Many Joyce scholars have been engaged in revealing the relationship between the "organic inter-relationships" and the patterns of revelation in his works, in discovering how the creative potentialities of his technique germinated in Stephen Hero through Dubliners and A Portrait and culminated in the larger works of Ulysses and Finnegans Wake. It is generally agreed that his writings are consistent in pursuing this germinal concept so as to result in the later amplification into a full-fledged fictional method, especially in scrupulously structuring micronically fragmented details into meaningful macrocosmic patterns.

Despite the fact that the concept of epiphany in Stephen Hero has been said to be Joyce's "major and most startling contribution" to contemporary critical terminology (Spencer, 1955, pp.16-17), the term seems submerged and completely disappears in Joyce's later writings. It will probably remain only a matter of speculation as to why Joyce later refrained from using the term. Whatever the cause might have been, the concept is evidently developed into a fictional method in Joycean canon and in the general run of modern and contemporary literature as well.

Joyce's epiphany is a term that calls for careful definition. I have elsewhere explored its significance, focusing on some of its parallels, Western as well as Eastern. A working definitions I have formulated is that "epiphany" refers to the act of manifestation of an ineffable spiritual essence at an "epiphanic moment" through the focusing of apprehending eye on some observable phenomena. It follows, therefore, that such moments occur only when the "the gropings of a spiritual eye" chance to focus on some "object" or situation when it shows forth an esthetic or spiritual force. The luminous moment must be the moment when both a divine being shows itself forth in its earthly form, and the observer's imaginative faculty finds its understanding in the symbolic form of the object or situation. In other words, epiphany can only result from a dual commitment of the mind and the object or situation at the epiphanic moment.

In the following, I will try to show that what is categorically called epiphany may actually be at least three kinds on three different levels, developing from a germinal kind, to a technical kind, and finally to the kind that establishes an esthetic link of communication among author, text, and reader. From the viewpoint of literature as system and as a means of vital communication, it is no exaggeration to say that this esthetical link is what makes literature as well as other arts essentially vital cultural concerns. It will also be demonstrated that instead of merely transmitting knowledge or establishing communication, epiphanies frequently defeat the viewers' expectations, unsettling their complacency, or deautomatizing the process of reading or interpretation.

To begin with, we should note that in Joyce's passages related to epiphany or Stephen's esthetic theory in Stephen Hero, the word "reader" is conspicuously absent. What we see instead is "the spiritual eye" of a viewer in the former, and "artist" in the latter (SH, 1963, p. 211-13). Joyce probably assumed the reader's role in the process of epiphany to be the same as the artist's. Given a successful patterning, both artist and reader as sensitive observers may be expected to reach forth with his vision to "epiphaniase," or to apprehend the transcendental signification of, the object or situation.

In practice, however, although the term "epiphany" primarily means manifestation
or showing forth, what is revealed may cause different perceptions of the viewer. It may even fail to attract any attention if the viewer is not attuned to the situation as one is tuned on to a radio signal. The achievement of an epiphany, after all, may not be as simple as the apprehension of an object, which "After the analysis which discovers the second quality [i.e., consonantia, the first quality being integritas] the mind makes the only logically possible synthesis and discovers the third quality" of claritas or quidditas (SH, 1963, p.213). If we concur that epiphany involves more faculty than just the capacity of making logical synthesis, it follows that different audience may respond to it in somewhat various ways or may even fail to respond to it at all.

In connection with the role of the reader in Joyce's epiphanic method, it is important to distinguish at least three kinds of epiphanies. First, a writer's initial epiphany, which is raw experience unrecorded or faithfully recorded. Secondly, the formalized or artistic epiphany perceived by the characters and/or presented to the reader for his contemplation. And finally the esthetic epiphany, or the reader's response to the epiphanic situation in the text. We should have noted that the categorization above largely corresponds to the author's intention, the formalized text, and the reader's response to the text.

We may maintain that a writer's initial epiphany may be considered as an epiphany by others only to the extent that it is formalized. What the author actually intended the epiphany to reveal is usually no longer ascertainable by the reader. If the artist "remains invisible, refined out of existence, indifferent, paring his fingernails" (P, 1966, p.215), and if appropriate clues are missing, even a faithfully recorded epiphany may prove enigmatic or even fail to arouse response as such in other viewers. Examples of ineffective epiphanies can be found in Joyce's own Epiphanies, a collection of notes he jotted down in preparation for his Dubliners and later published by U of Buffalo in 1956, but none of them are actually used in the book of short stories (Beja in Bowen & Carens, 1984, p. 712-13).

In comparison with his Ulysses or Finnegans Wake, Joyce's Dubliners appears to be elementary, and yet it may actually pose formidable difficulty to readers who are accustomed to sensational plots and negligent of minor details. An input of background knowledge of Joyce's method, especially his concept of epiphany, will certainly equip them for better appreciation. However, we need to understand that a Joycean epiphany can be either a minor or major one; it can be a technical device that shows one or more characters' sudden awareness, or one that involves the reader's apprehension of the overall significance of the work. This apprehension is the passport for the reader's entry into Joyce's fictional world.

In the following we may take some stories in Dubliners as examples to illustrate how Joyce's realism is coupled with epiphanies that achieves transcendent spiritual revelations by presenting mean, sluggish matters of the mundane world. At the same time, we shall also see how different kinds of epiphany may be found in Joyce's practice of the concept and examine the reader's role in achieving Joyce's epiphanies.

Joyce first tried his hand in the art of fiction in writing the fifteen stories that comprise Dubliners. This book turned out to be more of an important beginning chapter in Joyce's development as an artist than a chapter in delineating the moral
history of his society. Although for his personal reason, Joyce exiled himself from Dublin soon after he decided to devote his life to a creative career, Joyce wrote constantly on Dublin, turning the city into a microcosm through which he saw the larger world. His central theme of paralysis is revealed to the readers through a methodic representation of various aspects of Dubliners' life.

Readers, scholars, and critics have been challenged by its "style of scrupulous meanness" (Ellmann, 1967, p.134), its often fragmented details, and its seemingly endless layers of meanings. Apparently disconnected, the stories in Dubliners have been nevertheless found to be tightly and integrally related. Most critics agree that there is a definite structure to the sequence, which moves from childhood to maturity, broadening from small private circles to the public aspects of life--social, political, and religious--and finally ending with a contemplative notes on death. Even the arrangement of the Dubliners' moral-religious ideas has been found to conform to the usual order in the Christian tradition. The first three stories reveal the theological virtues--faith, hope, love; the fourth through the eleventh stories reveal the seven deadly sins--pride, covetousness, lust, envy, anger, gluttony, and sloth; and the twelfth through the fourteenth the subversion of the cardinal virtues--justice, temperance, and prudence. In the fifteenth and last story, no virtue or sin is given (Ghiselin in Beja, 1994, p.108), and yet we may see the sins of pride and lust melting into the virtues of temperance and love.

Furthermore, an examination of Dubliners shows that the manifestation essential to epiphany results from a variety of causes. Although most stories cannot be rigidly classified into a single cause, we may still note that epiphanies are presented through (1) Speech: as in "The Sisters," and "Grace"; (2) Eye: as in "Araby," "Eveline," "A Little Cloud," and "Clay"; (3) Objects, events, or situations: as in "Two Gallants," "After the Race," "The Boarding House," and "Ivy Day in the Committee Room"; (4) Memorable phases of the mind: as in "Araby," "An Encounter," and "The Dead"; (5) Moments of self recognition: as in "Araby," "An Encounter," "Eveline," and "A Painful Case"; and (6) Moments of dramatic irony: as in "Counterparts" and "A Mother." It is difficult and sometimes simply insignificant to try to make a clear-cut classification of the causes. Each of the stories may have a combination of these causes.

Though the action of each story is remarkably slow and sometimes almost entirely lacking in plot, the story often moves toward revealing the Dubliners' frustration and defeats in their various phases of life. Although Joyce might not have fully achieved what he had planned, the central theme of paralysis nevertheless clearly runs through the book. Goldberg, therefore, remarks summarily that Dubliners is a "dispassionate, morally realistic account of modern life, Joyce's discovery of his lifelong attitude to his lifelong subject" (Goldberg in Garrett, 1968, p.88). Some critics have suggested that it is the term "epiphany" that gives us the most profitable way of approaching Joyce's method and works. Indeed, we may not be too far wrong to say that it is the idea of epiphany that motivated Joyce to conceive the structure of Dubliners.

An earmark of Joyce's epiphany is that it is consciously employed as a fictional method to establish the communication from author and text to the reader so as to achieve a peculiar, aesthetic understanding. Epiphany may be couched in a very
Insignificant inert matter or insipid situation that it may not fit in the category of a symbol at all. In Joyce's words, it is a "triviality," yet it may lead to "a sudden spiritual manifestation, whether in the vulgarity of speech or of gesture or in a memorable phase of the mind itself" (SH 1963, p.188). To the sensitive reader, the trivial or vulgar are frequently metamorphosed to the momentously spiritual; the hidden, oblique, absent are suddenly revealed to be greater expression and presence (Ellmann, 1974, p.27-28; Riquelme, 1990, p.124).

Importance as it is, the concept of epiphany should not propel the reader to "hunt" for epiphanies, which after all, should illumine the reader in an aesthetic contemplation. The argument as to whether epiphany is "a key to the labyrinth of Joyce's work," or merely "a harmless pastime and ought probably to be condoned, like symbol-hunting, archetype-hunting, Scrabble and other intellectual recreations" is an interesting one (Scholes, 1992, p. 60). One way to arbitrate these contradictory attitudes probably lies in distinguishing kinds of epiphany. In his republished 1964-article, Scholes is still nursing the idea that people hunt for epiphanies. Yet, if an epiphany is an achieved one (what we have called esthetic epiphany), it is there to be seen as such by the readers. Such an epiphany may be likened to the meaningful figure suddenly emerging to the roving eyes of the viewer after he has gazed on a random dot diagram intently for a while. It is there for a careful observer to see.

Of the three kinds of epiphany mentioned above, therefore, we should concern ourselves chiefly with the second and third kinds, i.e., the artistic and esthetic epiphanies. In a work involving artistic epiphany, we see the author's manipulation of details --images, speeches, gestures, situations, etc.--that are calculated to trigger the viewers or characters in the story. Epiphany though it is to the characters in the story, whether it is perceived by the reader as an epiphany and one of the same import, is another matter.

For example, Little Chandler in "Little Cloud" realizes that, through his marriage, he has become a prisoner for life. He has wanted to escape from his little house and to live bravely like his friend Gallagher. But when he returns to his dull and loveless home, he finds something mean in his wife's face, the furniture which needs to be paid for and the crying baby, it dawns on him: "It was useless. He couldn't read. He couldn't do anything. The wailing of the child pierced the drum of his ear. It was useless, useless! He was a prisoner for life" (D 1991, p.95). This is an epiphany for Little Chandler, but can be one of similar import only when the reader can place himself in the same context and perspective. In the same vein is the epiphany in "Araby." The boy's anguish over his failed attempt to bring some precious gift back for the girl he adores is presented in this way: "Gazing up into the darkness I saw myself as a creature driven and derided by vanity; and my eyes burned with anguish and anger" (D, 1991, p.46). The reader will sympathize with his painful disappointment, but to what extent it will be perceived as "vanity" is another matter. More probably, the reader's thinking will be led to the symbolical implication of profanation of the sacred (as seen in the images of the "chalice" and "shrill litanies") or the impossibility of adequately representing the sacred in the heart in a mundane world.

Peterson's discussion of what is termed artistic epiphany is useful. He
distinguishes epiphany in a story into one that heightens the awareness of the characters and the other that illuminates the situation for the reader's understanding (Peterson, 1992, p.25). The heightening and illuminating are of course achieved by revealing covered-up meanings through some trivial speech, gesture, or incident. Beja has noted that with this apparently realistic, but actually very subtle, means, Joyce generally gets rid of unnecessary explanation: meanings become apparent through suggestive details in a dramatic situation (Beja, 1971, p.85).

What can be intriguing and artistically significant is the discrepancy that we may find between the epiphany apparently perceived by the characters and that a reader realizes. Conceivably the difference of viewpoints and the distance of apprehension between the characters in the story and the reader often result in a dramatic irony that heightens the reader's pleasure of discovery and understanding. The suggestive details presented without any overt explanation are often those that "impede" or block the automatized process of reading. In Russian formalists' ideas, they "deautomatize" or "defamiliarize" the reader's perception so as to jolt him into a sudden awareness (Jefferson, 1986, p.27). "Counterparts" exemplifies this kind of epiphany. Farrington, having been frustrated and humiliated, loathes the very moment of arriving home and beats his son Tom for letting the fire go out. The boy cries and says that he will say a Hail Mary for his father if his father does not beat him. The boy's desperate crying and offering to pray for the father may serve only to arrest the bullying hand and relent his anger. To the reader, it reveals ironically a bleak scene of an Irish homestead in whose moral failure religious blessings become only a give-and-take in a warped parent-child relationship.

Finally, in the esthetic epiphany, we see how an artist's use of epiphany effectively links author, work, and reader in a chain of communication. As some critics have already noted, Joyce's epiphany is often meant for the reader, rather than for the character (Beja, 1971, p.81; Garrett, 1968, p.14). Through this linking, the reader may not only appreciate what is presented in the visible, but "go beyond them to their meaning which is still unuttered" or "hidden" (Bolt, 1992, p.37). Joyce's stories become metanarratives in which what is revealed and perfectly apparent to a careful and informed reader may be typically lost on the characters (Leonard, 1993, p.2).

"Two Gallants," for instance, presents a dramatic irony resulting from the distance of apprehension between the characters in the story and the reader. The small gold coin (an object) which Corley receives from the girl and shows to Lenehan (a gesture) serves as a "symbol of ransom" and constitutes an epiphany. It reveals to the reader that these two young men's lives are empty, sordid, even parasitic. The title itself forms part of the epiphany because ironically, neither Corley nor Lenehan is really a gallant.

What makes literature different from ordinary linguistic communication is that the former has more connotative than denotative meaning. The author as sender of the message usually expects his addressee or reader to read with a fuller participation of his imaginative faculty. While reading a story, the reader produces the "configurative meaning" by constant observation and inference and experiences "a continuous interplay between 'deductive' and 'inductive' operations" (Iser, 1978, p.52, 58). Iser's notion is very much the same.
as the educational reading theory of the interaction of top down and bottom up process while a reader is speculating about textual meaning.

We can agree with Ryf that we do not have to assume, and should not care about, the writer's meanings in the process of reading. To Iser the meaning is no longer independent, objective reality; it is something that has to be formulated by the reader (Iser, 1978, p.46). Jacques Lacan (in Jefferson and Robey, 1986, p.16) also asserts that "it is not just the author of a work who determines its meaning, but that the reader plays a crucial part in the construction of that meaning." This is particularly true of reading Dubliners stories which may present multiple, competing discourses, none of which clearly dominates the others. Here we may tentatively conclude with Werner's suggestion that, when reading Dubliners, "a reader should subvert all attempts to establish a fixed reading, including those intended by Joyce" (Werner, 1988, p.19).

Moreover, in the reading process we frequently find that there are some vacant spaces or gaps in the text which need to be filled up. These spaces or gaps are offered to the reader as pauses in which to reflect (Iser, 1978, p.52). The spaces invite the reader to enter into the process of reading and to fill them up with some things from his imagination so as to construct the meaning of the story. As Iser has noted, "Social communication arise out of the fact that people cannot experience how others experience them ... but the gaps in turn arise out of the inexperienceability and, consequently, function as a basic inducement to communication" (Iser, 1980, p.109). In his Tristram Shandy Laurence Sterne remarks that an author pays respect to the reader's understanding by leaving him as well as the author himself something to imagine (Iser, 1978, p.275). Much like telegraphese, an epiphany only adumbrates the situation and much is left for the flight of the reader's imagination. Much like the open space in a typical oriental painting also, epiphany as a fictional device foregrounds the spaces to engage both author and reader (viewer) in a creative game.

The interaction between speaker and listener and between text and reader occurs in almost every communicative situation. Needless to say, however, that it is with an epiphany or any situation in which the flow of the text or speech is "impeded" or "deautomatized" that this interaction is intensified. In this connection, William Ray affirms the intersubjectivity of author and reader by stating that "Writing can only occur because it bears within itself the possibility of reading, and vice-versa," and that "any attempt to isolate one intention will only reveal the other" (Ray, 1984, p.15-16). By the same token, Werner contends that "the term epiphany has no static meaning and that Joyce uses the epiphany as a way of engaging the ongoing process of adjustment between language and perception" (Werner, 1988, p.43). If we take Werner's view of Joyce as "a writer of process, rather than a creator of static masterworkers" (Werner, 1988, p.22), we certainly see the important role a reader plays in reading Dubliners.

These gaps can be either spacial or temporal, qualitative or quantitative. And any case may result in the difference in interpretive perspective. Werner remarks perceptively: "On occasion, different characters experiences at different points in space and/or time. The epiphany perceived by narrator or reader may result from the juxtaposition of various characters' epiphanies" (Werner, 1988 p.52). In other words, epiphanies depend on both the events that frame the mundane gesture and the
perceptions of the observer. In considering the two kinds--artistic and esthetic--epiphanies, it is important to bear in mind that the two converge and interact to effect a change in the nature of the epiphany both qualitatively and quantitatively.

This last point can be further explained by the phenomenological theory of art: one must take into account the actual text as well as the actions involved in responding to the text. The reader uses the various interpretive perspectives he/she observes and deduces from the text to relate what is known to the unknown. In lifting the degree of decidability in the text, the reader keeps in mind what is present in the text along with what emerges from his imagination to complete his interpretation or luminous understanding. Qualitatively speaking, therefore, the significance perceived by different readers differs from the author's meaning in the text because of their different perspectives of interpretation. The difference or disparity forms the gap that invites the reader's creative participation in his reading.

This does not mean, however, that the reader is entirely at liberty to willfully create a significance that runs contrary to what he perceives to be the textual meaning. In his Validity in Interpretation E. D. Hirsch distinguishes the "significance" that the reader derives from the textual "meaning" which is said to be "intended" by the author (Hirsch, 1967, p.8). It is difficult, however, to believe that the author's intention is already transfixed and therefore transparently there in the text. In his The Aims of Interpretation he reaffirms that "a text can be interpreted from a perspective different from the original author's" (Bloom, 1988, p.47). Though the textual meaning cannot be separated from authorial intention, it cannot really be considered as fixed or immovable because different readers (presumably including the author himself at a later time of creation) respond to the text and ascribe varied significance to it from their own historical-cultural perspectives.

The reader of "The Sisters" encounters several barriers to understanding: the text is full of elliptical language filtered through the consciousness of a bewildered youth who broods over the deceased Father Flynn and the meaning of their friendship (Bloom, 1988, p.40). Toward the end of the story, Father Flynn is seen laughing to himself in his confession-box, which like a coffin finally contains him lying with "an idle chalice on his breast" (D, 1991, p.18). With Eliza's elliptical narration of Father Flynn's end of life, that "there was something gone wrong with him," the reader will agree, but in Herring's words, "the reader must supply the missing pieces for the puzzle to be complete" (in Reynolds, 1993, p.77). The reader has to imagine and supply what is not there. The unspoken implications will naturally be the central theme of paralysis.

In "The Dead" we see that Gabriel Conroy experiences some minor epiphanies in being snubbed by the maid at her aunt's doorway, in rethinking his pompous speech at his aunts' party in seeing his wife Gretta listening to some distant music, in being ridiculed as a West Briton by Miss Ivors, and in learning that he has Michael Furey as the rival of his love. Finally, the major epiphany occurs, to both Gabriel and the reader, when Gabriel casts his eyes outside toward the silent, all-enfolding snow. The reader understands that Gabriel is frustrated by the fact that his "impetuous desire" towards his wife is balked by her recollections of the dead young boy. Yet, the reader is never told what exactly is in his mind when "his soul swooned slowly as he heard the snow falling faintly through the universe and faintly falling, like the descent of their last end, upon
The poetic flow of the language, like the snow that covers up everything, seems to hide the gaps that reader is supposed to fill in silently.

The final closing paragraph, shifting from the falling snow to the protagonist's thinking about the dead (from kinetic to static), reaches its climax and achieves the ultimate catching stasis. This final scene very aptly illustrates how the reader receives an epiphany by participating in its process. As readers we join in our imagination the characters in *Dubliners* marching toward "the lonely churchyard on the hill where Michael Furey lay buried" (D, 1991, p.242). We may sense that this final epiphany of "The Dead" is more than the epiphany of Gabriel Conroy. Involving the reader's participation with his perspective gained from his reading up to the end, this epiphany also serves as the reader's epiphany of the entire book.

It is clear that behind the idea of epiphany lies an important esthetic conception which is characteristic of oriental art. This is a kind of restraint from explicit explanation on the artist's part and efforts required of the reader to participate in the discovery. The reticence and gaps arise from the sense that experience is essentially incommunicable. Usually, however, what is expressed in the text maintains an esthetic balance with what is absent so that the reader is induced to set his imagination in motion. Seen in this way, the so-called "gaps" ironically bridges author, text, reader in a satisfying link of communication. If Robert Scholes had absorbed some of the reticent character of oriental culture, especially Zenism, he might have had a different notion about Joyce's use of epiphany.

To sum up, a good work should provide the reader endless suggestions and associations rather than explicit explanations. Thus the reader can use his own mind, his critical intelligence and his own emotion so as to share—and even go beyond—the experience of the writer. Like an oriental scroll painting, the fifteen stories of *Dubliners* unfold before us piece by piece just as one corner of the painting reveals a landscape or event and leaves the rest to our imagination. The whole collection then reveals the mundane and spiritual life of Dublin as an integrated whole. We may have had the conception and known its quality, but it is Joyce who gives life to the term. Although the term is absent from *A Portrait*, the concept is there in all of Joyce's works all the same. It outlines Joyce's development as an artist and looms large in our appreciation of his art.
References


