die nur aus Farben, Konturen, Tönen besteht. Ihre Realität ist ewige Bewegung, chamäleonartig schillernd.«¹⁸ In this »game of phenomena«, Mach continues, our so-called »I« crystallises, being in permanent movement from birth unto death. Bahr's immediate response then refers to some of Hugo von Hofmannsthal's essential ideas centered around the »I«, e.g. that the ego is formed from the outside to the inside, quoting him with the saying »Draußen sind wir zu finden, von draußen weht es [unser Ich] uns an.«¹⁹ In these words alone, Mach finds a sincere affirmation of his own credo. Hofmannsthal joined Mach's lectures in summer 1897 and was certainly quite familiar with his work, for we can find a number of remarks that explicitly or at least implicitly remind the reader of Mach's philosophy.²⁰ This becomes particularly obvious when Hofmannsthal writes about the perishability of the »I« in his diaries: »Größere Verschiedenheiten im Ich verschiedener Menschen, als im Laufe der Jahre in *einem* Menschen eintreten, kann es kaum geben«, or »Wir haben kein Bewußtsein über den Augenblick hinaus, weil jede unserer Seelen nur einen Augenblick lebt«, or »Mein Ich von *gestern* geht mich so wenig an wie das Ich Napoleons oder Goethes«, or finally »Wir sind mit unserem Ich von Vor-zehn-Jahren nicht näher, unmittelbarer *eins* als mit dem Leib unserer Mutter. Ewige physische Kontinuität.«²¹

Aside from Hofmannsthal's diaries which show the immediate influence of Mach,²² we also find a number of remarks in his published work that remind us of the *Introduction* to the *Analysis of Sensations*. As another example, I will only mention Hofmannsthal's famous ficti-

23 Hofmannsthal, Hugo v.: Ein Brief. In: Hofmannsthal, Hugo v.: Sämtliche Werke. Vol. 31: Erfundene Gespräche und Briefe. Ed. by Ellen Ritter. Frankfurt/M.: Fischer 1991, p. 48f.: »Die abstrakten Worte, deren sich doch die Zunge naturgemäß bedienen muß, [...] zerfielen mir im Munde wie modrige Pilze. Es zerfiel mir alles in Teile, die Teile wieder in Teile, und nichts mehr ließ sich mit einem Begriff umspannen.«

24 Cf. Le Rider 1990, p. 67.

25 Cf. *ibid.*

26 Cf. Orosz, Magdolna/Plener, Peter: Das belletristische Ich. Einleitung. In: Orosz, Magdolna/Kerekes, Amália/Teller, Katalin (Eds.): »Und die Worte rollen von ihren Fäden fort...«. Sprache, Sprachlichkeit, Sprachprobleme in der österreichischen und ungarischen Kultur und Literatur der Jahrhundertwende. Budapest: ELTE-Chrestomathie 2002 (ELTE-Chrestomathie 13), pp. 355-361, here p. 358. – Furthermore, they argue that the »Ich-Verlust als Sprachstörung« can be seen as a central link between Schnitzler's novelette and Rilke's *Kusmitsch-Episode* in his *Die Aufzeichnungen des Malte Laurids Brigge*. Cf. *ibid.*, p. 357.

27 Schnitzler, Arthur: Ich. In: Schnitzler, A.: Entworfenes und Verworfenenes. Aus dem Nachlaß. Ed. by Reinhard Urbach. Frankfurt/M.: Fischer 1977, p. 444, p. 448.

28 Freud, Sigmund: Briefe 1873-1939. Ed. by Ernst E. Freud. Frankfurt/M.: Fischer 1960, p. 339.

29 Freud, Sigmund: Das Unbehagen in der Kultur. Und andere kulturtheoretische Schriften. Frankfurt/M.: Fischer 1997, p. 33.

30 Wunberg 2000, p. 176.

tious letter of Lord Chandos, when he, for instance, writes that the abstract concepts we naturally apply in our language, fell apart »in my mouth like rotten mushrooms« and that everything degenerates into parts and parts again, with the consequence that nothing can be captured by a particular single concept.²³ And interestingly enough, in this context, Hofmannsthal refers to the expressions »mind«, »soul« and »body«. Although Mach does not draw such a pessimistic conclusion, the way he treats abstract expressions offers a pretty similar view, investigating the words »body«, »object« and »I«. Furthermore, Hofmannsthal's description of everything falling apart is certainly one way of understanding Mach's bundle theory of perception for he, too, argues that those abstract terms do not refer to any kind of substantial objects as their meaning but can only be justified for practical reasons. The idea that those objects, we name with particular words, are constant in time is nothing but an illusion.

Hofmannsthal's letter has often been understood as an expression of a particular crisis of poetic language. It is, however, also another form of dealing with his perception of a more general individual identity crisis that culminates in the empiristic reduction of the I to a complex of different elements of immediate experience.²⁴ Therefore, I think, it is certainly not accidental that Lord Chandos addresses the letter to Francis Bacon, the founder of the British empiricist's tradition of Locke and Hume and Mach as a consequent follower.²⁵ Here we have another indicator for my thesis that Mach's influence on Viennese writers can mainly be justified by the pluralistic situation that initiated different forms of conflicts which were confronted with and reflected upon in the urban milieus around 1900.

In the above-mentioned talk between Mach, Bahr and Zuckerkindl, we also find explicit references to the situation in Vienna around 1900 and the way it was received in the intellectual circles. To mention another figure, Arthur Schnitzler and his understanding of the first person played a dominant part in this discussion. In their introduction to *Das Belletristische Ich*, Magdolna Orosz and Peter Plener point out that Schnitzler's novelette called *Ich* contains basic elements of Mach's empirio-criticism.²⁶ And interestingly enough, Schnitzler also plays with the dichotomy between reality and dream (»Aber es konnte ja auch sein, daß er träumte. [...] Er spürte alles ganz genau. Und das wollte er als Beweis für sein Wachsein gelten lassen. [...] Welche ungeheure Verwirrung war in der Welt. Keiner kennt sich aus.«²⁷)

During their discussion about Schnitzler, Bahr goes so far to argue that Schnitzler can be seen as the literary ancestor of Freud's psycho-analysis, and as we know from one of his letters to Schnitzler in 1922, Freud himself emphasises that in Schnitzler's work, he saw many of the presuppositions and results of his own research:

Und so habe ich den Eindruck gewonnen, daß Sie durch Intuition – eigentlich aber infolge einer Selbstwahrnehmung – alles das wissen, was ich in mühseliger Arbeit an anderen Menschen aufgedeckt habe.²⁸

To mention three remarks concerning Freud's conception of the »I«, he writes: »Dies [unser eigenes, VM] Ich erscheint uns selbständig, einheitlich, gegen alles andere gut abgesetzt. [...] dieser Anschein [ist] ein Trug [...].« In the case of love (*Verliebtheit*), Freud continues: »[...] die Grenze zwischen Ich und Objekt [droht] zu verschwimmen« and finally »Also ist auch das Ichgefühl Störungen unterworfen, und die Ichgrenzen sind nicht beständig.«²⁹

Furthermore, Zuckerkindl points out that Schnitzler shares the tragic which more or less affected everyone in Austria, i.e. that he loves his homeland fanatically but is aware of the fact that it runs into the danger of dying of its own unclarity, weakness and laxity, a picture we are already familiar with. Mach, too, offers a kind of interpretation of the *Young Viennese* writers by connecting them to Austria's »ejection« (»Hinauswurf«) from Germany in 1866, a

Geburtsstunde vollkommen eigener, von tragischen Wendungen bestimmter österreichischer Erscheinungen, geistiger und künstlerischer. Aus einer historisch gekitteten Gesamtheit verwiesen, flüchten sie in ein Land, das jedem Zugriff unerreichbar bleibt, in die Heimat einer von Realität unberührten Poesie und Kunst.³⁰

Another and perhaps the best example of Mach's influence is made explicit in some of the writings of Hermann Bahr. In his *Dialogue on the Tragic (Dialog vom Tragischen)* from 1904, he writes an entire essay based on Mach's anti-metaphysics, titled *The Unsaveable I (Das unrettbare Ich)*. Although most of the text is not written in a Machian sense – for instance, Bahr writes at length about the deception of the senses which I cannot find in Mach's approach, for those situations in which we are deceived by the senses is for him just a different case of a complex

31 Cf. Diersch, Manfred: *Empiriokritizismus und Impressionismus. Über Beziehungen zwischen Philosophie, Ästhetik und Literatur um 1900* in Wien. Berlin: Rütten & Löning 1977, pp. 46-82; Stadler 1988, p. 42.

32 Kokoschka, Oskar: *Die träumenden Knaben*. In: Kokoschka, O.: *Beichte aus einer eingebildeten Welt. Erinnerungen und Erzählungen*. Selected and ed. by Gerhard Trenkler. Graz, Wien, Köln: Böhlau 1996, p. 13.

33 Kubin, Alfred: *Die andere Seite. Ein phantastischer Roman*. Reinbek: Rowohlt 1998, p. 250. – The last two remarks I owe to Alice Bolterauer.

34 Cf. Schorske, Carl: *Fin de Siècle Vienna. Politics and Culture*. New York: Random House 1981, p. 345.

35 *Ibid.*, 230.

36 Cf. Le Rider, Jacques: »Ästhetische Identität soll dem Nichtidentischen beistehen, das der Identitätszwang in der Realität unterdrückt.« Überlegungen zu Egon Schiele. In: Bolterauer, Alice/Goltschnigg, Dietmar (Eds.): *Moderne Identitäten*. Wien: Passagen 1999 (Studien zur Moderne 6), p. 174.

37 Musil, Robert: *Beitrag zur Beurteilung der Lehren Machs und Studien zur Technik und Psychotechnik*. Ed. by Adolf Frisé. Reinbek: Rowohlt 1980, cited from Orosz/Kerekes/Teller 2002, p. 45.

38 Cf. e.g. *ibid.*, p. 15.

of elements in a different functional context –, Bahr tells us at the end that in Mach's »unsaveable I«, he had found precisely what had agonized him for many years. He then goes on to argue that the »I« is only a »name«, an »illusion«, an advice for practical needs. Indeed, all that exists is combined of colours, spaces, times, etc., a thesis that is also central in Mach's philosophy, as we have already seen. But as opposed to Mach, who does not say anything about the ontological status of his elements, but only talks in terms of scientific research, Bahr makes an *existential* claim about how things are, although he cites Mach when arguing that the status of our perceptions depends upon the *perspective* of a particular investigation.

His final remark gives us another hint at Mach's influence on his writings, when Bahr says that the basic element of our life is not truth but illusion. What he wants to point out here, I think, is that Mach's dissolving of the dichotomy between appearance and reality cannot tell us what is true and what is false, for all that counts is our sensory perception independent of the question whether things really are the way we perceive them. If I experience a yellow object through a blue glass then, in this case, the object is green whereas if I look at it under normal conditions, it appears yellow to me. Consequently, in another essay of his *Dialogue of the Tragic* called *Impressionism*, Bahr associates his readings of Mach's *Analysis* with the paintings of Manet, Degas and Renoir, claiming, that here, too, we can observe the interplay between colours, forms and moods, a perpetual flux of impressions, so to speak. Bahr finishes his essay by calling Mach's *Weltanschauung* [world-view] »philosophy of impressionism«. Furthermore, it has been argued that Mach's conception of the »unsaveable I« became the epitome of a »post-naturalistic philosophy of impressionism« for the writers of Young Vienna around Hugo von Hofmannsthal, Felix Salten, Richard Beer-Hofmann and Peter Altenberg.³¹

Even though we do not have explicit knowledge about the influence of Mach's philosophy on the process of the art production in Vienna at that time, we can at least emphasise that some of the paintings of e.g. Klimt, Schiele and Gerstl are expressions of a struggle with one's own self that is depicted in numerous self-portraits. The conflict of appearance and reality, the preoccupation with the »I«, too, is one of the dominating motifs in fine arts. Just to mention two more examples, in *Die träumenden Knaben*, Oskar Kokoschka offers another fine instance of dealing with the dichotomy of the inside and the outside, saying: »[...] mein abgezügelter Körper [...] kriecht in eure seelen/schwärt in euren leibern.«³² and Alfred Kubin remarks: »Mein Traumvermögen war augenscheinlich erkrankt, die Träume wollten meinen Geist überwuchern. Ich verlor in ihnen meine Identität [...].«³³

When talking about Schönberg in his *Fin de Siècle Vienna. Politics and Culture*, Carl Schorske names Hofmannsthal, Freud, Klimt and Mach the »intellectual pioneers of Vienna's élite« and remarks that with these contemporaries, Schönberg shared a »diffuse sense that all is flux, that the boundary between ego and world is permeable.«³⁴ And in connexion with Klimt's relation to Gustav Mahler, Schorske points out that they were also regular guests in Emil Zuckerkandl's house.³⁵ We can assume that at least Klimt was familiar with the basic ideas of Mach's philosophy. And finally, talking about Viennese Modernity around 1900, Jacques Le Rider mentions Hofmannsthal, Klimt, Mahler and Mach in one breath.³⁶

As we have seen, there are quite a lot of indicators that undermine Mach's influence on various intellectual circles in Vienna around 1900 and we could easily enlarge this list. Just to mention two more: first Robert Musil, who wrote his PhD thesis on Mach's philosophy and who places particular emphasis on his epistemic scepticism and his analysis of abstract terms. Musil remarks:

Körper oder Dinge [sind] abkürzende Gedankensymbole für Gruppen von Empfindungen, Symbole, die außerhalb unseres Denkens nicht existieren, denn mit dem Wegfall der Empfindungen verlieren überdies die hinzugedachten Kerne allen Inhalt [...].³⁷

Although Musil is quite critical of some of Mach's theses, one should not forget that he had to rewrite most of his ideas as a result of the rejection of the first draft of his dissertation by Carl Stumpf, his doctoral supervisor and a critic of Mach. Interestingly enough, Musil's dissertation was presented shortly after the publication of his *Die Verwirrungen des Zöglings Törless*, a novel that has quite a lot in common with Mach's epistemological scepticism.³⁸ Furthermore the problem of personal identity played an essential role in his *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften*.

Secondly, Otto Weininger offers a serious criticism of Mach's understanding of the first person in his *Sex and Character* from 1903, arguing, for instance, that the »I« is not, as he puts



it, »a waiting-room for sensations«, a metaphor which I will only mention here as another example of the reception of Mach's conception of the first person.

Finally, I hope I could show that it was not by pure coincidence that Mach's *Analysis of Sensations* had been such a success at that particular time and region, a success within a life-world of numerous socio-economic and cultural changes and a society that was characterised by its heterogeneity, plurality and multi-linguality and was therefore particularly apt for causing various forms of individual and collective identity crises.



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