

It is surely no accident that two of the greatest modern novels – Joyce’s *Ulysses* and Proust’s *Remembrance of Times Past* – both feature ‘library scenes’ where their heroes undergo decisive literary conversions. In both cases, I will suggest, the respective protagonists, Stephen and Marcel, experience an ‘epiphany’ which profoundly transforms their approach to literature. In *Ulysses* this occurs in the ‘midway’ episode, called ‘Scylla and Charybdis’, in which Stephen the aspiring writer realizes the error of his grand aesthetic expectations and rejoins the ordinary universe - with Leopold Bloom as guide. In *Remembrance*, the library sequence comes towards the end of the novel when Marcel, also an ambitious young artist, encounters a number of death experiences and finally renounces his delusions of authorial grandeur – at which point he undergoes a series of ‘epiphanies’ which open the way to his becoming a real writer in the real world. I propose to examine each of these library scenes as ‘traversals of the imaginary’ which tell us something crucial about the Joycean and Proustean aesthetics. But first a word about the term epiphany.

I: EPIPHANIES IN JOYCE

a) *Epiphany Revisited*

Epiphany was one of the most formative terms of Joyce’s aesthetic. It originally derives from the Christian account of the divine manifesting itself to the Gentiles in the persons of the three Magi. What seems to have especially appealed to the young Joyce was the idea that it is through a most singular and simple event – the birth of a child – that the sacred revealed itself to the world at large. Epiphany signals the traversal of the finite by the infinite, of the particular by the universal, of the mundane by the mystical, of time by eternity. For Joyce it was to become the operative term for an aesthetics of everyday incarnation. Indeed one of his most moving lyrics went by the epiphanic title of ‘Ecce Puer’ and ended with the lines: ‘Young life is breathed/On the glass;/The world that was not/Comes to pass./ A child is sleeping: An old man gone./O, Father forsaken./Forgive your son’.

In chapter 15 of the seminal novel, *Stephen Hero*, we find the following definition of Joyce’s style of writing between 1900 and 1904: ‘Its soul, its whatness, leaps to us from the vestment of its appearance. The soul of the commonest object, the structure of which is so adjusted, seems to us radiant. The object achieves its epiphany’(1). Elsewhere in *Stephen Hero* we find epiphany described as a ‘sudden spiritual manifestation, whether in the vulgarity of speech or of gesture or in a memorable phase of the mind itself’. And we read here that it is for ‘the man of letters to record these epiphanies with extreme care, seeing that they themselves are the most delicate and evanescent of moments’(2). This telling description relates in turn to another formative account of aesthetic epiphany in *Portrait of an Artist*. Here Stephen defines beauty as radiance or *claritas*, which

combines with two other Thomistic aesthetic properties – *integritas* and *consonantia* – to constitute the power of epiphanic revelation, especially as it refers (once again) to ordinary or inconsequential events. And yet in *Ulysses*, where we might expect this aesthetic to reach its crowning expression, we find but one single usage of the term ‘epiphany’, and that in the context of an ironic allusion to the vainglorious ambitions of the romantic artist.

The reference occurs in the ‘Proteus’ chapter where Stephen is unable to seize the moment of mystical insight – the ‘secret signature of things’ – unlike the hero Menelaus in the original Homeric myth who grasped the slippery figure of Proteus in water. As Stephen negotiates his way over the damp mud of Sandymount strand in Dublin bay he recalls how, when younger and more narcissistic still, he would bow to himself in the mirror and step forward ‘to applaud earnestly, striking face’, announcing all the wonderful masterpieces he would write to make himself famous for posterity. At which point, we read this telling sentence: ‘Remember your epiphanies written on green oval leaves, deeply deep, copies to be sent if you died to all the great libraries of the world, including the world, including Alexandria’. And Stephen adds, extending mock-heroic memory into a future anterior – ‘Someone was to read them there after a few thousand years...’ The self-irony could not be more pronounced. Then, immediately, in one quick deflationary instant, we are brought back to the banal nature of Stephen’s immediate material environment. The ground is giving way. Our hero is beginning to slide and sink. And as he does so, Stephen thinks of the terrible shipwreck of the grandiose Armada sent to rescue the Irish from British tyranny hundreds of years back. ‘The grainy sand had gone from under his feet...lost Armada. Unwholesome sandflats waited to suck his treading soles, breathing upward sewage breath, a pocket of seaweed smouldered in seafire under a midden of man’s ashes’. The hubristic artist rejoins the disenchanting everyday universe of living and dying. Grand illusions are followed by failure and defeat. Epiphany by anti-epiphany.

But this, as it transpires, is not the final conversion for Stephen. It is more like a prelude to the ultimate deflation of Stephen’s Promethean ambitions in the National Library sequence which takes place at the very centre of the novel, signaled by the motto: ‘the truth is midway’. Here the process of aesthetic demystification will open up a path leading towards a new kind of authorship, and I shall argue a new kind of epiphany – what I will call epiphany 2.

b) *Epiphany in the Library*

The National Library chapter opens with Stephen proclaiming his grand theory about Shakespeare before a band of fellow literary esthetes. From the word go, the tone is set. This is about a ‘ghoststory’. Ostensibly Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*. But more than that too. When Stephen asks, at the outset, ‘what is a ghost?’ the answer is telling. ‘One who has faded into palpability through death, through absence, through change of manners’. From the beginning of the novel, Stephen has been haunted by the ghost of his own mother, at whose deathbed he notoriously refused to kneel and pray. She returns to him in the form of a recurring guilt – ‘agenbite of inwit’ – which he tries to dispose of by banishing from his mind the ‘mothers of memory’. But these mothers are also of a more collective and cultural nature, constituting that ‘nightmare of history’ from which

Stephen is trying to awake from. Motherland (Ireland as Caitlin ni Houlihan), Mother Church (mariolatrous Catholicism), Mother Tongue (Gaelic). Stephen wants to trade in these unholy ghosts of history for a holy ghost of pure aesthetic mediation. He will seek to reconcile a lost son (himself) with a spiritual father through the medium of Art. And he will look for metaphysical confirmation of this in a certain reading of the Christian Trinity whereby Father and Son are united, 'middler the Holy Ghost'. No women need apply.

But Stephen is not talking in this episode about himself or about Ireland. At least not explicitly. He is talking about Shakespeare who lived through his own crisis of filiality and fiction. According to Stephen, Shakespeare wrote his famous 'ghoststory', *Hamlet*, at the very time he was grieving the loss of his son, Hamnet, and his deceased father, John Shakespeare. The play was composed as some sort of aesthetic compensation for Shakespeare's unbearable confusion as he hovered in the in-between space of fatherless sonhood and sonless fatherhood. The suggestion is that the playwright sought reconciliation through the agency of the ghost (which role Shakespeare actually played in the first London production in the Globe theatre). What is more, Stephen proffers the hypothesis that the incestuous Gertrude is a stand-in for Shakespeare's own wife, Anne Hathaway, who betrayed her husband by having an affair with his brother(s) in Stratford. This is how Stephen enunciates his Theory:

'The play begins. A player comes on under the shadow, made up in the castoff mail of a court buck, a wellset man with a bass voice. It is the ghost, the king, a king and no king, and the player is Shakespeare who has studied *Hamlet* all the years of his life which were not vanity in order to play the part of the specter. He speaks the words... '*Hamlet, I am thy father's spirit*' bidding him list. To a son he speaks, the son of his soul, the prince, young Hamlet and to the son of his body, Hamnet Shakespeare, who has died in Stratford that his namesake may live for ever'(3).

Stephen proceeds to suggest that William Shakespeare, in his theatrical performance as King Hamlet's phantom, must surely have been aware that he was playing out his own grief at the loss of his son, Hamnet. 'Is it possible', Stephen asks rhetorically, 'that that player Shakespeare, a ghost by absence, and in the vesture of buried Denmark, a ghost by death, speaking his own words to his own son's name (had Hamnet Shakespeare lived he would have been prince Hamlet's twin) is it possible, I want to know, or probable that he did not draw or foresee the logical conclusion of those premises: you are the disposed son: I am the murdered father: you mother is the guilty queen. Ann Shakespeare, born Hathaway?'(4).

The ghost thus serves to link father (King Hamlet) with son (Prince Hamlet) by displacing the guilty queen Gertrude and replacing her with the 'word of memory' – the story which Hamlet the Prince will eventually release to the world in the final Act of the play as he bids Horatio, 'absent thee from felicity awhile to tell my story'. By means of such narrative remembrance, the son shall ultimately fulfill the command of the father ('Remember me!') through the spiritual-aesthetic agency of the play itself. Shakespeare will be reunited - poetically if not empirically, phantasmatically if not historically – with his lost son (and indeed with his lost father, John Shakespeare). Thus also, we might infer, the ghost may rid Shakespeare of his own 'guilt' by having his story told in this cathartic way. Melancholy gives way to morning as it is 'worked through' in the telling of the 'ghoststory'. So the Theory seems to go.

But if Stephen is right, are we not witnessing a curious reversal of Stephen's own history here? Is not the very guilt – 'agenbite of inwit' – that Stephen is seeking to absolve by 'awaking from the nightmare of history' not occasioned by his own lack of proper mourning? In the transposition of his own history to the story of *Hamlet*, we find a strange transfer of Stephen's guilt *about* his unmourned mother (Mrs. Dedalus in *Ulysses*) to the opposite guilt *of* the unmourning mother. Gertrude serves in a perverse sense as the 'guilty queen' (like Ann Hathaway on whom she is based, or Mrs Dedalus and Mrs Bloom whom she represents) whose sexual and spiritual betrayal of her spouse qualify her as a suitable 'sacrificial scapegoat' whose exclusion from the new trinity of Father-Son-Ghost will, the theory suggests, lead to a perfect artistic purgation and atonement. As Pater et Filius are mutually absolved through the medium of the spirit, woman (mother, spouse) is dissolved.

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But let's have Stephen speak for himself again. After a few rounds of literary jousting with the librarians Eglinton and Best, Stephen returns to his basic thesis that an artist can become recompose the different aspects of his being – including that of father and son – through a work of art. Just as the 'artist weave(s) and unweave(s) his image' in such a way that 'through the ghost of the unquiet father the image of the unliving son looks forth', so too 'in an intense instant of imagination' our past and future can somehow, miraculously, be united into a present moment. This is how Stephen, sitting in the National Library surrounded by his literary peers, looks forward to a time when he will be able to look back at himself as he was in the past and in this very instant: 'that which I was is that which I am and that which in possibility I may come to be. So in the future, the sister of the past, I may see myself as I sit here now but by reflection from that which then I shall be'(5). In other words, the genius of the artist is to be able to transcend the divisions of existence by means of a spiritual imagination which can subsume the ruptures of our temporality into an aesthetic of eternal redemption. Stephen quotes the poet, Shelley, in this passage, confirming a romantic sentiment which harks back to Mallarmé's description of Hamlet with which the chapter opens – '*il se promène, lisant au livre de lui-meme, don't you know, reading he book of himself*'. The fact that this phrase is repeated – in French then in English – in addition to its crucial role of leading off the whole discussion of Hamlet which dominates the chapter, suggests that it is central to the author's meaning(5a). Here is the exemplary paradigm of the Great Book where the contingencies and contradictions of ordinary life may be ultimately transformed.

After several more bouts of repartee about how Shakespeare's dramatic corpus relates to his biography, Stephen returns once more to the theme of father and son in *Hamle*. We are back with the 'ghost' of King Hamlet on the battlements of Elsinore addressing 'the son consubstantial with the father'. Now the theological idioms of the Trinitarian mystery are explicitly invoked. 'He who himself begot, middler the Holy Ghost, and Himself sent himself, Agenbuyer, between Himself and others...' (6). This passage, beginning with four uses of the term 'himself' and ending with the return of God, now in the person of the crucified and resurrected Son, to sit at the 'right hand of His Own Self' in heaven, is mock-heroic in the extreme. And, if the reader was in any

doubt, the graphic invocation of ‘Glo-o-ri-a in ex-cel-sis De-o’ to round off the theological parody adds a defining touch of mischievous melodrama.

But this is not all. Stephen comes back to his Trinitarian theory – like a kitten playing with a ball of wool – later in the chapter when raising the question of physical versus spiritual paternity. ‘A father’, Stephen now opines, is at best a ‘legal fiction’, at worst a ‘necessary evil’. He means of course a biological father who has no real relation to a son apart from the physiological ‘instant of blind rut’ which engendered him. Paternal and filial affection are therefore, so the theory goes, unnatural, and no son can ever be certain who is father really is (unlike the mother). Whence Stephen’s rather cynical quip: ‘Who is the father of any son that any son should love him or he any son?’(7)

So Stephen’s overall hypothesis seems to be that in *Hamlet* Shakespeare is replacing the experience of actual fatherhood (his dead father, John Shakespeare) with a spiritual fatherhood that will compensate for all the doubts, uncertainties and rivalries that exist between real fathers and sons (for the male child’s ‘growth is his father’s decline, his youth his father’s envy, his friend his father’s enemy’(8). According to Stephen, this ‘mystery’ of spiritual paternity – represented by the Ghost in *Hamlet* and the Holy Ghost of the Christian Trinity – lies at the very root of the Western church and culture. Here ‘fatherhood...is a mystical estate, an apostolic succession, from only begetter to only begotten’(9). And it is precisely this ingenious fantasy of mystical fatherhood which meant that when Shakespeare wrote *Hamlet* ‘he was not the father of his own son merely but, being no more a son, he was and felt himself the father of all his race, the father of his own grandfather, the father of his unborn grandson...etc’(10). In this manner, Shakespeare contrived to resolve the tragic ruptures of his own life-history (death of his father and son, betrayal by his wife and brothers) by transmuting this history into a mystical story. John Elginton sums up Stephen’s metaphysical theory thus: ‘the truth is midway...He is ghost and the prince. He is all in all’(11). And Stephen readily agrees: ‘He is...The boy of act one is the mature man of act five’.

The implications of this are extensive. Just as Pater and Filius are miraculously reconciled so too are a host of other human antinomies – ‘bawd and cuckold’ (being now ‘a wife unto himself’), male and female, (united as ‘androgenous angel’), possible and actual (‘He found in the world without as actual what was in his world within as possible’), and so on. All of which suggests that the solution to life’s tragic contradictions and divisions is to be found in the great Trinitarian fantasy – forged by Christian theologians like Sabellius and writers like Shakespeare - in which father and son are reunited through the mediating agency of *Geist*. Is this not what is meant by the summary statement that ‘truth is midway’ – echoing the earlier allusion, ‘middler the Holy Ghost’? This surmise would certainly seem to be born out by Stephen’s citation of Maeterlinck’s mot about Socrates and Judas going forth only to find themselves again. Or as Stephen puts it in his own words: ‘We walk through ourselves, meeting robbers, ghosts, giants, old men, young men, wives, widows, brothers-in-love. But always meeting ourselves’(12). Meaning that if God was the ‘playwright who wrote the folio of this world’, Shakespeare rewrites the folio of his own world in a play called *Hamlet*. And we might presume, Stephen Daedalus will do likewise when he finally comes to realize his vocation as romantic Artist par excellence. In other words, if Stephen’s theory is correct, art would be the greatest feat of mystical solipsism – Self-Thinking-Thought, Self-Loving-Love, Self-Causing-Cause, Self-Creating-Creation.

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But is that the end of the story? Is it simply a matter of converting the mimetic conflicts and Sunderings of French ‘triangles’ into the spiritual sublimity of mystical ‘Trinities’? When, at the end of all the brilliant and grandiloquent discoursing, John Eglinton puts the hard question to Stephen: ‘You have brought us all this way to show us a French triangle. Do you believe your own theory?’ Stephen replies ‘no’. And replies, we are told, ‘promptly’(13). So what are we to make of this sudden recantation? Why such a labyrinthine detour in this august national library, conducted by some of the smartest minds of the young Dublin literati, if we are to end up in a *cul de sac*? And why does Stephen go on to claim that the one who helps him to ‘believe’ in the very theory which he now disowns, is ‘Egomen’? (Egomism is defined in the Shorter Oxford English Dictionary as ‘the belief of one who believes he is the only one in existence’).

Let us reflect a little more on what exactly might be meant here by the notion of ‘French triangle’. A motif running throughout the Library episode, as noted above, is that of Ann Hathaway’s betrayal of her husband William. This is very much a subtext compared to the central paternity theme but it serves a significant role nonetheless. The terms used to describe Shakespeare’s unfaithful spouse are invariably disparaging. She is portrayed as a seductress who tumbles young William in the hay, before going on to do likewise with Shakespeare’s brothers (Richard, Edmund and Gilbert), once her husband had left Stratford for London. ‘Sweet Ann I take it, was hot in the blood. Once a wooer twice a wooer’(14). Which is why, according to Stephen, Shakespeare brands Queen Gertrude with ‘infamy’ in the fifth scene of *Hamlet*. And when Stephen and Eglinton rejoin the discussion of Ann later in the chapter it is in the disparaging context of ‘an age of exhausted whoredom groping for its god’(15). The theological discussion of mystical paternity which immediately follows (discussed above) adds a further nail to the coffin of the banished woman. It was on the mystery of the Christian Trinity - and not on the ‘madonna which the cunning Italian intellect flung to the mob of Europe’(16) - that the true Church is founded. And this theme resurfaces one last and very telling time as a terminal salvo of Stephen’s Grand Theory, accounting for that singular note of banishment – ‘banishment of the heart, banishment from home’ – which we are told ‘sounds uninterruptedly’ from one end of Shakespeare’s corpus to the other. The theme of betrayal is not some isolated matter. ‘It is in infinite variety everywhere in the world he has created’, concludes Stephen. And is further born out by the fact that Ann Hathaway’s betrayal repeats itself again in the next generation (‘his married daughter, Susan...is accused of adultery’); while Ann herself is refused burial in the same grave as Shakespeare. ‘It is between the lines of this last written words’, claims Stephen, ‘it is petrified on his tombstone under which her four bones are not to be laid’(17).

Otherwise put, the theme of the infidel woman (wife-mother-daughter) ghosts the entire thesis of spiritual paternity and, Stephen argues, is the real hidden motivation for Shakespeare’s invention of a literary ‘ghoststory’ – a drama where the ‘guilty queen’ could be sacrificially purged and ‘Hamlet *pere*’ and ‘Hamlet *filis*’ find themselves ultimately atoned ‘middler the holy ghost’. In other words, if the Artist-Author-Creator can become a mystical Father who is ‘Himself his own Son’ and thereby dispense with the profane mediation of woman (‘being a wife unto himself’), then we would seem to

have finally hit upon a solution to the cruel Sunderings of existence. In this grand finale, Stephen's theory would end where it began – returning to itself in triumphal self-congratulation – that is, with the romantic vision of the great poet writing and reading the book of himself. The 'playwright who wrote the folio of this world...' echoing the Mallarmean poet '*lisant au livre de lui-meme*'.

But, once again, the matter is not so simple. Not only does Stephen revoke his own theory of triangles-supplanted-by-trinities, but he goes on to confront the radical consequences of this disavowal. First, he undermines the metaphysical model of self-thinking-thought as the ultimate guarantor of truth. The mystical paradigm of a self-sufficient-paternity (Trinitarian or other) is now parodied as solipsistic and masturbatory. Mulligan's Dublin ditty about onanistic literateurs - 'afraid to marry on earth/They masturbated for all they were worth' – leads to a send-up of Socratic self-knowledge. 'Jest on. Know thyself'. And this point is further reinforced by Mulligan's proposal of a mock-heroic drama (recalling the earlier theological conceits of self-engendering Trinities and androgenous angels) entitled

Everyman His own Wife

or

A Honeymoon in the Hand

(a national immortality in three orgasms).

This is Mulligan's way of trying to outdo the Irish revivalist movement of Synge, Lady Gregory and Yeats – as well as AE Russell who actually participates in the National Library discussion. But Stephen, it now seems, will have none of it. He parts company here with Buck Mulligan and his literary peers. He alone of the Library company is not party to the subsequent reunion in the literary soiree. And this decision to pass beyond the pretentious antics of Dublin's aesthetic coterie – which has preoccupied him up to now – on foot of his renunciation of his Grand Literary Theory, prepares Stephen to meet Bloom. The 'jesuit jew', as Mulligan labels Stephen, is now ready to behold the 'wandering jew', Bloom. 'Jewgreek' crosses paths for the first time with 'Greekjew'. Stephen now definitely renounces his proud presumption to become the great Irish writer to succeed Synge, Shaw and Yeats (all mentioned in the episode). 'Cease to strive', he resolves. And in so doing, Stephen begins the second half of his odyssey. He follows Bloom out of the National Library onto the street of Dublin, a journey which will lead through nighttown and the cabman's shelter to Bloom's own home in Eccles St, and eventually to Molly. The motto that 'the truth is midway' now takes on another meaning, retrospectively, in so far as Stephen finds a way through the extremes of Scylla and Charybdis to embrace a new aesthetic insight – what I will call the 'epiphany of the everyday'. This is how Joyce describes this crucial traversal of paths:

'About to pass through the doorway, feeling one behind, he (Stephen) stood aside. Part. The moment is now. Where then? If Socrates leave his house today, if Judas go forth tonight. Why? That lies in space which I in time must come to, ineluctably....The wandering jew....A dark back went before them. Step of a pard, down, out by the gateway...' (18).

The fact that Stephen will take his departure here from Mulligan and choose to follow Bloom instead is decisive. He trades in a popular, anti-Semitic literateur for a vagrant, cuckolded ad-man. This is the real turning point in the novel and marks the threshold separating the narcissistic romantic Stephen from the later author of the everyday. And the epiphany that marks this turn? I would suggest it is that instant of recognition wherein Stephen suddenly 'sees' what he had previously been blind to – the Other. The will of another – Bloom the despised and humiliated Semite - that fronts and confronts him humbly and unpretentiously ('bowing, greeting'). The 'other chap', who Stephen confesses presciently helps him to 'unbelieve' his Grand Theory. In short, that other who will lead him out of the self-enclosed, self-regarding circle of literary solipsism away, back, down, out onto the streets of the ordinary universe. Into a world where the self leads not back to itself – as with Socrates, Judas, Sibellius – but beyond itself towards otherness. A world where time does not subsume space into itself but comes to heed and serve it. 'That lies in space which I must come to...'. And as soon as Stephen accepts this, he sees not only his wayward past illuminated in the instant – 'cease to strive' – but also his imminent adventures with Bloom: traversing the roads of Dublin city ('men wandered'), nighttown ('streets of harlots after') and, finally, Molly ('a creamfruit mellon he held to me') (18a). 'You will see', Stephen realizes. This moment of traversal is the epiphany that will change his life.

Moreover, the last lines where the plumes ascending from the chimneys of Kildare Street are compared to the smoke rising from altars in Shakespeare's *Cymbeline*, may well allude to the return and resurrection of the sacrificed woman (Imogen-Ann Hathaway-Gertrude-Penelope?) – another pointer to the return of Molly in the last chapter of the book? If this reading is sound, then the throwaway line in the very middle of Stephen's peroration on mystical paternity takes on – retrospectively - another complexion: '*Amor matris*, subjective and objective genitive, may be the only true thing in life' (19). If so, then Stephen's 'agenbite of inwit' regarding his dead and unmourned mother may itself, at last, be subsiding, the repudiated 'mothers of memory' assuming a more benign visage, the nightmare of history returning as that epiphany of the mundane so faithfully and jubilantly recorded in Molly's polymorphous poem (itself one sustained coming back of time to space)?

There is still a way to go, of course, from here to there, from the middle of the book to the end. But the tide has turned, and there is no going back. Stephen, it seems, has undergone a profound conversion from belief to unbelief in his own Theory. He has died a death and shed his most fundamental delusions. No longer striving to fulfill the Great Expectations of Immortal Art – fostered by his literati confreres – Stephen is ready to take his lead from a simple adman, Bloom, someone who will guide him towards another way of 'seeing' and 'hearing', another kind of art (in the lower case) where father and son do not sacrifice procreation for creation, otherness for selfhood, space for time, female for male, history for mystique, the world of flesh-and-blood for a world of Ghosts and *Geists*. Leaving his Grand Theory behind him on the shelves of the National Library, Stephen follows Bloom out into a profane universe where divinity is witnessed in a 'cry in the street', in the 'yes' of a woman's desire. 'God: noise in the street: very peripatetic'. This is the truth of epiphany to which Stephen finally comes.

c) *Epiphanies – Intra-textual, Extra-textual, Trans-textual.*

Our account above suggests how we might identify the role of ‘epiphany’ within the Joycean text. But if Joyce is correct when he claims that ‘it would be a brave man would invent something that never happened’, is it not legitimate to wonder if Joyce’s intra-textual epiphanies might not repeat certain extra-textual experiences in Joyce’s own life? Any attempt nowadays – after formalism and structuralism – to relate an author’s work to his/her biography is contentious at least. But it is not always unprofitable. Indeed, if we are to give any credence to Stephen’s own procedure in correlating Shakespeare’s oeuvre with his life – while accepting his disavowal of his own ‘theory’ about this correlation – we may assume there is more than madness in the method.

I would like, before moving on to Proust, to suggest that there are three possible episodes in Joyce’s own life which might be said to prefigure crucial epiphanies in the novel.

First, and most obviously, we know from Joyce himself that his first ‘going out’ with Nora Barnacle on June 16, 2004, lies at the core of the book. This is the very day and date for the setting of the whole story, subsequently commemorated as ‘Bloomsday’. If this is so, by the author’s own admission, then it is probably fair to conjecture that Molly’s climactic phantasia is, in some respects, an epiphanic ‘repetition’ of this moment – the existential past being given an open future through the *kairos* of the literary moment. Here the human eros of space and time is celebrated in an epiphany of sacredness. ‘What else were we given all those desires for I want to know...’ Molly reminds us. And as Joyce suggests in a letter to his Paris friend, Valery Larbaud, we can take Molly at her word: ‘Pénélope, le dernier cri’.

Second, it is possible that a particular experience that Joyce had of being rescued after a mugging in Dublin was at the root of his motivation to invent Leopold Bloom. As he relates in a letter from Rome to his brother, Stanislas, dated Nov 13, 1906, a brutal mugging in Rome in 1906 which left him robbed and destitute, recalled the earlier mugging in Dublin when he found himself rescued by a Dublin Jew called Hunter who took him back to his home and gave him cocoa. The Hunter in question, as Joyce’s biographer Richard Ellmann explains, refers to a ‘dark complexioned Dublin Jew...rumored to be a cuckold whom Joyce had met twice in Dublin’. In his letter to Stanislas, Joyce reveals that this same Hunter is to be the central character of a planned new story called ‘Ulysses’. Ellmann comments: ‘On the night of 22 June 1904 Joyce (not yet committed either to Nora or to monogamy) made overtures to a girl on the street without realizing, perhaps, that she had another companion. The official escort came forward and left him, after a skirmish, with ‘black eye, sprained wrist, sprained ankle, cut chin, cut hand’...He was dusted off and taken home by a man called Alfred Hunter in what he was to call ‘orthodox Samaritan fashion’. This was the Hunter about whom the short story ‘Ulysses’ was to be projected’ (20). Curiously, however, it was not until the second mugging triggered the forgotten memory of the first that Joyce resolved to create Bloom. Epiphanies seem to have something to do with a certain *anagnoresis* which coincides with a creative repetition or retrieval of some ‘inexperienced experience’ – a sort of *ana-mnesis* which in turn calls for a particular *ana-aesthesis* of literary epiphany. We might even propose the neologism, *ana-phany*, to capture this curious phenomenon of doubling(21).

And Stephen? I would hazard a guess that the existential epiphany which lies at the root of the invention of Stephen – if there is one – relates to some pivotal event of awareness-through-sundering which the young Joyce experienced in a Dublin library. Such a moment, though we have no specific record of it in Joyce's biography or letters, would most likely have entailed a break with his Dublin literary rivals (for example, Oliver St John Gogarty and Vincent Cosgrove, who falsely claimed to have slept with Nora) – a break which finally prompted Joyce to take the role of exodus and exile. At least, that is what might be inferred from the National Library exchange which we have analysed above. As Declan Kiberd suggestively remarks about this decisive mid-way chapter: 'Written in 1918, but dealing with a day fourteen years earlier, this section includes lines which predict its future composition, implicitly uniting the young graduate of 1904 with the mature father and artist of 1918...Already Stephen sets himself at an aesthetic distance from events'(22). The recurring phrases which young Stephen addresses here to his future authorial self – 'see this. Remember' and 'You will see' etc - indicate the criss-crossing of past and future which epitomizes the singular temporality of epiphany (identified by Paul as *kairos* and by Kierkegaard and Heidegger as *Augenblick*). Moreover, the fact that a key epiphanic moment in *A Portrait* also takes place in a library – Stephen's revelation of the power of words in the famous 'tundish' exchange with the Jesuit Dean of Studies – might further point in this direction. But all such attempts to link literature to life remain, of course, a matter of conjecture and surmise.

Let me conclude with a few supplementary remarks on the *intra-textual* epiphanies of *Ulysses*. Concerning Stephen, the actual proponent of the notion of epiphany in the first place, we might say that the 'epiphany' of the Library scene is one which mutates and migrates through the book, until it reaches its culmination in the 'Part...You will see' intuition. Previous prefigurations of this epiphany are to be found, arguably, not only in the Sandymount Strand scene analysed above ('Wait...Remember'), but already in the opening exchange with Mr. Deasy where Stephen expresses his insight that God is 'a cry in the street'. Such a developmental reading of epiphany – that it emerges within a temporal-historical-wordly process – would seem to find some support in Stephen Hero's initial description of an object or event 'achieving its epiphany'. The 'radiance' of the 'commonest object' – be it apprehending divinity in a 'street cry' or in the unprepossessing figure of a wandering and rejected adman - attests to the traversal of eternity through time. But the eternity incarnate in the instant equally refers back to a past and forward to a future which overflows the moment.

In this sense, we might say that epiphany manifests a paradoxical structure of time which Paul called 'eschatological'. It is exemplified, for example, in the Palestinian formula for 'remembering the one who is still to come' – a phenomenon which numerous contemporary thinkers have called 'messianic' time (Levinas, Benjamin, Derrida). We are referring here to a singular form of 'anticipatory memory' which recalls the past into the future through the present. A temporal anomaly which Levinas calls the 'paradox of posterior anteriority'. And which the poet Hopkins – who studied theology and literature in the same Dublin libraries as the young Joyce – called 'aftering' or 'over-and-overing', an ana-aesthetic process which enables us to bear witness to the manner in which each simple mortal thing 'deals out that being that in each one dwells; selves...crying what I

do is me: for that I came...for Christ plays in ten thousand places' ('As Kingfishers Catch Fire).

And yet how do we explain that in *Ulysses* Stephen does not invoke the term epiphany except in the ostensibly derogatory sense identified above in the Proteus/Sandymount episode? I think that what we have in *Ulysses* is the mature Joyce translating his – and Stephen's – youthful notion of epiphany into a post-romantic literary praxis. So that what we witness is not some doctrinal exegesis of epiphany, which would too readily slip into some grand metaphysical theory à la National Library discourse; what we have rather is the performance of epiphany in the text itself. It does not have to be named. It is the very process of naming and writing itself. A process which retrieves life through the text and prefigures a return to the life-of-action after the text. Epi-phany as epi-phora and anaphora: a transferring back and forth between literature and life. Transvesality, moving in both directions.

If this is so, then the return of epiphany by performance rather than by name in the Library chapter, might be termed epiphany 2. Such a second epiphany, which dares not speak its name – of out modesty as much as discretion – would be post-romantic and post-metaphysical, democratic rather than elitist, and deeply demotic in its fidelity to the ordinary universe. And such epiphany is what we might call *posthumous* to the extent that it resurfaces after the experience of radical parting, powerlessness and loss. 'For without sundering', as Stephen learns, 'there is no reconciliation' (23).

And what, finally, of the *intra-textual* epiphanies of Leopold and Molly? For Leopold, as for Stephen, one could say that they are multiple, recurring at various key moments in the text (e.g. in Davy Byrne's pub, in the Hollis Street Hospital, in the cabman's shelter, in nighttown, when he chooses compassion over violence and hate) – recurrences which seem to 'achieve' their ultimate epiphany in the culminating passage of Ithaca where Bloom, curled up in the bed at Molly's feet, embraces a condition of quiet equipoise: 'less envy than equanimity...childman weary, manchild in the womb'. Resisting the path of mimetic rivalry (with Blazes Boylan), jealousy (of Molly), competition (with Stephen) and hatred (towards the Citizen and other anti-jewish persecutors), Bloom chooses rebirth.

And Molly's epiphany? The final sequence speaks for itself. Joyce's own verdict, cited above, is not impertinent: 'Penelope, le dernier cri!'. So that the only remaining question might be: is this the ultimate epiphany of epiphanies for Joyce, and for us his readers? Or is the entire novel itself an epiphany from beginning to end, with Stephen, Bloom and Molly serving as our three mundane magi - offering us different aspects of one particular epiphanic moment: June 16, 1904? One epiphanic time in one epiphanic space? A day in the life of three Dubliners, retrieved, rewritten and resurrected as literature? Not a triumphal literature of closure to be sure, but a textuality of endless openness to the event of life as surrendipity, surprise, accident, grace.

II: EPIPHANIES IN PROUST

Proust's *Remembrance of Times Past* performs, I suggest, a similar aesthetic of epiphany. Though the term is not explicitly invoked by Proust, the associated idioms of incarnation, manifestation, revelation and resurrection recur at key moments in the text, most especially around the final Library episode. This is where Marcel – like Stephen – comes to an ultimate reckoning with his vocation as an author.

Returning to Paris after a spell in a sanatorium where he has been recovering from a pulmonary illness, Marcel darkly acknowledges that he will never be a writer. 'If ever I thought of myself as a poet, I know now that I am not one'(24). He experiences deep disenchantment. All his great literary ambitions are shattered as he encounters death at every turn. News of daily carnage from the War front, the demise of his dashing young peers and especially Robert de Saint Loup, the shocking decrepitude and abjection of the once proud Charlus, the fall of the old Guermantes dynasty and its replacement by the arriviste Verdurin. And amidst all this, the realization that those who were dearest to him in his youth have passed away – Grandmaman, Maman, Swann, Odette, Françoise. Even his once august artistic models – Elstir, Goncourt, Vinteuil – have lost their former allure. It is the end, it seems, of Marcel's *Grandes Illusions*.

Arriving at the Guermantes soirée in Paris where he had, for so many years past, nurtured his elevated artistic aspirations, Marcel experiences a profound sundering. Alone and late for the musical prelude to the evening, he is ushered into the library by a servant and asked to wait. Thus begins one of the most elaborate explorations in modern literature – along with the Library episode in *Ulysses* - of the whole relationship between art and life. Lasting almost one hundred pages, this extraordinary detour through Marcel's death and resurrection as an author takes the form of five successive 'epiphanies'. Modeled on the earlier Madeleine experience, these four examples of 'involuntary memory' present Marcel with the possibility of dying to his old romantic self and starting over again as a writer. Let us take a closer look.

Traversing the courtyard leading to the Guermantes salon, Marcel stumbles on uneven cobbles and suddenly recalls an earlier experience of stumbling in the Baptistery of San Marco. In one instant, all his misgivings about the reality of art and life vanish and he is transported back to that forgotten moment in Venice many years before – a moment which was not fully experienced at the time but is now, involuntarily retrieved, re-experienced in all its glorious radiance. A chance reduplication of a similar experience across two different times and spaces, results in the epiphany of almost timeless proportions. This initial 'miracle of the courtyard' is followed shortly by another event of involuntary recall. Biding his time in the Guermantes Library, Marcel hears a servant accidentally strike a spoon on a plate and suddenly remembers the sound of a hammer struck against the iron wheel of a train by a forest – a sound which was rejected by his consciousness as irrelevant at that time but now returns in all its splendid intensity, saturated with deep resonance and reverberation. As if there was a microcosm imprisoned all these years in the vaults of Marcel's somatic unconscious, just waiting to be released. Third, Marcel wipes his lips with a starched napkin and is revisited by a luminous instant in the dining room in the Grand Hotel at Balbec where he holidayed as a child – a further instant that had been discarded by his voluntary memory as contingent and impertinent.

Fourth, the sound of water crying like a siren in the heating pipes of the Library recalls yet another buried unconscious association waiting to be triggered. And finally, when Marcel takes down a volume of George Sands' novel *Francois le Champi* from the shelves of the Guermentes' Library he is vividly reminded of an evening when his beloved mother read this very same book to him at bedtime(24a).

All five visitations constitute what Samuel Beckett calls a 'single annunciation'(25). And the significance of this annunciation – we would say epiphany – at this crucial point in the novel is to prepare Marcel for the rediscovery through *anagnoresis* of his true literary vocation. In other words, Marcel must renounce the vocation of art as some voluntary project, some elitist Will-to-Power, in order to recognize the epiphanic magic of the everyday – a recognition that only comes after he has accepted failure, disillusionment and death. The Proustian narrator lays great emphasis on this, citing with emphasis the famous passage about the grain dying so as to be reborn. Henceforth Marcel will write posthumously, retrospectively, anamnically, ana-aesthetically: Marcel the actual author is returning from the future to meet with Marcel the aspirant author of the past. The epiphany of the present serves the 'starcrossed road' where past and future traverse each other. It is not, of course, that this is the first or only time that Marcel experiences such phenomena of 'involuntary recall'. The famous and recurring incident of the Madeleine dipped in Linden tea precedes the Library scene, as do a number of other similar phenomena - .e.g. the steeples of Martinville perceived from Dr Percepied's carriage; the three trees near Balbec seen from Mme de Villeparisis' trap; the hawthorn hedge near Balbec; the red phrase Leitmotif of the Vinteuil Septuor; the incident where Marcel stoops to unbutton his boots during his visit to the Grand Hotel at Balbec and is flooded by the memory of his departed grandmother stopping over his distress as a young boy, and so on.

The point is not that epiphanies never happened before the library scene; it is that Marcel was not yet ready to see and hear them for what they really were. He had not yet, to cite Deleuze, been fully trained in his 'apprenticeship to signs'(26). And it is not until such apprenticeship is accomplished, through his recapitulative awareness of 'being-towards-death' in the Library, that Marcel can finally acknowledge the preciousness of even the most banal and discarded events through the lens of time recaptured (*le temps retrouvé*). Art is less a matter of romantic creation than of epiphanic recreation. For, as Marcel asks, 'was not the re-creation by the memory of impressions which had then to be deepened, illumined, transformed into equivalents of understanding, was not this process one of the conditions, almost the very essence of the work of art as I had just now in the library conceived it?'(27). Such epiphanic understanding marks the moment of *anagnoresis*.

Otherwise put, time has to be lost before it can be recovered. Unless the seed dies, accidents cannot be retrieved as essences, contingencies as correspondences, obsessions as epiphanies. Only through the veil of mortality, can the sacred radiate across the profane world which the arrogant repudiate as ineligible for art. It is only after he renounces his promethean Will-to-Write that Marcel's previously in-experienced experience is re-experienced in all its neglected richness. (And the greater the neglect the greater the richness) For it is precisely the rejected and remaindered events of Marcel's existence which return now, in and through literature, as 'resurrections'. The three personas of Marcel – as character, as narrator and as author – seem to crisscross here for

the first time, like three Proustian Magi recognizing that the deepest acts of communion are to be found in the most fortuitous acts of ordinary perception. This whole process of 'resurrection' takes the form of what Marcel calls 'metaphor' – an art of 'translating' one thing in terms of another. True art, Marcel now realizes, is not a matter of progressively depicting a series of objects or events ('describing one after another the innumerable objects which at a given moment were present at a particular place'); it occurs only when the writer 'takes two different objects' and 'states the connection between them'(28). This identification of 'unique connections' and hidden liaisons between one thing and another, is what enables the writer to translate the book of life (that 'exists already in each one of us') into the book of art (29). This is how Marcel puts it: 'truth – and life too - can be attained by us only when, by comparing a quality common to two sensations, we succeed in extracting their common essence and in reuniting them to each other, liberated from the contingencies of time, with a metaphor'(30).

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But Proust's novel does not end there. Marcel does not stay in the library anymore than Stephen does. And though he takes this occasion to announce an extremely elaborate theory of literature and life, the text does not culminate with theory. Marcel leaves the Library and reenters the everyday universe. And it is here, in the midst of the chaos and commotion of a fragmenting Parisian community, that Marcel has what we might consider to be his ultimate epiphany: his meeting with Mlle de Saint Loup (Gilberte's daughter)

Mlle de Saint Loup is to Marcel what Molly (via Leopold) is to Stephen. Both appear at the end of the story and lead the author-artist beyond the vain play of mimetic triangles and abstract trinities back to the ordinary universe of generation and gratuity. Was she not, Marcel says of Mlle de Saint Loup – 'and are not the majority of human beings? – like one of those star-shaped crossroads in a forest where roads converge that have come, in the forest as in our lives, from the most diverse quarters'? And he adds: 'Numerous for me were the roads which led to Mlle de Saint-Loup and which radiated around her'(31). Marcel then recalls the two great 'ways' – the Guermantes Way represented by her father, Robert de Saint Loup, and the Meseglise Way represented by her mother, Gilberte, the narrator's first youthful love.

'One of them took me, by way of this girl's mother and the Champs-Elysees, to Swann, to my evenings at Combray, to Meseglise itself; the other, by way of her father, to those afternoons at Balbec where even now I saw him again near the sun-bright sea. And then between these two high roads a network of transversals was set up...'(32).

From this emerges Marcel's new vision of life as a large web where the various incidents of time past and time recovered crisscross in a 'network of memories' which give us an 'almost infinite variety of communicating paths'. So that life resurrected in and through literature becomes a palimpsest of chiasmic overlaps and transversals that cannot be brought to a final close. Mlle de Saint Loup sets up a series of reverberations and recollections that resonate out into the future. She is the only character in the novel not 'recalled' from the past as such. She comes to Marcel out of the future as it were, taking him by surprise. And it is precisely by virtue of her 'messianic' advent into Marcel's

world that she opens up a new *optique* on both the past, the present and the time-still-to-come.

This new *optique* is what Marcel now calls a three-dimensional psychology, one which leads from life to literature and back again. Marcel's recapture of the different planes and elements of his life, following his encounter with Mlle de Saint Loup in the party, makes him realize that 'in a book which tries to tell the story of a life it would be necessary to use not the two-dimensional psychology which we normally use but a quite different sort of three-dimensional psychology'; a perspective which affords, he says, 'a new beauty to those resurrections of the past which (his) memory effected while (he) was following his thoughts alone in the library'(33). Marcel, like Stephen after his Library epiphany, is now ready to 'part' with his past so as to regain it. He is prepared to pass from the 'see this, remember'(epiphany 1) to the 'will see'(epiphany 2). And again like Stephen, Marcel will be lead to his book and to a life-beyond-the-book by someone with whom he does not actually speak (Molly for Stephen; Mlle de Saint Loup for Marcel). In Gilberte's daughter, coming to him across the room in the Guermantes salon, Marcel sees the possibility of rebirth and renewal, another's life beginning again and going beyond his own. This young woman, he realizes, is the incarnation of time lost and regained. 'Time, colorless and inapprehensible time, so that I was almost able to see it and touch it, had materialized itself in this girl....still rich in hopes, full of laughter, formed from those very years which I myself had lost, she was like my own youth'(34).

Then comes the moment of decisive *anagnoresis*(35). While tempted to rejoin his old ambition to compose a great masterpiece which would 'realize a life within the confines of a book!' - mimetically drawing 'comparisons from the loftiest and the most varied arts'(36) - Marcel says no. He resists the temptation. 'What a task awaited him!' he proclaims, taking his final distance from the persona of the Great Writer, now suddenly displaced into the third person - 'How happy would *he* be, I thought, the man who had the power to write such a book!'(ibid, my italics). But Marcel now knows he is not this man. He is not one of those Promethean romantic artists whose will-to-power would construct his work 'like a general conducting an offensive', or an architect building a huge vaulted 'cathedral', ensuring one's immortality even in the tomb, 'against oblivion'(37). This Ideal Author of the Ideal Book is not for Marcel. He has learned, like Stephen in the wake of the Library episode, to 'cease to strive'. And again like Stephen, he has come to disavow 'his own theory'. He no longer believes in the Gospel of the Absolute Text. Instead, he resolves on a far more modest proposal: to begin a work which will serve not as a text in-itself and for-itself - the Grand Illusion of the self-sufficient-Book - but rather as a pretext for the renewed and resurrected life of his readers.

Marcel's critical conversion is marked by the seemingly innocuous phrase, 'But to return to my own case...'. The word 'But' is all important here. The full passage reads as follows:

'*But* to return to my own case, I thought more modestly of my book and it would be inaccurate even to say that I thought of those who would read it as "my" readers. For it seemed to me that they would not be "my" readers but the readers of their own selves, my book being merely a sort of magnifying glass like those which the optician at Combray used to offer his customers - it would be my book, but with its help I would furnish them with the means of reading what lay inside themselves. So

that I should not ask them to praise me or to censure me, but simply to tell me whether “it really is like that”, I should ask them whether the words that they read within themselves are the same as those which I have written...’(38).

The author dies unto himself so as to be reborn in and through his readers. Marcel’s literary *metanoia* is complete. The die is cast.

This ultimate epiphany expresses itself in a series of descriptions of writing as discovery and disclosure – midwifery, pregnancy, child-birth, mining, incubation, detection, listening, diving, excavation, repetition, revelation. Indeed it confirms Samuel Beckett’s own conclusion that for Proust, ‘the only fertile research is excavatory’(39). The old romantic delusion of art as some Fiat of omnipotence gives way to a more humble profession. To an aesthetics of passion rather than imposition, of receptivity rather than volition, of humility rather than hubris. Epiphany as anaphany. In a world, ana-aesthetics.

Indeed just as the humiliated Bloom becomes Stephen’s guide to Molly, the previously mocked figure of Françoise is now retrospectively rehabilitated as Marcel’s most reliable guide. The housemaid Françoise was the one who had always been pointing Marcel, from the beginning, away from literature-for-literature and in the direction of literature-for-life. She was the mundane servant who, ‘like all unpretentious people’, had a no-nonsense approach to literary vainglory and rightly saw through all Marcel’s literary rivals as mere ‘copiers’(40). It was Françoise, Marcel now realizes, who had allowed had ‘a sort of instinctive comprehension of literary work’ capable of ‘divining (Marcel’s) happiness and respecting (his) toil’(41). And so Marcel resolves to labor as she did, weaving, stitching and sowing from bits and pieces of cloth - ‘constructing my book, I dare not say ambitiously like a cathedral, but quite simply like a dress’(42). The Muse is displaced by the maid. The fantasy persona of Albertine, the main source of Marcel’s tormented jealousies and deceptions, is finally replaced by the scullery seamstress of the real.

In this respect, Françoise - no less than Molly - is the reincarnation of Penelope. What we are witnessing is the return of the odyssean figure from great heroic wanderings to the workings of the everyday. The marvels of literature are now to be sought less in monumental basilicas of grandiose design than in the intricate weft and warp of ordinary existence. In this embrace of writing as weaving we find the literary trope of metaphor being allied to that of metonymy. The transformative and synthetic power of metaphor, which turned contingency into essence, is here supplemented by a second moment which returns the essence to contingency – that is, to metonymy as a process of endless displacement and replacement, of accidental weaving and unweaving, of one thing ceding itself to another in the quotidian play of time.

This new understanding of writing as a stitching of webs, tapestries, textures, texts – leads Marcel to the insight that he is the ‘bearer’ of a work that has been ‘entrusted’ to him and which he will, in time, ‘deliver’ into other hands (that of the reader). This intuition of the basic inter-textuality of writing comes to Marcel as a sort of deliverance from his long fear of death. Affirming that genuine literature is a form of messianic ‘repetition’ or remembrance of life forward – from natality to mortality and back to natality again - Marcel finds himself ‘indifferent to the idea of death’(43). Learning to die is learning to be reborn. ‘By dint of repetition’, as he says, ‘this fear had gradually been transformed into a calm confidence. So that if in those early days, as we have seen, the

idea of death had cast a shadow over my loves...the remembrance of love had helped me not to fear death. For I realized that dying was not something new, but that on the contrary since my childhood I had already died many times...'(44). Marcel's authorial self now faces the possibility of being posthumously reborn again as another, as one of those many harbingers of new life, epitomized by Mlle de Saint Loup or, more generally, his future readers. Natalty reemerges from mortality. So that the final passage of the novel – recalling the dead Albertine and the dying 83 year old Charlus – invokes an enveloping movement of Time which swings back and forth, up and down, carrying us towards vertiginous and terrifying summits, higher than the steeples of cathedrals, before returning us again to the earth, 'descending to a great depth within...'

In short, time is all too wont to raise mortals 'to an eminence from which suddenly they fall'(45). And from such recognition of the fall back into the ordinary universe, fear becomes love and literary delusion becomes real writing.

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So what, in sum, do these Proustian conclusions novel tell us about epiphany? They indicate, I suggest, that epiphany is a process which is 'achieved' in a series of double moves. First, that of mortality and natalty. Second, that of metaphor (the translation of one thing into another) and metonymy (the disclosure of new meaning through the accidental contiguity of contingent things). Third, that of constructing and deconstructing. Moreover, it is in this last double-gesture that the text surpasses itself and finally reaches out towards its future readers. For if we begin with the notion that literature 'constructs' an epiphany based on the recreation of impressions recalled in involuntary memory, the literary text in turn 'deconstructs' itself in order to allow for the recreation of the reader. That is how Penelope's tapestry and Francoise's sewing works – stitching and unstitching, weaving and unweaving, endlessly. In a form of hermeneutic arc, the text configures an epiphany already prefigured by a life which is ultimately refigured by the reader (46). And this reader is one who not only co-creates the text with the author but re-creates it again as he/she returns from 'text to action'. So that if epiphany invites a first move from life to literature, it re-invites us come back again from literature to life. In both Proust and Joyce, it is indeed Penelope who has the last word(47).

And what do we readers learn from Penelope? What do we stand to gain, if anything, from our traversals of the Joycean and Proustian imaginaries? Less closure and consolation, I would wager, than keen vigilance and excitement before the open interplay between literature and life. Traversing the epiphanies of Marcel and Proust, something about our own sensibilities as readers is more finely attuned, just as something about our imaginations is more enhanced and amplified, graciously opened to new possibilities of being. After such odysseys the world we return to is, surely, never quite the same.

Notes.

(1) I wish to thank Amanda Gibeault for bringing this and other such texts to my attention. The full passage from *Stephen Hero* reads: 'First we see that the object is *one* thing, then we see that it is an organized composite structure, a *thing* in fact: finally, when the relation of the parts is exquisite, when the parts are adjusted to the special point, we recognize that it is *that* thing which it is. Its soul, its whatness, leaps to us from the vestment of its appearance etc...' (*Stephen Hero*, New Directions, New York, 1963, 213). Stephens speaks these words to his friend, Cranly, to explain how even the most demotic of objects – in this case the clock of the Ballast Office – can achieve an epiphany. So from this earliest consideration of epiphany in Joyce's work we realize that it involves 1) a sensible response to an external stimulus in the world (rather than a merely intra-mental insight) and 2) a certain interpretative response on the part of the viewer (or by extension, reader). In *Stephen Hero*, as later in *A Portrait*, this discussion is followed by a Thomistic account of the properties of aesthetic beauty. Though already in *A Portrait* Joyce appears to be taking a certain ironic distance from his early 'theory' of epiphany, though not, I would contend, of the phenomenon of epiphany itself which remains central to Joyce's developing aesthetic – in practice if not in name – in both *A Portrait* and *Ulysses*. I shall introduce the terms epiphany I and epiphany II below to mark this important distinction between the early and later Joyce. While the former seeks to force essences out of their everyday vestments, the later Joyce seems to acknowledge that the essences are to be found within the everyday events themselves, no matter how trivial or insignificant.

2) James Joyce, *Stephen Hero*, New Directions, New York, 1963, p. 211

3) James Joyce, *Ulysses*, Penguin, 1968, pp. 188-189

4) 189

5) 194

5a) This citation from Mallarmé comes from a passage on Hamlet in Mallarmé's *Divagations* which reads as follows: 'The play, a pinnacle of the theater, is, in the work of Shakespeare, transitional between the old multiple plots and the future Monologue, or drama of Self (*avec Soi*). The hero...he walks, no more than that, reading in the book of himself, high and living Sign; he denies the others attention'. The fact that another line from this same Mallarmé passage - 'sumptuous and stagnant exaggeration of murder' – turns up a few sentences later as part of Stephen's own interior monologue, *unattributed to Mallarmé*, that is, without inverted commas or quotes, suggests that the Mallarmé take on Hamlet as a solipsistic self-reading Self is close to Stephen's own stance at this point in the scene. The various references, later in the chapter, to the library as a place of death and ghostliness (e.g. 'Coffined thoughts around me, in mummycases, embalmed in spice of words') adds to the suspicion that Stephen needs to move beyond this enclosed world of mummification if he is to live and write as a real author, free from the deadening hold of a reified literary and intellectual tradition. The fact that Bloom leads Stephen beyond the National library – as does Mlle de Saint Loup lead Marcel beyond the Guermantes library – towards a life and literature still to come, is a curious parallel between the two novels. The solipsistic Selves they leave behind them in the library are, arguably, Stephen Hero (for Joyce) and Jean Santeuil (for Proust) respectively – the romantic narrators whom they have to shed in order to find their own voice.

6) 197

7) 207

8) 208

9) 207

10) 208

11) 212

12) 213

13) 213. See also here René Girard's intriguing reading of this passage in 'French Triangles in the Shakespeare of James Joyce: Do You Believe in Your Own Theory?' in *A Theater of Envy: William Shakespeare*, Oxford Press, New York, 1991.

14) 202

15) 206

16) 207

17) 212

18) 217

18a) It is telling that these allusions hark back to Stephen's anticipatory dream in the Proteus chapter where he speaks of a 'street of harlots' and a certain Haroun al Raschid, an 8th century caliph of Baghdad who disguised himself as a commoner and wandered among his people to find out who they really were and what they really needed. In his dream, Stephen follows the man who offers him a mellon ('creamfruit smell') just as in the Library chapter Stephen will follow Bloom who holds out a 'creamfruit mellon' to him, a reference which anticipates the final fruits of the 'mellonsmellonous' Molly in the Penelope episode. This convoluted temporality of forward reprise or anticipatory memory typifies the experience of epiphany which is never just a 'once off' isolated moment, but a multivalent present (*kairos/Augenblick*) traversed by both past and future. Commenting on this phenomenon, Amanda Gibeault write: 'Stephen's enjoinders to remember the scenes leading up to the epiphany take on accrued importance: without the memories, the epiphany will cease to have an anchor in the world of the text and will appear an ad hoc combination of words. The conclusion we can draw from this is that an epiphany is only genuinely a revelation if it includes the context of description of the revelation – that is, if it is actually embedded in a narrative with a temporal unfolding.... This means that the reader must do the work of reconstruction to reach a full understanding of Stephen's epiphany' ('Epiphany in Joyce and Narrative Identity', Presented at Boston College 'Phenomenology of Fiction' Seminar, November, 2004).

19) Joyce, *Ulysses*, 207

20) R. Ellmann, Appendix to the 1968 Penguin Edition of *Ulysses*, p. 705.

21) For more on our theory of ana-aesthetics see our 'Epiphanies of the Everyday' in *After God...*.

22) See Declan Kiberd's very informative note to the Penguin Annotated Students Edition of *Ulysses*, London and New York, 1992 p. 1013.

23) Joyce, *Ulysses*, 195

24) Marcel Proust, *In Search of Lost Time*, Vol VI, 'Time Regained', trans. A. Mayor and T. Kilmartin, Modern Library Paperback, 1999 p. 238

24a) It is perhaps revealing that this story which brings Marcel back to the formative moment with which the book begins – his mother reading to him and then kissing him goodnight – is about an orphaned, fatherless son, namely, Francois. The narrator, Marcel,

recalls that that evening was at once one of the most blissful *and* traumatic moments of his childhood, for if it brought him close to his mother it marked the absence of his father, a defaulting father, therefore, who failed to intervene and separate mother from child (what Lacan would call 'symbolic castration'). This pivotal moment might be seen accordingly as a candidate for what Rene Girard calls the 'original trauma' which lies at the root of all great novels about mimetic desire. We have seen how the lost son in search of a surrogate or spiritual father was central to Joyce's *Ulysses*; and how Shakespeare, on Stephen's reading, was writing *Hamlet* in the shadow of the absent/ghostly/defaulting father syndrome. 'It's the father and the son idea', as Hynes announces at the beginning of *Ulysses*, 'the son striving to be atoned with the father'. To this, we might add the observation that Dostoyevsky's *Brothers Karamov* – a third great novelistic exposure of the original trauma, crisis and redemption of mimetic desire – was also (according to Girard) about a defaulting/absent/deceased father, in this case a father murdered by his son. Dostoyevsky claimed that the murder of his father by his serfs was one of the most traumatic events in his life which he needed to work through cathartically by writing his great masterpiece. Could the theme of defaulting fathers be one of the hidden subtexts of these three great modern novels, by Joyce, Proust and Dostoyevsky? Could the failure of symbolic castration in these three authors – leading to a form of paralyzing psychosis which Lacan also identifies with Hamlet/Shakespeare – be at the root of their 'original trauma', motivating them in turn to remedy this pain by constructing a narrative which rewrites their past and enables them to reenter the symbolic order of language? Girard argues that by the end of the novel the hero-narrator-author must be able to write the novel – a point he also makes about Joyce and Proust as well as about Dostoyevsky. In the case of the latter he sees Dmitri, who mourns for his father's death in prison, as the hero who renounces metaphysical desire and experiences an 'eruption of memory which is more true than the perception itself' (*Deceit, Desire and the Novel*, Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, 1965, p 297). Memory thus serves as a form of creative and cathartic *anamnesis* and *anagnoresis* which repeats the past forward, transforming chronological time into eschatological time – as in Stephens 'See. Remember' or Marcel's recall of *François le Champi* – which enables the hero-narrator to become a genuine post-romantic author (ibid, pp 260, 312). So Stephen passes from Joyce the man (son of John Joyce) to Joyce the author of *Ulysses*, Marcel from Proust the man (son of Adrien Proust) to Marcel Proust the author of *Remembrance*, Dmitri from Dostoyevsky the man (son of Fyodor Dostoyevsky) to Fyodor Dostoyevsky the author of the *Brothers Karamazov*. In each case, according to Girard, the hero-narrator, goes through an arduous journey of self-discovery where they 1) come to terms with an original trauma; 2) renounce the mimetic desire of a rival mediator; and 3) overcome models of deviated transcendency towards a creative repetition-recall-remembrance of the past in the light of some eschatological epiphany. The fact that all three wrote earlier novels which they considered failed 'ghost' versions of their final masterpieces – Joyce's *Stephen Hero*, Proust's *Jean Santeuil* and Dostoyevsky's *Notes from the Underground* – suggests that in each case we are witnessing a transfiguring mutation of the writer from romantic 'egoman' to post-romantic author-as-reader. See also here Blanchot's intriguing comments on the role played by *Jean Santeuil* in the composition of *Remembrance of Times Past* (Maurice Blanchot, 'Proust' and 'The Sirens Song' in *The Book to Come*, Stanford University Press, Stanford, 2003. See for example, his claim that Proust the man

and Proust the writer stand to Marcel the hero-narrator of the novel as to ‘a shade into which they have been metamorphosed...the narrator having become the book’s protagonist, who in the course of the narration writes a narration which is the actual book and who creates further metamorphoses of himself which are the various ‘selves’ whose experience he recounts’.Ibid).

25) Samuel Beckett, *Proust*, Grove Press, New York, 1970, p. 25

26) Gilles Deleuze, *Proust and Signs*, The Athlone Press, London, 2000.

27) Proust, *op.cit.*, , p. 525

28) p. 290

29) p. 291

30) p. 290

31) p. 502

32) p. 502

33) pp. 505-506

34) p. 507

35) See Aristotle on the key role played by re-cognition (*anagnoresis*) in poetic awareness where we recall something previously forgotten and realize how different things are connected, how ‘this’ relates to ‘that’ etc. See the *Poetics* 4, 4, 1448f and *Rhetoric*, 1, 2, 23. 1371f.

36) Proust, *op.cit.*, p. 507

37) p. 508

38) p. 508

39) Samuel Beckett, *op.cit.*

40) Proust, *op.cit.*, p. 509

41) p. 509

42) p. 509

43) p. 509

44) p. 509

45) pp. 530-531

46) See Paul Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, vol 2, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1985, especially the section entitled ‘The Traversed Remembrance of Things Past’ in Chapter 4.

47) Derrida offers a useful gloss on the language of Molly/Penelope in an intriguing footnote to his commentary on the relationship between Greek and Jew in Emmanuel Levinas, ‘Violence and Metaphysics: An Essay on the Thought of Emmanuel Levinas’ (in *Writing and Difference*, University of Chicago Press, 1978, pp 320-321. Commenting on a phrase in *Ulysses* - ‘Jewgreek is greekjew. Extremes meet’ - Derrida attributes this not only to ‘woman’s reason’, as in Joyce’s text, but he also identifies Joyce here as ‘perhaps the most Hegelian of modern novelists’(p. 153). The implication here seems to be that the discourse of ‘feminine logic’, associated with Molly/Penelope, is one which, for Levinas at least, suggests an ‘ontological category’ of return and closure: namely, Ulysses returning to Penelope in Ithica, Stephen and Bloom returning to Molly in Eccles Street where they may find themselves ‘atoned’ as father-son, jew-greek, greek-jew etc. It is not quite clear where Derrida himself stands towards Joyce in this early 1964 text, though it is evident that he thinks Levinas would repudiate the Joycean formula as overly Hegelian and Greek (that is, not sufficiently respectful of the strictly

Jewish/Messianic/eschatological need for a radically dissymmetrical relation of self and other). In his later essay, 'Ulysses Gramophone', first delivered as a lecture to the International Joyce Symposium in Frankfurt, 1984, he makes it clear that the 'yes' of Molly/Penelope marks an opening of the text beyond totality and closure to an infinite and infinitely recurring 'other'. Even if it is a response to oneself, in interior dialogue, 'yes' always involves a relay through an other. Or as Derrida cleverly puts it, *oui-dire*, saying yes, always involves some form of *oui-dire* or hearsay. 'A yes never comes along, and we never say this word alone' (p. 300). With this relay of self through the other, this willing of yes to say yes again, 'this differing and deferring, this necessary failure of total self-identity, comes spacing (space *and* time), gramophonizing (writing *and* speech), memory....' (p. 254). And this 'other' clearly implies a reaching beyond the text of *Ulysses* itself to the listener, the reader, an open call for our response.

In this sense we would say that *Ulysses* is a deeply anti-Hegelian book. Molly's finale does not represent some great teleological reconciliation of contradictions in some absolute synthesis of Spirit, but an on-going affirmation of paradoxes, struggles, contraries, contingencies in a spirit of humor and desire. 'What else were we given all those desires for....?' asks the polymorphously perverse Molly, a far cry from the Hegelian triumph of Identity. We may conclude therefore that the story of struggle and trouble does not end when Stephen follows Bloom out of the library, it only begins... And by the same token, Molly, when she finally arrives, does not put paid to Trinities as such, she simply reintroduces us – along with Stephen and Bloom – to another kind of trinity, one without a capital T and more inclusive of time, movement, natality and desire (all those things banned from the Sabellian Trinity of self-enclosed Identity). And one might add, more inclusive of the reader. For like any epiphany, Molly's too calls out to an open future of readers. On Proust's work as an opening to otherness, see also Levinas's cryptic but revealing essay on Proust in *Proper Names*, Athlone Press, London, 1996

Walter Benjamin identifies the Penelope motif of textuality in Proust. In his essay, 'The Image of Proust', Benjamin writes: 'For the important thing for the remembering author is not what he experienced but the weaving of his memory, the Penelope work of recollection' (*Illuminations*, Schocken Books, New York, 1968, p. 202). Benjamin identifies the Penelope trope with the textual process of weaving-unweaving, forgetting-remembering, composing-disrupting which manages to reveal the extraordinary in the ordinary. Once again, Penelope's fidelity to the epiphanies of the everyday is affirmed: 'Can we say that all lives, works and deeds that matter were never anything but the undisturbed unfolding of the most banal, most fleeting, most sentimental, weakest hour in the life of the one to whom they pertain' (p. 203). Or again: 'Proust's most accurate, most convincing insights fasten on their objects as insects fasten on leaves, blossoms, branches, betraying nothing of their existence until a leap, a beating of wings, a vault, show the startled observer that some incalculable individual life has imperceptibly crept into an alien world. The true reader of Proust is constantly jarred by small shocks' (p. 208). This emphasis on the microscopic and miniscule is repeated at the level of language itself where Proust, like Joyce, offers us a subatomic investigation of society in terms of exploring the reverberations and associations of the most everyday words and phrases, what Benjamin calls 'a physiology of chatter' (p. 206). This reminds me, in turn, of Camus' observation that 'all great deeds and all great thoughts have a ridiculous beginning. Great thoughts are often born on a street corner or in a restaurant's revolving

door' (*The Myth of Sisyphus*, in *Basic Writings of Existentialism*, ed. G. Marino, The Modern Library, New York, 2004, p 448). I am reminded also of the telling passage in Aristotle's *On the Parts of Animals* (645a15-23) where he writes: 'Every realm of nature is marvelous: and as Heraclitus, when the strangers who came to visit him found him warming himself at the furnace in the kitchen and hesitated to go in, is reported to have bidden them not to be afraid to enter, as even in that kitchen divinities were present, so we should venture on the study of every kind of living thing without distaste; for each and all will reveal to us something natural and something beautiful'.

APPENDIX: SUPPLEMENTARY EPIPHANIES

i

The three Magi who witness the event of meaning, which epitomizes the epiphanic paradigm, may also be interpreted more textually – or more hermeneutically – as *author*, *actor* and *reader*. Thus we might say that while a) the lived action of Joyce's world (*le vécu*) 'prefigures' the text, and b) the voice of the narrator-actors (Stephen-Bloom-Molly) 'configure' the meaning in the text, it is we readers who completes the function of third witness by 'refiguring' the text once again in our own lived experience of the world as enlarged and epiphanised by the new meanings proposed by the text. This triangular model of epiphany always implies a certain birth or re-birth which constitutes something of a miracle of meaning, the *impossible* being transfigured into the *newly possible*. One thinks of the three angels that appear to Abraham (Gen XVII, 6.8) to announce the conception of an 'impossible' child (Jacob) to Sarah, the three Magi who bear witness to the 'impossible' child Jesus, and the three persons of the Christian Trinity who bear witness to the birth of a new and 'impossible' kingdom (viz Andrei Rublev's icon of the Blessed Trinity). This third example brings together the first two and foregrounds the pivotal role of the empty chalice or space (*chora*) at the centre of the triadic epiphany. The movement of the three persons/angels/Magi around the still vacant centre – which the Church fathers named *peri-choresis* or the dance around the open space – may be read, hermeneutically, as the creative encounter of *author/narrator/reader* in and through and around the locus of language. This suggests, interestingly, that the triadic model of epiphany always implies a fourth dimension – *chora* understood as the space of advent for the new (Jacob, Jesus, mustard seed etc), the miracle of semantic innovation as an event of language, the transfiguration of the impossible into the possible. That the witness of the three personas is usually met with a celebratory 'yes' (Sarah's 'laugh' in Gen XVII, Mary's 'amen' in the Gospels, Molly Bloom's final 'yes I will yes') is itself significant as an illustration of a *kairological* time which breaks into our conventional chronological time and opens up a surplus of possible meaning hitherto unsuspected and unknown. The epiphanic event may thus be seen as one which testifies simultaneously to the *event* of meaning (it is *already* here) as an *advent* always still to come (it is *not-yet*). In this wise, it reenacts the Palestinian formula of the Passover/Eucharist which remembers a moment of saving while at the same time anticipating a future ('until he comes'). (See our discussion of the eschatological temporality of the Palestinian formula in both Judaic and Christian messianism in 'Hermeneutics of the Possible God' in *God and Givenness*, ed Ian Leask and Eoin Cassidy, Fordham UP, New York, 2005).

Indeed, *Ulysses* may be read as a series of anti-Eucharists or pseudo-Eucharists (Mulligan's black Mass, Stephen's parodic Mass in nighttown, Bloom and Stephen's failed Mass over a cup of cocoa in Ithica) which ultimately – after a long deconstructive *via negativa* – open up a space where the 'kiss' of the seed cake on Howth Head, as recalled/anticipated by Molly in Penelope, reprises not only the 'kisses of the mouth' celebrated by the Shulamite woman in the opening verse of the *Song of Songs* but also the Eucharistic Passover of Judeo-Christian promise. In this sense, we might say that Molly's 'yes' epitomises Walter Benjamin's intriguing notion of messianic time as an openness to 'each moment of the future as a portal through which the Messiah may

enter'. This is, in short, epiphany understood as a transfiguring of each ordinary moment of secular, profane time (*chronos*) in terms of sacred time (*kairos*). It is also worth noting, perhaps, that epiphany implies witnesses that come as strangers from afar - the three angels to Abraham, the three Magi from the East etc. This may be read, hermeneutically, as the event of textual openness to new, other, strange, unprecedented meanings in and through the perichoretic textual encounter between *author, narrator* and, above all, *reader*. Reading *Ulysses* as just such an 'open text', Rudolphe Gasche writes of the 'desire to open writing to unforeseeable effects, in other words, to the Other. It is a function of a responsibility for the Other – for managing in writing a place for the Other, saying *yes* to the call or demand of the Other, inviting a response' (*Inventions of Difference: On Jacques Derrida*, Harvard UP, Cambridge, 1994, p. 230). Gasche is here elaborating on Derrida's reading of Joyce in 'Ulysses Gramophone' (in *Acts of Literature*, ed. Derek Attridge, Routledge, New York, 1992). Derrida invokes Elijah as a sort of messianic model of the reader - as unpredictable Other - who calls the text forth and is called forth by the text. This notion of *Ulysses* as an open textual invitation to 'refiguration' finds confirmation in Joyce's repeated appeal to the 'ideal reader', somewhat akin to Proust's appeal to his future reader who would discover in Proust's book the book of his/her own life. One of Joyce's most telling refrains in letters is – 'is there one who understands me?' The metaphor of Eucharistic transubstantiation to convey the miracle of textual composition and reception is equally present in Proust, of course, in the epiphany of the Madeleine. (On this later point see Julia Kristeva, *Time and Sense: Proust and the Experience of Literature*, Columbia University Press, 1996, pp 3-22).

ii

Joyce's notion of epiphany is, it appears, intimately indebted to the Scottist concept of 'haecceitas'. Like his predecessor at the National University at Newman House on Stephens Green – Gerald Manley Hopkins – Joyce was very taken by Duns Scotus' teaching about the sacred 'thisness' of things. Scotus understood haecceity to be a concrete and unique property of a thing which characterizes one, and only one, subject. As such, it is the 'last formal determination which makes an individual to be precisely this individual and not anything else' (see Gerard Casey, 'Hopkins' in *Studies*, vol 84, no 334, p. 163). The haecceity of a thing is that radiance of its internal being as created and apprehended by God. It discloses itself – mystically, poetically, spiritually – in terms of a certain sacred perception. As Hopkins wrote: 'I thought how sadly beauty of inscape was unknown and buried away from simple people and yet how near at hand it was if they had eyes to see it' (quoted William Noon, 'How Culious an Epiphany' in *Joyce and Aquinas*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1927, p. 61). For Joyce's 'epiphany', as for Hopkins' 'inscape', haecceity is a way of 'seeing the pattern, air or melody in things from, as it were, God's side' (quoted Casey, *ibid*, p. 164. See also the more developed analysis of this subject in Philip Ballinger, *The Poem as Sacrament: The Theological Aesthetic of Gerard Manley Hopkins*, Peeters Press, Leuven, 2000, Chapter 3, especially pp. 193-198. See also here Fran O'Rourke's analysis of Joyce's debt to the related scholastic notion of 'quidditas' as derived from his studies of Thomas and Aquinas in his Paris and Pola Notebooks of 2003-2004: see 'Allwisest Stagyrite: Joyce's Quotations from Aristotle', National University of Ireland, Dublin, 2006. Stephen explicitly links

Aquinas' notion of *quidditas* (whatness) to his aesthetic account of *claritas* or (radiance) in the *Portrait*, thereby suggesting that the epiphany is linked to the *causa formalis* or 'essence' of something. But Noon expresses the view that what Stephen seems to mean by *claritas* may have been expressed better by the *haecceitas* of Duns Scotus than by the *quidditas* of Aquinas. Etienne Gilson, an expert on both Aquinas and Scotus, has described the *haecceitas* of Scotus as 'l'extreme point d'actualité qui détermine chaque être réel a la singularité'" (p. 51). Haecceity is, in other words, the noumenal become phenomenal, the sacred perception of things translated into profane perception, in a manner so luminous and unexpected that it appears – to cite Hopkins – like an 'explosion out of darkness' (cited Noon, *ibid*, p. 61). This translation of the word into flesh can occur in the most ordinary and demotic of events. Joyce's most formative account of epiphany is to be found in *Stephen Hero*: 'By an epiphany he meant 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. He told Cranly that the clock of the Ballast Office was capable of an epiphany' (p. 211). Noon argues that the reason that Joyce later parodies Stephen's 'epiphanies on green oval leaves' is because his various books 'with letters for titles', never achieved any existence outside of his mind – they were still figments of his solipsistic fantasy (see Noon pp. 61-62). By the time Joyce writes *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake*, he has matured beyond his early view that epiphanies depend on some light within the viewer's mind, to a more ontological or eschatological understanding of epiphany as coming from the otherness and transcendence of the worldly object – disclosing as the druid in *FW* puts it, 'the Ding hvad in itself id est', 'the Entis-Onton', the 'sextuple Gloria of light' (cited Noon pp. 62-3). But this transition from an idealist to a more realist comprehension of epiphany presupposes the traversal of language – the 'sound sense symbol' of literary discourse which allows the inner radiance of a thing's *claritas* to find expression within the 'wold of words' (*ibid*). Central to this process of textual traversal is what Joyce, in one of his unpublished Zurich notebooks, calls 'metaphor', by which he understands not 'comparison' (which only tells you 'what something is like') but the expression of what something 'is'. Noon relates this to the Thomistic claim that 'metaphors are poetic vestments of the truth' of things ('metaphorae... sunt quasi quaedam veramina veritatis'), adding that he believes this was not yet fully appreciated in *Stephen Hero* but would have to await Joyce's mature works. Aquinas, whom Joyce studied in some depth along with his reading of Aristotle in the Paris Notebooks (1903) and Pola Notebooks (1904), gave a prominent role to the symbolic and sacramental power of language. As he wrote in the *Summa Theologica*: 'The illumination of the divine ray of light in this present life is not had without the veils of imaginative symbols, since it is connatural to man in this present state of life that he should not understand without an imaginative sign.... The signs which are in the highest degree expressive of intelligible truth are the words of language' (ST, II-II, q 174, a 2-4). Moreover it seems that it was during his Paris sojourn in early 1903 that Joyce penned fifteen short prose snatches which he entitled 'epiphanies' which have been described as 'tiny literary seeds' (Noon, *op.cit*, p 75) from which whole narratives may issue, testifying to the power of the 'single word that tells the whole story', to 'the simple gesture that reveals a complex state of relationships' (Harry Levin, *James Joyce*, p. 28).

The first of these numbered 'epiphanies' has particular interest for our reading of the National Library episode in *Ulysses*. It reads as follows: '(Dublin: in the National Library). *Skeffington* – I was sorry to hear of the death of your brother...sorry we didn't know in time...to have been at the funeral...*Joyce* – O, he was very young...a boy....*Skeffington* – Still....it hurts....'

It is not clear to what extent Joyce's notion of epiphany ultimately conflates the Thomistic *whatness/quidditas* of radiance with the more Scotist *thisness/haecceitas*. For if radiance/*claritas* is properly speaking a feature of art, epiphany – like *haecceity* – is also available, it seems, to non-aesthetic sensible experience. This latter and more generic sense of epiphany is likely to have its source in what Oliver St John Gogarty surmises to be an insight imparted by Joyce's teacher, the Jesuit Father Darlington, to the effect that epiphany refers to 'any shining forth of the mind' by which one 'gives oneself away' (*As I was Going Down Sakeville Street*, Reynal and Hitchcok, New York, 1937, pp. 293 f). But it also appears to derive from a more ontological use of the term in Joyce's early Notebooks to refer, not to art or literature per se, but to 'moments of spiritual life' when the soul of the commonest object reveals itself by some trivial attitude or gesture, discloses its secret, 'gives itself away' (Joseph Prescott notes in 'James Joyce's Epiphanies', *Modern Language Notes*, 64, May 1949, p. 436. Cited and commented, Noon, op.cit. p. 70). It may even be the case that Joyce translates the more Thomist interpretation of *claritas* in *Stephen Hero* and the *Portrait* (qua universal form) into a more Scotist interpretation in *Ulysses* (qua individual form). For Stephen in the early works - *Stephen Hero* and *The Portrait* – it may be said that 'not Being but the Beautiful had been the Absolute' (Noon, p. 68). But as we move into *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake*, it appears that Stephen is leaving the aestheticism of Mallarmé, Pater and the French symbolists behind him in favor of a more ontological experience of art as inextricably connected to the sensible phenomena of the everyday, that is, radiance in contact with the 'thisness' of things. So that if the early Joyce's understanding of epiphany seems to change back and forth between art and experience, the mature Joyce seems to locate it firmly in the 'relation' between the two, a relation which he increasingly understands in terms of the transfigurative power of language. As William Noon observes: 'The poet, the literary artist, is the manipulator par excellence of the symbol, or metaphorical signs; he is the craftsman of the phantasmata, the contriver of the meditative verbal image that suggests, reveals, 'epiphanises'....The Joycean epiphany in literature may be described as a formulation through metaphor or symbol of some luminous aspect of individual human experience, some highly significant facet of most intimate and personal reality, some particularly radiant point to the meaning of existence'. We may thus speak of 'Joyce's effort to find vital symbols at the verbal level, capable of interpreting the ineffable epiphanies of experience, and of making these 'sudden spiritual manifestations' permanently available through words for the apprehension of other minds'(p. 70). The basic genesis of Joyce's notion of epiphany is construed by Noon accordingly in terms of a 'shift as to the location of radiance (*claritas*), from the actual experience of the spectator in life to the verbal act or construct that imaginatively re-presents this experience in the symbols of language, re-enacts it through illuminating images for the contemplation of the imaginative mind'(p. 77). One might rephrase this in more hermeneutic terms to say that the *prefigurative* epiphany of lived experience passes through the *configurative* epiphany of the text before reaching the

refigurative epiphany of the reader. In short, epiphany is a triadic movement from life to text back to life again, amplified and enriched by the full arc of hermeneutic transfiguration.

iii

Merleau-Ponty offers a suggestive gloss on the phenomenon of epiphanic perception in the *Phenomenology of Perception* (Routledge, London, 2002), pp. 246-248. He writes: 'Just as the sacrament not only symbolizes, in sensible species, an operation of Grace, but *is* also the real presence of God, which it causes to occupy a fragment of space and communicates to those who eat of the consecrated bread, provided that they are inwardly prepared, in the same way the sensible has not only a motor and vital significance, but is nothing other than a certain way of being in the world suggested to us from some point in space, and seized and acted upon by our body, provided that it is capable of doing so, so that sensation is literally a form of communion' (p. 246). Merleau-Ponty goes on to elaborate on this Eucharistic power of the sensible as follows: 'I am brought into relation with an external being, whether it be in order to open myself to it or to shut myself off from it. If the qualities radiate around them a certain mode of existence, if they have the power to cast a spell and what we called just now a sacramental value, this is because the sentient subject does not posit them as objects, but enters into a sympathetic relation with them, makes them his own and finds in them his momentary law' (p. 248). I am grateful to my colleague at Boston College, John Manoussakis, for bringing this passage to my attention.

iv

Gilles Deleuze makes the point in *Proust and Signs* (London, Athlone Press, 2000) that Proust's epiphanic experience of 'essences' requires the 'style' of art and literature to be brought to expression. Proust speaks here of 'a qualitative difference in the way that the world looks to us, a difference that, if there were no such thing as art, would remain the eternal secret of each man' (*In Search of Lost Time*, trans. Moncrieff and Kilmartin, Vintage, 2000 Vol III, 895). Deleuze refers to a 'final quality at the heart of the subject' due to the fact that the essence 'implicates, envelops, wraps itself up in the subject' (*Proust and Signs*, p. 43) and so doing constitutes the unique subjectivity of the individual. In short, essences may be said to individualise by being caught or inscribed in subjects in what Proust referred to as a 'divine capture' (Vol. I, 350). The epiphany of essence is also described by Proust as a 'perpetual recreation of the primordial elements of nature' (vol 1, 906), implying that the essence retrieves the birth of time itself at the beginning of time. Invoking the Neoplatonic idea of *complication* - referring to an original enveloping of the many in the One prior to the unfolding of time (*explicatio*), Deleuze suggests that it is to this original timeless time, complicated within essence and revealed to the artist, that Proust points when he writes of 'time regained'. And, one might add, it also has echoes of Leibniz' view that each created monad represents the whole created world. Is this not close to what Proust is getting at when he writes of 'Combray and its surrounding world taking shape and solidity out of a cup of tea' (Vol 1: 51). But in Deleuze's reading of Proust, essence can only recapture this original birth of

the world through the 'style' of art – expressing that 'continuous and refracted birth', that 'birth regained' in a substance (words, colors, sound) rendered adequate (Deleuze, p. 46).

I think this can be linked with Walter Benjamin's suggestion that Proust's involuntary memory is 'closer to forgetting than what is usually called memory', for it is only when we can forget conventional time that we are open to the capture or recall of originary timeless time. Following Proust's hint that 'the only true pleasures are the one's we have lost' (Vol 6, p.222), Benjamin defines the root of Proust's 'elegiac happiness' in terms of 'the eternal repetition, the eternal restoration of the original, the first happiness' which occurs in literature (p. 200). Benjamin, like Deleuze, argues that the Proustian revelation of essences – which I call epiphany – is only available through the mediation of literature. Indeed Benjamin goes so far as to claim that 'the image of Proust is the highest physiognomic expression which the irresistibly growing discrepancy between life and literature was able to assume' ('The Image of Proust' in *Illuminations*, Pimlico, London, 1999, p. 197). Proust's use of literary metaphor extended the usual understanding of this trope to mean not just one thing standing for another – a notion deconstructed by Paul De Man's famous reading of Proust – but one thing standing for the world. Or as Benjamin put it, 'an experienced event is finite' but an involuntarily 'remembered event is infinite because it is only a key to everything that happened before and after it' ('The Image of Proust', p. 198). Commenting on the final meeting between Marcel and Mlle de Saint-Loup – described by Proust in terms of the 'star-shaped crossroads' image – Thomas Gunn writes: 'Thus the metaphoric, and expressive universe is created, which...combines unity and diversity and every element is able to express any other. It is only in remembering and writing that metonymy is transmuted into metaphor. However, this is no longer a metaphor that aims to exclude contingency and metonymy but a metaphor constituted entirely by chance but raised to the level of metaphor with the potential to express the whole world' ('On Proust's Spiritual Exercises', Seminar Paper, UCD, March 2005). By contrast, my own reading of epiphany as a bridge between literature and life follows the more hermeneutic reading of Paul Ricoeur in *Time and Narrative* vol 2, University of Chicago Press, 1985 and Julia Kristeva in *Time and Sense*, Columbia UP, New York, 1996. As Ricoeur puts it, Marcel's 'decision to write has the capacity to transpose the extra-temporal character of the original vision into the temporality of the resurrection of time lost' (p. 145), and so doing it opens up a return journey to the life of the reader, refigured by the text towards new possibilities of being in the lived world. The reading of the text invites the reader to repeat the 'spiritual exercises' performed by the narrator in and through the text, so that 'the process of composition, of configuration is not completed in the text but in the reader and under this condition makes possible the reconfiguration of life by narrative' (Ricoeur, 'Life in Quest of Narrative' in *On Paul Ricoeur*, ed David Wood, Routledge, 1991, p. 26. I am grateful to my UCD graduate students, Declan Sheerin and Thomas Gunn, for bringing these and other illuminating points on Proust to my attention.

In the final volume of the novel, *Time Regained*, Françoise becomes the model for writing the novel, as seamstress and cook. The narrator now confesses, 'I should work beside her almost as she worked herself...I should construct my book...like a dress' (vol 6, 432). Françoise is acknowledged as the 'Michaelangelo of our kitchen' (vol 2, 33) and remembered to be like Giotto's Charity in her being as well as her appearance (*pace* Swann) (vol 1, p. 95). Replacing thus the endless litany of elusive metonymic muses, from Maman and Ghilberte to Mlle de Guermantes and Albertine, Françoise reemerges in the final volume as an anti-muse of the everyday microcosm. Curiously it is the very qualities of patient craft and quotidian endurance that Benjamin celebrates in his famous concluding image of Proust – 'for the second time there rose a scaffold on which the artist, his head thrown back, painted the creation on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel: the sickbed on which Marcel Proust consecrates the countless pages which he covered with his handwriting...to the creation of his microcosm' (p. 210). And it is also Benjamin who could say – whether thinking of the seamstress Françoise or not – that 'the eternal is in any case far more the ruffle on a dress than some idea' (*The Arcades Project*, Harvard University Press, London, 1999, p. 69). If Françoise is indeed Marcel's ultimate guide, it is perhaps no accident that the novel becomes fragmented in a number of different directions in *Time Regained* just when it seemed it would reach closure and become whole. The book remains open as to whether Marcel's novel is *In Search of Lost Time* or whether he continued to put his 'spiritual exercises' and literary conversions into practice. That is for the reader to decide. Indeed, it is curious how each great reading of Proust – by such thinkers as Deleuze, Levinas, Ricoeur, Benjamin, De Man, Kristeva, Nussbaum, Rorty, Murdoch, Girard etc – manages in almost every case to translate the novel into their own reading! The ultimate definition, perhaps, of an 'open text'.