

JOYCE: BETWEEN ARISTOTLE AND AQUINAS

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A comprehensive history of aesthetic theories proffered by literary writers and artists in general has not yet been written, perhaps also because—in my opinion—it would (with a few notable and rare exceptions, some of which have already been recorded) yield much disappointment.

In the case of James Joyce, a section of his *Critical Writings*¹ has been given the title of 'Aesthetics', and considerable scholarship has been devoted to the study of the writer's ideas on the subject. Fr. Noon's *Joyce and Aquinas*,² of 1957, is a substantial and elaborate piece of generous scholarship that Joyce's musings may perhaps not entirely deserve. In more recent years, Jacques Aubert has revisited the issue. *The Aesthetics of Chaosmos*,³ by Umberto Eco—no less generous than Noon—is really, and despite its title, an exploration of the poetic strategies, rhetorical devices and linguistic mechanisms spectacularly deployed by the Irish writer. Eco's main purpose was to illustrate the new precepts of avant-garde poetics, as instanced in the writings of Joyce, and to show—by contrast and analogy, at once—the *coincidentia oppositorum* between medieval aesthetics and avant-garde poetics. As he stated in the introductory note to the book, "To me Joyce was the node where the Middle Ages and the avant-garde meet, and the present book is the story and the historical-theoretical foundation of such a paradoxical meeting." (The first version of the mentioned book appeared as an extended essay in *Opera Aperta*, which was mainly concerned with avant-garde poetics, in general.)⁴

A brief synopsis of Eco's thought-provoking interpretation, which unravels the hidden machinations of Joyce's literary genius, could help us appreciate the significance, ambition and magnitude of Joyce's project.

In the early writings—*Stephen Hero*, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*,⁵ and *Dubliners*—Eco traces, among the numerous influences upon the young artist, three main lines: the presence of Aquinas and medieval aesthetics; the response to Ibsen's call for closer ties between art and

life; and the influence of the symbolist poets: their aesthetic ideal of a life devoted to art and of art as a substitute for life, with their call to answer the deep questions of existence by delving into the mysterious alchemy of language.

The transition from Scholasticism to Symbolism is perhaps best exemplified by Joyce's concept of *epiphany*: a way of letting reality disclose itself and arrest our imagination, and a way of defining reality through discourse. Summing up Joyce's intentions, we could agree with him that art does not record nor imitate. It produces epiphanic insights that make the reader seize, in the words of *Stephen Hero*, "the inside true inwardness of reality" across the "sextuple gloria of light actually retained."⁶

Eco remarks that:

with this, Joyce again approaches the Thomist position in which the beautiful object would be that '*in cuius aspectu seu cognitione quietetur appetitus*', and the fullness of aesthetic perception would consist in a sort of *pax*, a contemplative gratification. This *pax* can be easily identified with the concept of aesthetic 'stasis', mentioned in the *Paris Notebook*, in which Joyce resolves the Aristotelian idea of 'catharsis'.⁷

(But, then, by an almost imperceptible change of tune and a quick twist of the pen, the Irish magician claimed that comedy is superior to tragedy because, as he claimed to understand, comedy yields 'rest', while tragedy leaves us prey to 'desire' and 'loathing'.)

With *Ulysses*, Joyce moved on to new strategies and a more ambitious project. *Dubliners* was conceived as a 'moral history' of Ireland, told in a realistic tone and a literal key. *Ulysses*, instead, is constructed as a vast metaphor in an allegorical tone and key. As he explained in one of his *Letters*:

It [*Ulysses*] is an epic of two races (Israelite-Irish) and at the same time the cycle of the human body as well as a little story of a day (life)... It is also a sort of encyclopaedia. My intention is to transpose the myth *sub specie temporis nostri*. Each adventure (that is, every hour, every organ, every art being interconnected and interrelated in the structural scheme of the whole) should not only condition but even create its own technique.⁸

This extraordinary novel is designed as a self-contained, self-encompassing work: a Work-as-Cosmos.

The conflict that inspired and sustained the early works: a conflict between a world conceived according to traditional (realist? Thomist?) categories and the search for a contemporary sensibility, assumes—in

Ulysses, and later in *Finnegans Wake*—a new form and more spectacular dimensions. Joyce paradoxically superimposes the classical order onto the chaotic world of a new sensibility informed by relativity and uncertainty.⁹ The resulting image of the *Ulysses*-universe stands as a blueprint of contemporary culture and an 'epistemic metaphor' of its time—which is still our time.

I.

According to Eco, *Ulysses* presents the incredible image of a world that amazingly rests on the preserved structure of an old world, accepted for its formal reliability but denied in its substantial value. *Ulysses* constitutes a watershed for contemporary sensibility. It tells the dramatic story of a dissociated consciousness that tries to reintegrate itself, seeking its own 'objective correlative'—as T.S. Eliot, Erich Heller, and Hegel before them, would put it.

An eloquent instance of the quintessential characters of avant-garde poetics, *Ulysses* could be read, formally, as a highly improbable "enormous treatise on quantum physics which paradoxically subdivides its material in the manner of the *Summa Theologiae*, and freely uses concepts and examples from early Greek physics."¹⁰ *Ulysses* is a great modern epic moulded, like Dante's *Commedia*, in the classical mode. Having been called playfully 'the Dante of Dublin' by his fellow students, in later years Joyce vowed to immortalise Dublin, just as Dante had eternalised Florence. He kept his promise and wrote *Ulysses*: harmonious and resonant, albeit in a modern tongue, as the symphonic music of Dante's verse. And certainly as ambitious, in design, as that of the great medieval epic text—and meta-text—of the Florentine divine poet.

Eco on *Finnegans Wake*.

It may seem that *Ulysses* violates the techniques of the novel beyond all limit, but *Finnegans Wake* passes even this limit. It may seem that *Ulysses* demonstrates all the possibilities of language, but *Finnegans Wake* takes language beyond any boundary of communicability. It may seem that *Ulysses* represents the most arduous attempt to give physiognomy to chaos, but *Finnegans Wake* defines itself as *Chaosmos* and *Microchasm*, and constitutes the most terrifying document of formal instability and semantic ambiguity that we possess.¹¹

From the beginning, *Finnegans Wake* announces what it will be—a nocturnal epic of ambiguity and metamorphoses, the myth of a death and a universal rebirth, in which each figure and each word will stand in place of all the others. It will be an epic without clear divisions between the events, so that each event may implicate the others to form an elementary unity that does not exclude the collision and opposition between contraries.¹²

This work—a pun of puns, we may say, and a metaphor of metaphors—is structured circularly, unendingly opening itself onto itself, in a ceaselessly new re-enactment of itself, unendingly folding itself upon itself. A complex icon of the world and of language, a map of nature metamorphosed into culture, *Finnegans Wake* is the ideal book intended for the ideal reader suffering from an ideal insomnia. It is an open work:

For this reason it is a scherzarade (game, 'scherzo', charade, tale of Sheherazade), a *vicocyclometer*, *collideoscope*, *proteiform graph*, *polyhedron of scripture*, *meanderthale* and, finally, a *work of doublecrossing twofold truths and devising tail-words*.¹³

A great epiphany of the cosmic structure resolved into language, *Finnegans Wake*—as exemplary *summa* of avant-garde poetics, and a veritable encyclopaedia of avant-garde poetic strategies—is the poetics of itself. By the same token, it marks the birth of a new type of discourse and narrative: it lends voice to Chaosmos.

Joyce's writings can be understood as a continuous discussion of their own artistic procedures. "*A Portrait* is the story of a young artist who wants to write *A Portrait*; *Ulysses*... is a book which is a model of itself; *Finnegans Wake* is, above all, a complete treatise on its own nature, a continuous definition of 'the Book' as the Ersatz of the universe."¹⁴

This introductory section could be fruitfully brought to an end by highlighting the differences obtaining between the old, classical and medieval, world-order and the emerging new conceptions of reality. For Aristotle and Aquinas—for instance—the universe is a closed, finite, complete, stable, and ordered organism. It is, precisely, a cosmos ruled by rational principles such as the principle of identity, of non-contradiction, of the 'excluded third'. To their mind, the cosmic order unfolds towards an appointed goal, through a chain of causal relations.

The contemporary and modern sensibility, in which Joyce shared and which—at once—he helped to forge, construed an image of the universe imperfect and incomplete, boundless, open-ended and in continuous expansion, unstable and precarious. Reality is, then, seen as constantly threatened with total collapse, also because fundamentally void of any secure *telos*. It is conceived as a 'happening' of a series of random events, prey to relativity and relativism, adrift away from causal links, deserted by the power of rational principles. This is the image of a universe construed as deprived of an ontological core and a stable ground.

The voice of Being has faded away, to let subjectivity, language, endless semiosis, and *différance* speak instead. The artist has to face the challenge of a possible reintegration, by giving birth to 'a terrible beauty'.

Joyce must have been, if faintly and sub-consciously, aware of this when he wrote in *A Portrait*:

—MacAlister, answered Stephen, would call my esthetic theory applied Aquinas. So far as this side of esthetic philosophy extends, Aquinas will carry me all along the line. When we come to the phenomena of artistic conception, artistic gestation, and artistic reproduction I require a new terminology and a new personal experience.¹⁵

II.

The total body of Joyce's fragmentary reflections on matters of beauty, aesthetic experience, poetic strategies, and art (i.e., literature as a dramatic art) deals with the following main issues:

- 1) the autonomy of art;
- 2) the impersonality of the work of art, as a self-contained object;
- 3) the division of art (literature) into three main genres: lyric, epic, dramatic;
- 4) the nature of the aesthetic emotion;
- 5) the criteria for the definition of beauty, which actually turn out to be the criteria for an aesthetic experience;
- 6) the concept of 'epiphany'.

To this list could be added the themes of the vocation of the poet, and the nature of the poetic activity.

I shall focus on points 4, 5, and 6, but I will say a little about the other points. With reference to the autonomy of art, Joyce cleverly invokes the authority of Aquinas to counter the moralistic and pedagogical conception of art held by his university teachers. This way, he smuggles in the current idea of 'art for art's sake', and the aesthete's conviction that 'all art is perfectly useless', as Oscar Wilde would put it. But he does this mainly for polemical reasons. There was no inclination in Joyce—just as in Aquinas and in Aristotle—to side for a purely formalist conception of art. We find in Joyce's voice a distant echo of the age-long distinction between primarily useful and primarily aesthetic arts and crafts.

The idea of the impersonality of the work of art had already been announced by the French symbolists, Mallarmé, Baudelaire, Flaubert, and by Yeats, to mention but a few; and found a new—more systematic—formulation in the writings of T. S. Eliot and Ezra Pound. Joyce left aside any mystical and symbolist overtone and focused on the work as a perfect self-contained organism which—finally—displays its internal structural laws, independent of the personal intentions of the

empirical author. And, so, he could write: "Art... is the human disposition of sensible or intelligible matter for an aesthetic end."¹⁶

This may sound a fairly accurate paraphrase of Aquinas's definition of art as 'recta ratio factibilium' or 'ratio recta aliquorum faciendorum'. But while the medieval definition—which repeats classical formulations—refers to art in general, any kind of human production, Joyce adds "for an aesthetic end", thus pointing to our modern idea of fine art and to its aesthetic autonomy. In all this, "The artist, like the God of creation, remains within or behind or beyond or above his handiwork, invisible, refined out of existence, indifferent, paring his fingernails."¹⁷

The hierarchical division of art—that is, literature—into the lyrical, the epic, the dramatic forms reproduces and echoes Aristotle's and—in more recent times—Hegel's and Schopenhauer's classifications. The definitive influence, however, seems more clearly to have been Lessing, to whose *Laocoon* Joyce refers more often and more explicitly.

Also, this division and progression from the personal and inward voice of lyrical diction to the sound of universal human destiny in drama points to the autonomy and impersonality of art: "By drama I understand the interplay of passions to portray truth."¹⁸ And so, the reason for his putting drama at the very apex of art is that, in his mind, in drama—tragicomedy, I would suggest—the artist, having unearthed that type of truth which is beauty, does more than simply point it out and interpret it to others. In drama, according to Joyce, the artist "fashions that beauty as a thing, a thing among other things, and casts it out upon the world where men's eyes may light upon it."¹⁹ After that, the artist goes back to paring his fingernails...

III.

To deal with the central points mentioned before, we need to briefly consider Thomas Aquinas's central aesthetic tenets.²⁰ Furthermore, to adequately contextualise our presentation, we must focus on two important themes in Aquinas's philosophy: the principle of analogy, and the problem of the transcendental properties of being, as two unavoidable metaphysical presuppositions.

In the medieval Christian world, God was conceived of as the maker and the existential source of everything that there is. Everything was seen to participate, in varying degrees, in the divine perfection of being. For this reason, the multiplicity of different entities in the universe were understood to share their being with one another, regardless of their concrete diversity. This is what the principle of analogy signifies: a participation in a common pool of existence, a universal mutuality

that co-exists with difference. All things in the universe differ from one another, are distinct from one another, and are identical only with themselves; and yet at the same time they mutually point to one another across the vast ocean of being, in so far as they share in the power to be. Beings, we could say, are like siblings: brothers and sisters. Each is different and unique, yet all share in their real, genetically marked, belonging to the same parent/s. (The medieval conception of analogy clearly has nothing to do with the questionable, misconceived, and falsifiable notion of 'family resemblance', as timidly announced by Wittgenstein.)

The principle of analogy took, in the Renaissance, the shape of the new Neo-Platonic and Hermetic idea of a cosmic 'sympathia universalis' and of the 'coincidentia oppositorum', whereby everything loses its identity and becomes confused with everything else in an endless chain of metonymic slipping and sliding. Love supersedes reason. Ecstatic and intuitive enthusiasm takes the place of rational reflection. The principle of analogy, and the exercise of analogical thinking, wherein things retain their separate identity while dialectically communing among themselves, is substituted with the principle of universal confusion and equivocity or univocity, in an endless referral of meaning. (We are, then, led to think that the 'crisis' of modernism, avant-garde, and post-modernism, started a long time ago.)

In so far as being is present in varying degrees in different things, analogy implies a hierarchical structure of the universe: a kind of ladder ascending from inorganic matter, through organic matter, plants, living animals, humans, angelical substances, and finally God. It is in the light of the principle of analogy that we must understand the medieval preoccupation with symbolism in general, and the conviction that everything is fundamentally linked to everything else. The principle of analogy inspired the metaphysical lyricism of a well-known poem by Alain de Lille (*Alanus de/ab Insulis*):

Omnis mundi creatura
 quasi liber et scriptura
 nobis est in speculum;
 nostrae vitae, nostrae mortis,
 nostri status, nostrae sortis
 fidele signaculum.
 Nostrum statum pingit rosa,
 nostri status decens glosa,
 nostrae vitae lectio;
 quae dum primo mane floret,
 defloratus flos effloret
 vespertino senio.²¹

["Every creature of this earth is like a picture or a book; it is a mirror of ourselves. It is a faithful sign of our life and of our death, of our condition and our fate. The rose is a picture, a fitting image of our state, a lesson on our life; for it flowers in early morning, and the fading flower blooms in the evening of age."]

The poem could serve as a manifesto of the medieval sensibility, articulating and celebrating the analogical order of reality, and therefore the possibility of a universal symbolism, albeit rooted in the ontological structure of reality.

The principle of the analogical structure of reality points, in turn, to the other fundamental medieval assumption, encoded in the notion of the transcendental properties of being. This theory, Aristotelian in its provenance, was given its definitive form by Aquinas who applied it to his understanding of beauty. The theory held that being in general—and hence each individual being or thing—is one, true, and good. Being and unity, just like being and truth, and being and goodness, *convertuntur*: they are interchangeable and co-extensive. Unity connotes a thing's identity with itself and distinctness from everything else. Truth means an absence of contradiction, and thus an intelligibility or knowability: an openness to the inquiring mind. Goodness means appetibility, desirability, and therefore the capacity to serve as a goal for the will. Being is unified within itself and distinct from what it is not; it is free from contradiction, and therefore an object of intellection; it is a positive value and the object of will and desire. Everything that is, precisely in so far as it participates in the activity of being, by the same token participates—analogically—in the transcendental properties of being: it is one, true and intelligible, good and desirable.

It has been argued that Aquinas considered beauty to be yet another transcendental property of being.²² From this it would follow that, as Aquinas put it, "There is nothing that does not participate in beauty."²³

Aquinas's reflections on beauty and art were never set forth systematically, but are dispersed through his works in a fragmentary and occasional fashion and in a variety of different contexts. Many are to be found in his commentaries on Aristotle. Others occur in his commentary on the Pseudo-Dionysius's *Divine Names*. Pre-eminently they appear in his *Summa Theologiae*, a mature work in which we find Aquinas's most developed and definitive views on aesthetics, poetics, beauty, and the meaning of art.

Aquinas has two complex definitions of beauty, both of which require further analysis. The first is as follows:

Goodness has to do with appetite/desire [*appetitus*]... Beauty, on the other hand, has to do with the cognitive powers, for we ascribe beauty to things which give us pleasure when they are seen. Thus beauty consists in due proportion, because the senses take delight in things duly proportioned as being similar to themselves—for the senses, and every cognitive power, are a kind of reason. Cognition takes place through assimilation, and assimilation pertains to order, so beauty properly belongs to the realm of formal causes.²⁴

This is a passage of some density, but we can extract from it the core of a definition: *those things are called beautiful which, when seen, grant us pleasure*. It should be noted that this is an objectivist definition of beauty, since the logical subject of the sentence is “things which give pleasure when seen.”

The second definition, in contrast, has a subjectivist flavour, since it focuses upon the experiential side of the equation. When extrapolated from its context, it is as follows: “let that be called beauty, the very apprehension of which pleases.” Here, apprehension is the subject of the sentence and is clearly indicated as the cause of delight. But we must be warned that the subjective experience of apprehension is, more than a psychological reaction, a cognitive and affective experience triggered and justified by the objective structure of beautiful things:

*It is part of the nature of beauty that, in seeing or knowing it, the will and desire [*appetitus*] come to rest. The senses involved in the experience of beauty—sight and hearing—are those particularly involved in cognition. Thus we speak of beautiful sights and beautiful sounds. In the case of the other senses we don't speak of beauty; we don't call tastes and smells beautiful. What the notion of beauty adds to the notion of good is an involvement with the cognitive powers. We call something good when it satisfies the will and desire [*appetitus*]; but we call it beautiful when the simple apprehension [*ipsa apprehensio*: the very apprehension itself] of it gives us pleasure.²⁵*

The central elements in these two definitions are sight or vision (*visio*), and pleasure or delight (*complacentia*), in the first definition; and apprehension or sense-perception (*apprehensio*), and again pleasure or delight (*complacentia*), in the second definition. A detailed analysis of these elements, together with some reference to Aquinas's conception of the human faculties, will bring to light the richness and complexity of the definitions. To begin with, *visio*, in the first definition is refined in the second into the notion of *apprehensio*: sight (*visio*) stands for perception in general, but particularly for the senses of sight and hearing (and not for taste, touch and smell, not if the object of perception is the beau-

tiful). *Visio* refers also to intellectual apprehension, which is a form of cognition. Modern linguistic practice warrants the metaphorical use of the word 'seeing' to signify intellectual grasp and understanding. Thus we talk of 'seeing the point' that Aquinas is making. It is a usage that is entirely consistent with Aristotle's observations and with Western tradition, according to which knowledge is a kind of 'sight', an 'insight' as we say. For Aquinas, moreover, the analogy between sight, sense-perception and intellectual insight does not rest solely on a metaphorical transposition and displacement. For Aquinas sense-experience cannot be separated from cognition, but rather is related to and structured by intellectual experience. (*Ipsa perceptio quaedam intellectio est*). The senses, as he put it, are a kind of reason. He also wrote:

The word seeing or vision indicates [*patet in nomine visionis*] that it refers in the first instance to the activity of the sense of sight. But because of the dignity and certainty of this sense the name is extended, in accordance with linguistic usage, to all cognition by the other senses... and ultimately even to intellectual knowledge.²⁶

The second vital element in the definition of beauty is pleasure or delight (*complacentia* or *delectatio*). Aquinas, as we have already mentioned, holds that in seeing or knowing beauty, "the will and desire (appetitus) come to rest".

Pleasure and delight refer to: 1) the gratification of the senses when confronted with objects that have certain properties, and that we call beautiful; and 2) the mental satisfaction we experience when we have adequately grasped the form or internal structure of a physical object presented to the senses. More importantly, however, pleasure is produced by 3) the satisfaction of 'appetite'. *Appetitus*—like the Greek *órexis*, *epithymia*, *bōulesis*—means both 'desire' and 'will/love' taken jointly. It is the movement of the will to possess what one desires/craves because one judges it to be good. Aquinas says that pleasure comes from the possession of what we love: "The cause of pleasure is love. For everyone takes delight in whatever he possesses and loves."²⁷

We can therefore conclude that, for Aquinas, beautiful things are objects of love and will/desire. They are not only sensuously perceptible and knowable, but also lovable and good. There is goodness in beauty, and so the experience of beauty involves our desires and our will as well as our cognitive faculties.

We hasten to add that Aquinas, following Aristotle, is quite clear about the conceptual distinction between goodness and beauty: goodness is the proper object of the will, while beauty is primarily the proper object of sensation and cognition. However, at the same time,

he identified in the beautiful object the presence of goodness, without which we could not feel the sense of emotional delight, pleasure and well-being that aesthetic experience grants us. As he put it:

Beauty and goodness are the same thing in an object, for both clarity and consonance are contained within the concept of goodness. But they differ conceptually [*ratione*], because beauty adds on to goodness a reference to the knowledge that something is the way it is.²⁸

We are now in a position to reconstruct Aquinas's conception of aesthetic experience. In the presence of beauty, whether natural or artistic, we perceive sensible properties that stimulate and gratify our senses. Sensory experience leads to an intellectual insight into the structure, order and form of the object, so that the intellect is stimulated and gratified in its turn by its intuitive grasp of the form. Anything that is perceived, and whose form is intuitively known, is experienced as desirable, and, as a result, stimulates our emotions also. The harmonious correspondence between the object and our faculties brings it about that our senses, our intellect, and our will are satisfied, and this generates a sense of pleasure and delight: an experience of contemplative rest or stasis.

It is an experience in which all our faculties are active and perfectly harmonised among themselves, just as they are perfectly attuned to the object of contemplation. We experience an intuitive, gratifying unity of all our faculties with all the aspects of an object which exhibits truth, in so far as it is intelligible and open to the intellect; and exhibits goodness, in so far as it is desired by our will and grants delight. The aesthetic experience is a harmonious and unifying experience in which subject and object cannot be separated and distinguished. (As Yeats put it, *How can we know the dancer from the dance?*) That experience of fusion is akin and analogous to the experience of love, both physical and spiritual, and to the experience of deep reflection, prayer, and anticipated beatific vision.

We can now appreciate the claim that Aquinas regarded Beauty as a fourth transcendental property of being and, even more dramatically and spectacularly, that Beauty is the synthesis of the other three transcendentals (Unity, Truth and Goodness). If we were to accept this claim, we would be compelled to hold that everything is beautiful in its own way. This, however, would turn the specifically aesthetic meaning of beauty into a metaphysical category applicable to everything that is. We would be swimming in a metaphysical 'pankalfá'. Aquinas seems to be quite close to this position, which was congenial to the medieval conception of the universe as a beautiful masterpiece issuing from the hands of God, the supreme artist.

Aquinas believed that objects had to possess certain properties in order to be beautiful. He took two of these: proportion and clarity, directly from the Pseudo-Dionysius:

From what Dionysius has written we can gather that the notion of beauty involves both clarity and proportion—for he says that God is called beautiful because He is the cause of consonance and clarity in the universe.²⁹

And elsewhere he wrote:

We call a man beautiful because of his correct proportions in size and shape, and because he has a bright and glowing colour. So it should be accepted in other cases that a thing is called beautiful when it possesses the clarity of its kind, whether spiritual or corporeal, and is constructed in the correct proportions.³⁰

Two things are worth noting in these passages. Firstly, the properties of clarity and proportion are not just material properties, but can be properties of material and non-material entities alike. Aquinas was keenly interested in the nature of material beauty, to a much greater extent than most of his medieval predecessors; but he did not think for a moment that beauty was merely physical. Secondly, both of these passages—just like the two definitions of beauty analysed earlier—emphasise the semantic function of the word 'beauty'. Aquinas seems to be concerned with the meaning of the term, the reasons why we call something beautiful. (In his attention to 'how and why we call things the way we do', Aquinas shows more strongly the Aristotelian influence).

In contemporary philosophy, the distinction—and even separation—between the semantic and the ontological is thought to be pertinent and significant. For Aquinas, the semantic function presupposes and is grounded in the ontological realm. We should not be misled by his manner of writing into thinking that he was a closet sceptic about the objectivity of beauty, and a pragmatist or even a 'family resemblance-ist' and a nominalist.

To the concepts of clarity and proportion, taken from the Pseudo-Dionysius, Aquinas added a third property: integrity. All three properties are defined in a passage from the *Summa Theologiae*:

Three things are necessary for beauty. The first is integrity or perfection; for whatever is defective is therefore ugly. The second is due proportion or consonance. The third is clarity; so that whatever has a bright and clear colour is called beautiful.³¹

- a) *Integrity* or *perfection* signifies the completeness of something. It signifies that an object can be called beautiful provided that it exhibits all the structural and organic elements that its specific nature or essence requires. It cannot be beautiful if it lacks any of its ontologically necessary attributes and elements. A human body is disfigured by the absence or privation of a limb or organ, and is thus imperfect and ugly. Beauty is grounded in ontological completeness and perfection. Obviously, this criterion is particularly and primarily applicable to natural organisms and phenomena, rather than to works of art.
- b) *Proportion* or *harmony* had already been identified as an aesthetic property by the Pythagoreans. The Pythagoreans, however, understood proportion primarily in quantitative and mathematical terms. (For this reason, Plotinus had difficulty with this concept as pertaining to beauty). In Aquinas we find rather a qualitative conception of proportion, which had been adumbrated by Augustine before him. This he called *convenientia*, which means an intrinsic attunement and correspondence, whether in the physical or the spiritual world, a correspondence between inner and outer reality, *appearance and essence, matter and form*.
- c) *Clarity*, finally, was explained in the first instance in terms of bright primary colours (*color nitidus*). And this is scarcely surprising in view of the predominant medieval visual taste, some trace of which can still be witnessed, with spectacular effect, in the vibrant flags, scarves, and costumes at Siena's *palio*, for instance, as in other contemporary medieval pageants, or in the colours of the stained-glass windows of churches and cathedrals, and in Byzantine and Gothic iconography. However, Aquinas also spoke of the clarity and beauty of virtue and, more radically, stated that "the clarity of a glorified body derives from the clarity of the soul".³² In this sense, clarity signifies the shining forth of form or essence in material and physical appearances.

Plato had spoken of beauty as 'the splendour of truth' ('*aletheia*' means precisely revelation and 'epiphany'), Augustine had defined beauty as 'the splendour of order', and Albert the Great had defined it as 'the splendour of form'. Aquinas was aware of his predecessors and, hence, understood clarity as the splendour—the diaphanous luminescence—of an intelligible form shining through matter. Clarity is the self-revelation and the self-transparency of inner truth, in its material embodiment. The splendour of physical and bodily appearances is due to the clarity of the spiritual principle—soul and essence—which

manifests itself in every material body or structured artefact. Beauty is therefore splendour—or luminous revelation and manifestation—of unity, truth, and goodness.

Aquinas's conception of art and the arts was profoundly influenced by Aristotle, and most of his numerous references to art are to be found in his Commentaries on Aristotelian texts, especially the *Physics* and the *Nicomachean Ethics*. There is no evidence that he read, or knew of, Aristotle's *Poetics*, even though partial translations and paraphrases of that work were available during his lifetime. His definition of art, as *recta ratio factibilium* (the rational knowledge and way of how to make things) was, however, entirely conventional in medieval times.

The phrase *recta ratio factibilium* refers to art in the broad sense of all the arts and crafts, all manufacturing and purposeful manipulation of the physical world. It emphasises the role of knowledge and intellect in these processes. "The structure of artifacts," he wrote, "derives from the ideas of their makers, and consists of composition, order and shape".³³ But he also followed Aristotle in connecting art with nature. It is just because art is a rational process that it fits in with the intelligible order of the created world. Aquinas therefore explained Aristotle's claim that art imitates nature in the following way:

Art imitates nature. The reason is that the principle of artistic activity is knowledge.... Natural things can be imitated by art, because, by a certain intellectual principle, all nature is directed to an end, and a work of nature has the character of a work of intelligence: it moves to its certain goal by determinate methods. Thus, art imitates nature in its activity.³⁴

Art imitates nature by deploying the same purposefulness that we can observe at work in the natural world. One significant modification that Aquinas made to this theory is in the phrase "by virtue of a certain intellectual principle". The intellectual principle is God. For Aristotle, the teleological character of nature is just the way nature happens to be, whereas for Aquinas it signifies the creative intellect of the divine creator. For Aquinas, therefore, when art imitates the intelligent order of nature it is exercising an intelligent creativity that bears the mark of its source in God.

Aquinas did not have a clear concept of what we now call fine art. He did reflect from time to time upon representational art, for instance when he wrote, "An image is called beautiful if it represents its object, even an ugly object, perfectly."³⁵ But it should be remembered that whenever Aquinas wrote that art aims to produce arrangement, order

and shape, this also meant that art aims to produce something aesthetically beautiful. All works of art are, like nature itself, signs of the divine. The human artist emulates and resembles the divine artist.

IV

Let us now return to Joyce. And we must note—to begin again—that Joyce's stance with regard to Aristotle and Aquinas is, to put it mildly, ambiguous. Furthermore, his actual knowledge of Aristotle and Aquinas has certainly been exaggerated by most critics. With reference to Aquinas, in particular, Joyce does not seem too clear as to where he precisely stands. In *The Holy Office*, he claims to be "Steeled in the school of the old Aquinas".³⁶ Elsewhere—in *Stephen Hero*³⁷ and *A Portrait*³⁸—he ironically refers to his aesthetic musings as 'applied Aquinas', while explicitly rejecting the premises of Scholasticism (in *Stephen Hero*), and admitting (in *A Portrait*): "I can work on at present by the light of one or two Ideas of Aristotle and Aquinas... I need them only for my own use and guidance until I have done something for myself by their light."³⁹ Finally, Stephen confesses to having read only a garner of slender sentences from Aristotle's poetics and psychology and a *Synopsis Philosophiae Scholasticae ad mentem divi Thomae*. (Valéry Larbaud has recorded Joyce's confession that "il passait plusieurs heures chaque soir à la bibliothèque St. Geneviève lisant Aristote et St. Thomas d'Aquin."⁴⁰)

From his misquotations of Aquinas, in his *Pola Notebook*, we may "infer that Joyce had probably never read directly from the texts of Aquinas",⁴¹ and never extensively anyway, but only indirectly through the mediation of the mentioned compendium—God knows how accurate—known as *Synopsis Philosophiae Scholasticae ad mentem divi Thomae*.⁴² As for his knowledge of Aristotle, the story is even more complicated, since Joyce read few excerpts of (relatively poor) translations, knew no Greek, and was not vastly informed about ancient Greek art, culture and sensibility. We must also add that the relatively meager serious Aristotelian scholarship available at the time was far removed from Joyce's reach.

Joyce was acquainted superficially with Greek mythology, also because all that was available to him was, by our standards, romanticised and simplified versions of that wealthy tradition. This does not really matter, in the end, since Joyce did not claim to be, and should not be regarded as, either a professional philosopher or a classicist. We glean from his *Paris Notebook*—and later passages in *Stephen Hero* and *A Portrait*—that he was aware of some of the central issues in Aristotle's *Poetics*, for he mentions the question of defining rhythm, the imitation of nature by art, pity and terror.

However, even Aristotle's theory is treated very much according to Joyce's prejudices: an instance of 'applied Aristotle'. In his ingenious, cunning, and customarily spongy fashion, Jim took what he could, from whatever source he could: whether of money or information.⁴³ But what he took, including money, he made it his own: all grist to his mill.

Whenever mention is made of Aquinas and Aristotle, our attention is drawn to the *Paris* and *Pola Notebooks* and to their elaboration in *Stephen Hero* and especially *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*.

In the *Pola Notebook*, Joyce gives two quotations from Aquinas, and they are both incorrect. 'Pulcera sunt quae visa placent' (from *Summa Theologiae*, I q.5 a.4) should actually read: 'pulchra enim dicuntur quae visa placent'. And 'bonum est in quod tendit appetitum' (*Contra Gent.*, ch.III) should read with the masculine (and not neuter) gender of 'appetite/desire'... It is *appetitus*, as the Editors of *Critical Writings* have correctly amended. (I note that the same editors, while correcting the misspellings in the first quotation, fail to give us the exact text. They add 'ea' to Aquinas's text, between *dicuntur* and *quae*). In *A Portrait*, *appetitus* is correctly spelled.

We encounter misquotations again in *Stephen Hero* and, later, in *A Portrait*: "Aquinas, answered Stephen, says *pulcra sunt quae visa placent*."⁴⁴ On this occasion, the 'h' is missing from 'pulchra' (*sunt* replaces *dicuntur*). The same mistake is made again, at page 212.

What should we make of Joyce's misquoting? Aware of the writer's skill in the art of *dépistage*, we must ask: were the misquotations intentional or un-intentional? If the latter, were they due to carelessness and mis-writing, a *lapsus plumeae*, or to a writing after recollection? (We must not fail to note that in the mentioned text of the *Summa Theologiae*, from which Joyce misquoted the definition of beauty, Aquinas gives also a definition of goodness, and writes: "Nam bonum proprie respicit appetitum." Did Joyce mix up his sources, his feeble Latin, and his notes?) If intentional, was this another game of *dépistage*? Of course, for the misspellings found in the *Notebooks* we could think of a more banal cause: an incorrect transcription by the editors perhaps not very familiar with Latin.

The 'neutering' of the masculine appetitus (*óρεξις, epithymía, bôulesis*), in the definition of goodness, may excite the free-associative imagination of Freudians, not to mention Lacanians; but it presents no conceptual difficulty. On the contrary, Joyce's writing of "Pulchra sunt quae visa placent" becomes conceptually intriguing, when we note his translation: "Those things are beautiful the apprehension of which pleases".⁴⁵

In *A Portrait*, we read:

—Aquinas, said Stephen, says that is beautiful the apprehension of which pleases.

Lynch nodded.

—I remember that, he said, *Pulchra sunt quae visa placent*.⁴⁶

Stephen's anticipated translation of the quotation given by Lynch actually refers to another text by Aquinas, where we read: "pulchrum autem dicatur id cuius ipsa *apprehensio* placet."⁴⁷ But with this we witness, within the span of three lines, the slipping and sliding from Aquinas's ontologically and objectively conceived nature of beauty, as residing within reality itself, to an intentional, psychological and subjective location of beauty in the act of apprehension as source of delight.

Other texts, from the youthful papers *Drama and Life* and the subsequent one on James Clarence Mangan, have been invoked in support of the argument that Joyce held an understanding of beauty as an objective ontological property. In the first paper we read: "Art is true to itself when it deals with truth."⁴⁸ And truth is defined as "the deathless passions, the human verities."⁴⁹ This reference to truth, which according to some commentators would ground the ontological value of beauty, is further developed in the paper on Mangan. Hugh Bredin⁵⁰ reminds us that Joyce had, at this stage (1902) come across and been impressed by Flaubert's paraphrase of Plato's *Symposium*: "Le beau... est la splendeur du vrai." Accordingly, he wrote: "Beauty, the splendour of truth, is a gracious presence when the imagination contemplates intensely the truth of its own being or the visible world, and the spirit which proceeds out of truth and beauty is the holy spirit of joy."⁵¹ I think it would be disingenuous to presume that Joyce understood beauty, truth, and goodness ontologically, as *kaloagathía*, in Plato's sense.

The mainly subjective value of Joyce's concept of beauty re-emerges again, when he writes in the *Pola Notebook* of 1904: "Even the most hideous object may be said to be beautiful, in so far as it encounters the activity of simple perception".⁵² And when, coming closest to an objective definition of beauty, he writes: "Beauty is that quality of a sensible object in virtue of which its apprehension pleases or satisfies the aesthetic appetite which desires to apprehend the most satisfying relations of the sensible",⁵³ the objectivity of "sensible object" is cancelled out by the subjectivity of "satisfying relations".⁵⁴

What did Joyce make of the objective properties ascribed by Aquinas to that which we call beautiful: *integritas seu perfectio* (wholeness), *consonantia* (harmony), *claritas* (radiance)?

With reference to the first, it seems clear that while Aquinas understood *integritas* as a substantial completion, Joyce understood it as spatial delimitation. Aquinas thought of ontological volume, Joyce of physical perimeter. With reference to *consonantia* or harmony, Joyce clearly states that “we feel... the rhythm of its (an object’s) structure.”⁵⁵ As for *claritas*, clearly Aquinas meant—despite his distracting reference to *color nitidus*—the transparency, manifestation and knowability of the form and *quidditas* (or generic essence) of a thing. For Joyce, it is the epiphanic intuition or apprehension of ‘this one thing here’: the Aristotelian concept of immanent substance as *tóde ti*, and the Scotist *haecceitas*.⁵⁶

Here *claritas* meets ‘epiphany’. And let me stress, about ‘epiphany’ also, its essentially subjective value. It is not so much the sudden illumination and revelation of something from within (*splendor veri, formae, ordinis*), but the intuitive apprehension of something from without, that gives aesthetic value to something, no matter how ugly, meaningless, and quotidian. Pointing to a clock, Stephen says: “Imagine my glimpses at that clock as the gropings of a spiritual eye which seeks to adjust its vision to an exact focus. The moment the focus is reached the object is epiphanised.”⁵⁷ Hugh Bredin comments: “The radiance of beauty is defined in terms of the spiritual eye and the focusing vision. We epiphanize the object.”⁵⁸ And, in Joyce’s words, “the instant wherein the supreme quality of beauty, the clear radiance of the aesthetic image, is apprehended luminously by the mind which has been arrested by its wholeness and fascinated by its harmony, is the luminous silent stasis of esthetic pleasure...”⁵⁹

Another quite substantial difference must be noted. For Aquinas, integrity, consonance, clarity (in Joyce’s words, “wholeness, harmony, and radiance”) define ontological aspects of whatever is beautiful, and furthermore they are co-present at the same time. For Joyce, on the contrary, they become attributes of things in so far as they are solicited, conjured, and produced by an aesthetic perception. Moreover, they emerge separately and progressively along a temporal experience that proceeds by successive steps. A section of the conversation between Stephen and Lynch illustrates this point:

—Look at that basket, he said.

—I see it, said Lynch.

—In order to see the basket, said Stephen, your mind first of all separates the basket from the rest of the visible universe which is not the basket. The first phase of apprehension is a bounding line drawn

about the object to be apprehended. An esthetic image is presented to us either in space or in time. What is audible is presented in time, what is visible is presented in space. But, temporal or spatial, the esthetic image is first luminously apprehended as selfbounded and self-contained upon the immeasurable background of space or time which is not it. You apprehended it as *one* thing. You see it as one whole. You apprehend its wholeness. That is *integritas*.

—Bull's eye! said Lynch, laughing. Go on.

—Then, said Stephen, you pass from point to point, led by its formal lines; you apprehend it as balanced part against part within its limits; you feel the rhythm of its structure. In other words, the synthesis of immediate perception is followed by the analysis of apprehension. Having first felt that it is one thing you feel now that it is a *thing*. You apprehend it as complex, multiple, divisible, separable, made up of its parts, the result of its parts and their sum, harmonious. That is *consonantia*.

—Bull's eye again! said Lynch wittily. Tell me now what is *claritas* and you win the cigar.

— [...] When you have apprehended that basket as one thing and have then analysed it according to its form and apprehended it as a thing you make the only synthesis which is logically and esthetically permissible. You see that it is that thing which it is and no other thing. The radiance of which he speaks is the scholastic *quidditas*, the *whatness* of a thing. This supreme quality is felt by the artist when the esthetic image is first conceived in his imagination. The mind in that mysterious instant Shelley likened beautifully to a fading coal. That instant wherein that supreme quality of beauty, the clear radiance of the esthetic image, is apprehended luminously by the mind which has been arrested by its wholeness and fascinated by its harmony is the silent stasis of esthetic pleasure, a spiritual state very like to that cardiac condition which the Italian physiologist Luigi Galvani, using a phrase almost as beautiful as Shelley's, called the enchantment of the heart.⁶⁰

Joyce's understanding of the aesthetic experience, as epiphanic and 'arresting', points not so much in the direction of a theory of beauty, as in the direction of a theory of art. Joyce's 'aesthetic' musings, on Aquinas's themes, are really in function of his poetic preoccupations with ways of metamorphosing into form, and with mimetic creation—as in the light of Aristotle's *Poetics* and *Rhetoric*. And it is also in this respect that Joyce can be seen to stand between Aquinas and Aristotle. Aristotle, anyway, is ever present in the Thomist texts familiar to Joyce.

But there is more. Young Jim's understanding of *katharsis*—quite original and fascinating—as an arresting experience of *stasis*, in the joy of possession (albeit only cognitive and imaginary), brings its meaning

very close to Aquinas's concept of *quies* in contemplation. One could say that Joyce read Aquinas with Aristotelian eyes, with a view to poetic strategies, and Aristotle with Thomistic eyes, with a view to establishing the epiphanic and 'static', or contemplative, effect of drama: both tragedy and comedy or, better, tragicomedy.⁶¹

The stories of *Dubliners* illustrate—most tangibly, with their Ibsen-like dramatic realism, and in a vein of tragicomedy—Joyce's poetics of *epiphany*. A chin, a smile, a cup of tea, a song, an echo, a wake, yield the insight of a previously hidden form. They are not epiphanies of visibility, but rather dramatic—tragicomic, again—insights into the fabric of life and character. And the 'arresting' power of the epiphany is in the words that capture and mould the event.

Here, we may ponder over the extraordinary fact that Joyce showed an almost total lack of understanding and appreciation of the visual arts. And he showed no interest whatsoever in visual artistic expressions. The wealth of the artistic feast of epiphanic visibility that surrounded him, especially during his Italian years, left him totally untouched. We know that in one of his peevish moments of irritation, when in Rome, he gave vent to a tirade against Italy, Italian and the Italians. He wrote: "I hate to think that Italians ever did anything in the way of art. But I suppose they did." Then, as if he had conceded too much, he wrote in the margin, "What did they do but illustrate a page or so of the New Testament!"⁶²

At this point, the concept of 'epiphany' reveals other meanings. It stands also for the concept of *mimesis* which, borrowing the words of H.-G. Gadamer, could be defined as 'metamorphosis into form' (*Verwandlung ins Gebilde*), rather and better than 'imitation' or 'representation' of nature.

v

To conclude, if we leave aside Joyce's musings with Aquinas's and Aristotle's aesthetics, his writings—the rich fruit of his poetic strategies—tell us that we don't so much need to comprehend, but rather allow ourselves to be 'arrested' by the wealth of human experience metamorphosed into form: into the epiphanic and epiphanising power of language. Epiphany becomes the amazing revelation, not just of form and essence in beauty, but also (and mainly perhaps) of form, plot, structure, narrative, *téchne*. It is a happening that we make happen, when attentive to the possibility of making things utter their music. Epiphany occurs in those revelatory moments when we think and feel something approximately expressible by a sudden "ah, here it is..."⁶³

And beauty, according to Joyce is a beauty that we make, even when it is the beauty and splendour of chaos, for even chaos is 'metamorphosed into form' and moulded by the hand of art. Had Joyce been mainly pre-occupied with beauty, as Aquinas was, and with aesthetic experience, he might not have produced much as significant as he did. He might have remained a dandy aesthete and a pale copy of Oscar Wilde. But he was Dedalus and he was Hermes, at once. He was his own artificer and he was his own *dedalo*: his own labyrinth.⁶⁴

The young Stephen, school child at the Jesuit boarding-school of Clongowes Wood, in Kildare, conceived himself as a member of a cosmic whole, and wrote on the opening page of his geography text-book: "Stephen Dedalus—Class of Elements—Clongowes Wood College—Sallins—County of Kildare—Ireland—Europe—The World—The Universe."

The young Joyce, as the young Stephen Dedalus begotten of his miraculously fertile imagination, began with pursuits of classical order. However, the architectonic closed structures of *Stephen Hero*, *A Portrait*, and *Dubliners* are, from the very beginning, threatened by the Daedalian promise and fate. Dedalus is there, from the outset. Because the raw material of experience, the tragicomedy of life, placed our young artificer—at once Dedalus and mercurial Hermes—on the threshold and interface between fact and word, where riddles, mazes and labyrinths abound. Should we, then, be surprised if the initial epiphany that brings to light, through the alchemy of art and language, the amazingness of inner presence and of structured order, later becomes the epiphany of the splendour of disorder?

As Umberto Eco puts it:

We have been living in the Tower from the beginning. The first dialogue between God and Adam took place in Finneganian labyrinths, and only by returning to Babel and accepting the only real chance available to us, can we find our peace and embrace the limits, the vocation and the destiny of our human condition.⁶⁵

Joyce wondered, and makes us wonder, at the wonderfully amazing creative power of the maze of language that, in art, mimetically metamorphoses into form the realm of our Adamic and post-Adamic, Babelic and post-Babelic, heroic and heroicomic, tragic and tragicomic condition of being human.

NOTES

- 1 *The Critical Writings of James Joyce*. E. Mason and R. Ellmann (eds), (London: Faber and Faber, 1959). Henceforth *CW*, followed by page number.
- 2 William T. Noon, *Joyce and Aquinas* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1957).
- 3 Umberto Eco, *The Aesthetics of Chaosmos*. The Middle Ages of James Joyce (Tulsa: The University of Tulsa, 1982).
- 4 Umberto Eco, *Opera aperta* (Milano: Bompiani, 1962).
- 5 *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1968).
- 6 Stephen Hero, J. J. Slocum and H. Cahoon (eds) (New York: New Directions, 1944/1963), p. 78.
- 7 Eco, *The Aesthetics of Chaosmos*, p. 28.
- 8 *Letters of James Joyce*, Stuart Gilbert (ed.), vol I (London: Faber and Faber, 1957), pp. 146-47.
- 9 Eco, *The Aesthetics of Chaosmos*, p. 55.
- 10 Eco, *The Aesthetics of Chaosmos*, p. 55.
- 11 Eco, *The Aesthetics of Chaosmos*, p. 61.
- 12 Eco, *The Aesthetics of Chaosmos*, p. 62.
- 13 Eco, *The Aesthetics of Chaosmos*, p. 66.
- 14 Eco, *The Aesthetics of Chaosmos*, p. 1.
- 15 *A Portrait*, p. 214.
- 16 *A Portrait*, p. 207.
- 17 *A Portrait*, p. 219.
- 18 *Drama and Life*, in *CW*, p. 41.
- 19 See Hugh Bredin, "Applied Aquinas: James Joyce's Aesthetics", *Eire-Ireland*, vol. III (1968), p. 75.
- 20 For a concise introduction to Aquinas's aesthetics see Hugh Bredin and Liberato Santoro-Brienza (eds), *Philosophies of Art and Beauty: Introducing Aesthetics* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2000), pp. 57-66; and Liberato Santoro-Brienza, "Art and Beauty in Antiquity and the Middle Ages", in S. Davies and A. Ch. Sukla (eds), *Art and Essence* (Westport, Connecticut & London: Praeger, 2003), pp. 55-73. For more extensive and comprehensive studies see Umberto Eco, *Art and Beauty in the Middle Ages* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1986); and *The Aesthetics of Thomas Aquinas*, trans. Hugh Bredin (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1988).
- 21 Quoted in E. De Bruyne, *Études d'esthétique médiévale*, 3 vols (Bruges: De Tempel, 1946), vol. II, p. 338.
- 22 F. J. Kovach, "The Transcendentality of Beauty in Thomas Aquinas", in P. Wilpert (ed.), *Die Metaphysik im Mittelalter*, Miscellanea Mediaevalia II (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1963), pp. 386-392.
- 23 Aquinas, *Exposition of Dionysius on the Divine Names*, 4, 5.
- 24 *Summa Theologiae*, I, 5, 4 ad 1.
- 25 *Summa Theologiae*, I-II, 27, 1 ad 2.
- 26 *Summa Theologiae*, I, 67, 1 c.
- 27 *Commentary on the Nicomachean Ethics*, III, 19, 6.
- 28 *Exposition of Dionysius on the Divine Names*, IV, 5.
- 29 *Summa Theologiae*, II-II, 145, 2 c.
- 30 *Exposition of Dionysius on the Divine Names*, IV, 5.
- 31 *Summa Theologiae*, I, 39, 8 c.
- 32 *Summa Theologiae*, III, 45, 2 ad 1.

- 33 *Summa Theologiae*, II-II, 96, 2 ad 2.
- 34 *Commentary on the Physics*, II, 4, 6.
- 35 *Summa Theologiae*, I, 39, 8 c.
- 36 From *Collected Poems*, now in *The Essential James Joyce* (London: Jonathan Cape Ltd, 1948), p. 460.
- 37 *Stephen Hero* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1956), p. 81.
- 38 *A Portrait*, p. 214.
- 39 *A Portrait*, p. 191.
- 40 Cf. Eco, *The Aesthetics of Chaosmos*, p. 6.
- 41 Eco, *The Aesthetics of Chaosmos*, p. 6.
- 42 J. Aubert, *The Aesthetics of James Joyce* (Baltimore & London: The John Hopkins University Press, 1992), p.100 & p. 167.
- 43 P. N. Furbank has reported that Svevo—who was generously disposed towards Joyce—once wrote to his wife: "Poor Joyce... We have got a fine leech in our hands." In *Italo Svevo: The Man and the Writer* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1966), p. 83.
- 44 *A Portrait*, p. 190.
- 45 *CW*, p. 147.
- 46 *A Portrait*, p. 212.
- 47 *Summa Theologiae*, Ia IIae q.27 a. 1 ad 3.
- 48 *CW*, pp. 43-44.
- 49 *CW*, p. 45.
- 50 Bredin, "Applied Aquinas", pp. 61-78.
- 51 *CW*, p. 83.
- 52 *CW*, p. 147. Among other texts by Aquinas echoing Aristotle, see the following: "Videmus quod aliqua imago dicitur pulchra, si perfecte repraesentat rem quamvis turpem." (*Summa Theologiae*, I q.38 a.8). In Aristotle's words, "Objects which in themselves we view with pain, we delight to contemplate when rendered [figured/formed] with great care: such as the forms of the most repellent animals and of dead bodies..." (*Poetics*, 1448b 4ff). Elsewhere we read "again, since learning and wondering (being amazed) are pleasant, it follows that pleasure is given by acts of mimesis, such as painting, sculpture, poetry and every skillful representation, even though the original be unpleasant" (*Rhetorica*, 1371b 4ff).
- 53 *CW*, p. 147.
- 54 Bredin, "Applied Aquinas", p. 67.
- 55 *A Portrait*, p. 217. My italics.
- 56 See Ulick O'Connor, *Biographers and the Art of Biography* (London: Quartet Books, 1993), pp. 107-113.
- 57 *Stephen Hero*, pp. 216-217.
- 58 Bredin, "Applied Aquinas", p. 70.
- 59 *A Portrait*, p. 217.
- 60 *A Portrait*, pp. 216-217. In his lyrically induced understanding of the the word 'incantation', which carries much musical and mystical meaning, Joyce—for all his adequate knowledge of the Italian language—does not seem to know that the reflexive 'incantarsi' means also to stop ticking or stop functioning.
- 61 Another perfect case of reading of Aristotle, following Aquinas (followed by Butcher and Bosanquet—but had Joyce read them?), is to be found in Joyce's fragment from the *Paris Notebook* (*CW*, p. 145), where he comments on Aristotle's meaning of *mimesis*: "e

tekhne (sic!) mimitai ten physin"—This phrase is falsely rendered as "Art is an imitation of Nature'. Aristotle does not here define art; he says only, "Art imitates Nature" and means that the artistic process is like the natural process...". See Aristotle's *Physics*, 194a 22; Aquinas's *Summa Theologiae*, Ia q. 117a.1 c.; and *In Physicam*, II 4 (Leonina, Vol.II, p.65). See also my "Some Remarks on Aristotle's Concept of Mimesis", *Revue des Études Anciennes*, vol. LXXXII (1980), pp. 31-40. The concept of 'tragicomedy' could perhaps better explain what Joyce may have meant by 'comedy'. Donizetti's *Don Pasquale* and Verdi's *Falstaff* come to mind. In these instances we experience what Hegel has admirably qualified as "the serenity of pleasure, a cheerful and happy indifference united all the same to a calm hint of melancholy: that smile through the tears, that is neither tears nor smiles." Anyway, in the end, Joyce seems preoccupied—in the light of his understanding of desire—with establishing the 'restful' condition of aesthetic experience. And we could safely surmise perhaps that what he meant by 'the joy of comedy' is simply the rejoicing in the contemplation of artistic form.

62 Richard Ellmann, *James Joyce* (Oxford University Press, 1983), p. 229.

63 The correspondence, and indeed identity, between the essence of beauty and the epiphanic experience is perfectly captured by Persius, when he writes: "At pulchrum est digito monstrari et dici 'hic est'." Joyce's intuitive idea of 'epiphany' may prove to be very close to, if not identical with, Cesare Brandi's philosophically and semiotically sophisticated concept of *astanza*. See *Le due vie* (Bari: Laterza, 1966).

64 *Dedalo* is another word, obviously justified by metonymy, for *labirinto*.

65 Umberto Eco, & Liberato Santoro-Brienza, *Talking of Joyce* (Dublin: University College Dublin Press, 1998), p. 39. In the Library of Babel there must be a chaotic book that talks of connections among Joyce, Borges and Eco.