Epiphany in the Modernist Short Story
Italian and English Perspectives

Valeria Taddei

St Anne's College

University of Oxford

Thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Michaelmas Term 2019

Acknowledgements

This work would not exist without the support of many people. First in line are my supervisors, Giuseppe Stellardi and Matthew Reynolds, who believed in this project from the start. Thanks for your feedback, your encouragement, and that much-needed occasional shake. I am amazed at your magical ability to see coherence in my most nebulous thoughts.

My sincere gratitude goes to Maria Ferreras Willetts, whose generous scholarship allowed this enterprise to happen. Thanks also to St Anne's College, St Anne's MCR, and the Faculty of Modern Languages for supporting my conference trips. I am grateful to the OCCT group for welcoming me in their ranks, and particularly to Eleni, Kasia, and Karolina, in whose company I learnt a lot.

Thanks to the professors and colleagues who contributed to my research with feedback and ideas: to Ela Tandello, Guido Bonsaver, and Stefano Evangelista, who read this thesis in the making; to Hugo Azérad, whose warmth, enthusiasm, and suggestions propelled my earliest approach to epiphanies; to Pierpaolo Antonello and Pierluigi Pellini, who supervised the ancestors of this work; to Glenn Most and Ilaria Muoio, for material that changed my chapters; to Elio Providenti and Maurizio Ascari for kind remote consultations; and to Riccardo Castellana, who remained the point person in matters of *novelle*, Pirandello, Tozzi, and Italian modernism. Thanks to Guido Mazzoni for the challenging gift of this research topic and for his being, however deliberately, a mentor.

As much as this work is my own doing, I wouldn't have made my way through it alone. Thanks to my college mates of all these years: Vassilios, Virginia, Dan, Matthew, Guillaume, Sebastian, Nesrine, Augusta, Ross, Esther, and the others, for the camaraderie, the nerdiness, the games, the long walks, the international trips, the debates over brunch, and the moments of mutual support. Thanks to Alex for the STAAR adventure. Thanks to Barbara, Camila, Margarita and Sebastian for a household that feels like home, and to my adoptive housemates at 53 Juxon for being a safe haven of relax, food, and fairy tales.

Special thanks go to the Cardigan Street team – Vas, Sid, and Clint – for the most memorable chai-and-scopa night in Oxford history.

We are now reaching a point where emotion overflows and it becomes hard to find words of gratitude adequate to the feeling. Thanks to the best colleagues I could ever hope to find in an Oxford department. To Olmo, my confidant, inciter, guardian and ally, for proving time and again how deep a connection can be. To Alice, partner in crime through paperwork and reckless seminars, for being the living proof that cement-hard intellect and effervescent *caciara* are equal parts of wisdom. A thousand thanks to Emily for her unsparing help and exuberant sweetness. Thanks to Claudio for sharing the daily effort through the ups and downs, and for his bursts of folly under the crust of shyness. Thanks to Giacomo for his courteous affectionate wit, to Luca for his lessons of courage, and to the other Pierlington denizens for some of the most thrilling parties I have had in a long time.

There is then an older layer of gratitude, which dates back to other times and places. Thanks are overdue to my Siena team: Franca, the soul of our group, whose affection overwhelms me even from afar; Giovanni, esteemed colleague and dear friend, who actively contributed to this thesis with competent encouragement, discussion, and a generous amount of bibliography; Francesca, whose words of wisdom, love, and hope always hit the spot; Jessica and Egle, who proved that life moves on but some people stay. Thanks for our shared years of apprenticeship, and for a sodality that endures.

Thanks to Riccardo, Sofia, and Lorenzo, for a bond so strong that even the worst of adolescence could not manage to break it. To Chiara, for always being able to simply pick up where we left off. To Giulia, for being the most constant source of comfort, laughter, and peer learning of the last twenty-five years. It has become too hard already to make justice in words to what you all are to me. You are my measure of what true friends feel like.

Then there is deepest gratitude for my parents, my sister, my grandparents, my aunt and uncle, and to Giulietta, Andrea, and Gianni, who throughout these years went out of their way to support me, care for me, and feed me, even when the going got long and tough.

Thanks, Tom, for being at my side all along, keeping things light, growing with me every day.

Contents

Abstract ..... **i**
Extended Abstract ..... **iii**
Abbreviations ..... **xi**
Referencing Style and Translations ..... **xii**
Introduction: Mapping a Family Resemblance **1**

I. Epiphanies and Their Discontents 6
II. The Western Tradition of Illuminations 11

1. 'A hole in the paper sky': Luigi Pirandello **18**

1.1 Demystification 22
1.2 Metaphysical Intuition 35
1.3 Cosmic Consciousness 49
1.4 Conclusion 61

2. 'The significance of trivial things': James Joyce **72**

2.1 Aesthetic Theory 74
2.1.1 Whatness: quidditas as transcendence *83*
2.1.2 Thisness: quidditas as immanence *87*
2.2 *Dubliners* 93
2.3 Conclusion 121

3. 'Behind a thick veil': Federigo Tozzi **124**

3.1 Psyche as Mind 136
3.2 Psyche as Soul 154
3.3 Conclusion 170

4. 'The possibility of something quite other': Katherine Mansfield **177**

4.1 Central Points of Significance 180
4.2 Moments of Direct Feeling 188
4.3 Moments of Suspension 198
4.4 Conclusion 212

Conclusions **215**
Bibliography **231**

Primary Sources 231
Secondary Sources 235

Valeria Taddei
St Anne's College, University of Oxford
DPhil in Medieval and Modern Languages
Michaelmas Term 2019

Epiphany in the Modernist Short Story: Italian and English Perspectives

Abstract

This thesis reconsiders the phenomenon of literary epiphany in the early twentieth-century short story by comparing its occurrence in the work of four Italian and Anglophone authors: Luigi Pirandello (1867-1936), James Joyce (1882-1941), Federigo Tozzi (1883-1920), and Katherine Mansfield (1888-1923). The decentred perspective allowed by this transnational comparison illuminates epiphanies as complex phenomena connected to multiple aspects of modernist culture. 'Epiphany' is considered here as a 'blurred' category of literary criticism, based on a family resemblance between independent artistic experiences developed in the same decades. Each author's idea and use of epiphanies is considered separately, but within a common theoretical frame that brings out peculiarities and recurring themes. At least three common threads emerge, as a result, as general characteristics of modernist epiphanies. First, they participate in a phenomenological attempt to rediscover lived experience as a source of partial but reliable knowledge. Second, they are a result of the 'inward turn' and of the curiosity for the psyche's deeper regions that are manifested through the logic of emotions. Third, they re-actualise mystical experiences as conduits to an authoritative insight that relies on unconscious structures to achieve a comprehensive view of life. The main appeal of these moments of enlightenment is precisely their lack of specificity. Far from revealing a truth, they establish an atmosphere of ambiguity where multiple and even contradictory interpretations are possible. By so doing, they succeed in evoking the undifferentiated creative potential that, according to the widespread vitalist philosophies of the age, constitutes the ultimate essence of life. In reframing ambiguity and indeterminacy as spaces of creation and choice, epiphanies thus bring out a lesser known, life-affirming but not naïve vein of modernist inspiration.

Valeria Taddei
St Anne's College, University of Oxford
DPhil in Medieval and Modern Languages
Michaelmas Term 2019

Epiphany in the Modernist Short Story: Italian and English Perspectives

Extended Abstract

This work aims to propose a new perspective on the phenomenon of literary epiphany in early twentieth-century literature by studying its artistic application by Anglophone and Italian short-story writers. This angle enriches existing scholarship on epiphany, mainly focused on Anglo-American literature and on novels and poetry, by broadening the scope of enquiry to an international comparison, and focusing on a specific genre and time frame: the first twenty years of the 20th century. The short story enjoyed a period of great vitality in Italian and English literature around this time, and the authors considered here were among the most skilled practitioners of the genre in their respective traditions. In this sense, the present work also contributes to a critical reappraisal of their innovative but comparatively overlooked production in this field. Two main questions guided this critical investigation: how did modernist authors understand and use epiphanies in their stories? What can their practice tell us about the phenomenon itself and the cultural circumstances in which it appeared?

Despite many valid scholarly efforts, a single comprehensive definition of epiphany has not yet been found: its existence as a theoretical category is based on the recognition of a family resemblance whose defining elements change according to the samples considered. Rather than trying to force arbitrary limits upon it, at the risk of creating more confusion, the present study embraces epiphany as a 'blurred' concept, in Wittgenstein's words, observing the main features that emerge from the juxtaposition of a new set of coeval independent experiences. Thus, several aspects suggested by previous studies result

applicable beyond the limits of Anglophone literature. Their specific form in the context of each author's work is observed in close reading, in some cases for the first time.

This thesis contributes to its scholarly context on several levels. On the most general plane, it connects the findings of different strands of Italian and English research on modernism, epiphanies, and on each of the chosen authors, offering through their combination a richer view of the modernist exceptional moments. From a theoretical perspective, analysing Italian short-story writers alongside mainstream Anglophone modernists has a twofold benefit: it expands the range of case studies used to delineate the concept of epiphany, and, at the same time, enables a reassessment of the Italian authors' work from an international standpoint. At the critical level, finally, this work offers an original application of the theory in a close reading of better- and lesser-known stories, showing how a reflection on the form, value, and implications of epiphany can enhance our appreciation of the texts themselves.

After an introductory overview of epiphany scholarship and of the challenges this phenomenon poses to research, four monographic chapters follow. Each of the chosen authors is studied singularly, with a focus on how they conceived epiphanic moments in their aesthetics and what role these play in a few exemplary short stories. Their individual view of exceptional moments is connected to widespread philosophical and cultural tendencies that also inspired other authors, thus tracing the origins of the phenomenon's 'multiple discovery'. Each author's perspective illuminates specific components in the complex of ideas that made epiphanies so popular at that age. These aspects, however, are not exclusive, and re-emerge from chapter to chapter, highlighting common features of the modernist epiphany that are summed up in the conclusions.

Pirandello's epiphanies, analysed in chapter 1, are conceived as moments of wonder at the obvious, when a sudden estrangement from the ordinary perception of things allows an insight into what life is when it is not taken for granted. These moments are part of Pirandello's theory of humour, an aesthetics based on contrasts, and conjoin psychological, philosophical, and spiritual suggestions. Destructive, prosaic moments and lyrical-mystical illuminations, often distinguished in criticism, are taken here as ends of a continuum where

every manifestation features both iterations to varying extents. The deconstructionist side of Pirandello's epiphanies focuses on their power to dismantle illusions of coherence, unity, and meaning to the individual's existence. They rely on recent discoveries about human personality and on a philosophical attitude inspired by Romantic irony. Paul De Man interprets the self-doubling required by Romantic irony as the premise of an insight about human detachment from eternity, and Pirandello's 'momenti di silenzio interiore' confirm his reading. The short stories 'Tra due ombre' (1907) and 'La carriola' (1915) illustrate this self-doubling and its effects.

In exposing the characters' distance from authentic life, however, the *momenti* also call attention to what is meant by 'life'. Remarkable affinities with Bergson's vitalism help to recognise Pirandello's idea of life as a reservoir of creative potential holding together conflicting nuances. This can be directly perceived through intuition, a momentary descent into the depths of consciousness which deactivates logic and borders on the ineffable, as can be seen in 'Il viaggio' (1910). Epiphanies are also in this sense moments of metaphysical intuition, which reverse ordinary intelligence and enable contact with the creative origin of life and most authentic part of the self. This second sense highlights their place in Pirandello's non-institutional spirituality as instances of non-divine mysticism. Following W. James' classification, they can be associated with discoveries of the unreality of reality or seen as fully religious forms of cosmic consciousness, where individual life is lost in a holistic fusion with the universe. This does not imply that their value is positive; a non-euphoric illumination is indeed the central event of the story 'Notte' (1912). Thus, as recapitulated through 'Il coppo' (1912), Pirandello's exceptional moments offer a dual outlook on the human condition, from the perspective of the individual and the cosmos. Accordingly, they can feel tragic or reconciling. Their greatest significance lies, however, in the very coexistence of these two stances, which uncovers contrasts as the core of life and turns the theory of humour into an existential discovery.

The second chapter aims to reframe Joycean epiphanies building on the substantial amount of specialised scholarship on the subject. Focusing on the early experiences that led to the composition of *Dubliners*, the formation and evolution of the epiphany concept is

explored in Joyce's aesthetic theory, before looking at how it can be read in some of his stories. Joyce's initial *Epiphany* sketches were inspired by a detective-like inclination to find the clue that betrayed hidden secrets. However, *Stephen Hero* explains epiphany as a more complex aesthetic experience: an encounter with truth prepared by the imagination which brackets the ordinary perception of things. This process is akin to a phenomenological attitude, where subjective perception must estrange itself from the certainties of common sense to bring them into focus. The first stage of the Joycean epiphany can thus be read as the achievement of a phenomenological *epoché*. The ensuing manifestation of 'quidditas' can be intended in two ways: either as the transcendent 'essence' of reality, which would make an epiphany a symbol pointing beyond itself to a universal truth; or as 'thisness', the embodied presence of an object. The first aspect is inspired by Joyce's fascination with a religion of art which frames epiphanies as lay-mystical experiences. The second fits his artistic intention to deal with reality outside any transcendent meaning. Merleau-Ponty's idea that transcendence can also be conceived horizontally, as a way to go beyond the limits of subjective understanding and encounter the world as it really is, shows how these two faces of Joyce's inspiration can be reconciled.

The presence of epiphanies in *Dubliners* is not beyond doubt and has been reasonably questioned. However, his epiphanic aesthetics contributes to the effect of the stories even when readers are unaware of epiphany as a concept, as happens in 'The Sisters' (1904-12). This story also helps to dispel the myth that an epiphany must have life-changing, verifiable effects. Stories can be revealing even when characters remain unenlightened, as in 'Clay' (1905), whose epiphanic moments are, crucially, moments of non-understanding. When characters, instead, appear to have an insight, a twofold doubt arises, concerning its content and also its reliability. In 'A Little Cloud' (1906) this double layer of interpretation questions the character's possibility of evolution without conclusively supporting or denying it. This also happens in 'The Dead' (1907), where Gabriel's final meditations can as plausibly be taken as trivialities or as life's most fundamental questions. The contrasting readings that emerge in all the stories fulfil the task of bringing the reader to face the complexity and multifacetedness of reality. Taking Joyce's epiphany as a

phenomenological discovery of essences in their embodied existence, as suggested by Kearney, accounts for his focus on concrete reality, his aim to confront it pitilessly, and his respect for it as a mysterious and sacred thing.

Tozzi, whose production is the subject of chapter 3, adopted an aesthetics of non-comprehension based on representing the mysterious aspects of reality without trying to explain them. This context apparently impedes the moment of illumination. Yet significant affinities with Joyce's and Pirandello's positions and the presence in Tozzi's stories of nodes of importance independent of events (as it appears, for instance, in 'Pigionali', 1917) indicate that investigating his exceptional moments can enrich an understanding of his work. Tozzi's keen interest in psychology suggests his epiphanies can be read as manifestations of the subconscious. His readings of Bergson and William James led him to infer the presence of a deep area of the psyche governed by a different logic than consciousness. In this key, furthering a suggestion by scholar Federica Tozzi, epiphanies can be read as moments when thought and profound emotions combine, bringing the logic of the unconscious described by Matte Blanco alongside waking logic. Stories like 'Marito e moglie' (1919) and 'Una recita cinematografica' (1918) support this view, also highlighting a consonance with Joycean motifs and conscious engagement with Pirandello.

The other important aspect of Tozzi's moments is the religious sentiment, manifested first as late-romantic spirituality, later as institutional Catholicism. William James' study of mystical experiences, familiar to Tozzi since the early 1900s, had a direct influence on his epiphanies, as it presented religious feeling as a path to deeper levels of consciousness and located the divine out of reach for consciousness. This fostered Tozzi's creatural anguish of separation from reconciled meaning and highlighted the ambiguity of mystical feelings, which are readable as genuine moments of divine transcendence or as feats of neurosis. This conflicted religious perspective, particularly evident in 'Il crocifisso' (1919), makes clearer how epiphanies in Tozzi's work coexist with allegorical tendencies. In W. Benjamin's perspective, allegory is typical of a creatural worldview, exposing human fragility and distance from meaning while at the same time allowing for a contact with it by a leap of faith. The psychological and religious components of Tozzi's epiphanies thus

establish positive values at the same time as they call them into question. This highlights their importance as moments when numbing habit or emotional repression are interrupted, creating a space of possibility where freedom and choice can manifest themselves. At the textual level, this is staged through a juxtaposition of images which are not symbolic in themselves but create a constellation that suggests an undefined beyond. Tozzi thus combines a scrupulous realism, a possibility of transcendence backed by psychology and religion, and a sensitivity to ambiguity and contradiction, to create modernist 'framing' epiphanies that act as bridges toward the unconscious and generate a constant tension to meaning.

Chapter 4 explores Mansfield's aesthetics, which combines similar motifs to those explored so far: respect for life's mystery, the perception of meaning as embodied in things, a humoristic view aimed at debunking constructions of identity, and the conception of fiction as posing questions, rather than giving answers. Her example confirms epiphanies as moments of possibility for a more authentic life, but which remain substantially ambiguous in their nature and effects. Moving from her private and critical writings, Mansfield's exceptional moments are analysed as structural devices in an inward-focused narrative, as psychological moments of emotional self-discovery and interpersonal contact, and as moments of lyrical-mystical ecstasy.

Structurally, exceptional moments can provide the core event around which a slice-of-life story is organised. Their impression of momentousness, granted by language and style, is often complicated by humour: Mansfield plays with conventions, requiring readers to question the credibility of the situation, of the character, and of the epiphanic moment itself, as can be seen in 'Je ne parle pas français' (1918). This satisfies the stories' function as posing questions, while at the same time presenting emotional processes as turning points in a narrative of the self. Inspired by empirical psychology and Bergson's vitalism, Mansfield too regarded epiphanies as moments of emotional intensity bringing out subconscious drives. More optimistically than Pirandello or Tozzi, however, she conceived them as actual chances to come closer to a state of authenticity and questioned the way characters take or miss these opportunities, as 'Psychology' (1919) illustrates. Her aesthetics

places empathy, the foundation of Bergsonian intuition, at the core of creative work, highlighting a profound connection that presents art as a bridge to make contact with life. Empathy is involved in experiencing others as selves, at once creating the mutual opening required by the phenomenological encounter and necessitating a degree of unconscious logic that evokes the interconnectedness of all beings.

This is especially relevant to her ecstatic moment of suspension, which builds on a Romantic vein of lay mysticism (explicitly present in 'The Escape', 1920) to try and make sense of life as a harmonious work of art that balances opposites. 'The Garden Party' (1921) deals, in the usual ambiguous way, precisely with the coexistence of marvel and destruction. Mansfield's take thus confirms epiphanies as moments of phenomenological suspension of our usual approach to reality, when the logic of emotions intervenes to complement the ordinary faculties of consciousness and grants a feeling of authentic contact with the self, the others, and the universal equilibrium of all living beings. Her explicit reflection on the compositional implications of these moments, moreover, foregrounds the role of art as providing the tools to recreate the conditions of these experiences and share with others their epistemological value, necessarily provisional but still felt to be true.

The combination of these authors' perspectives allows us to recognise modernist epiphanies as the synthesis of a spiritual quest for meaning and fullness, a phenomenological pursuit of lived experience beyond the ordinary human attitude, and a scientific interest in the psychological structures that make both possible. These texts re-codify transcendence through the cultural coordinates of twentieth-century modernity and propose its experience as a way to a fuller knowledge of existence, broad and deep enough to encompass opposite possibilities. With their resulting intensity and undecipherable ambiguity, epiphanies respond to the modernist quest for the essence of life with a positive though not naïve discovery of its inexhaustible creative potential.

Abbreviations

Joyce:

CW:	Joyce, James. 1964. *The Critical Writings of James Joyce*, ed. by Ellsworth Mason and Richard Ellmann (New York: Viking Press)
D:	Joyce, James. 1996. *Dubliners*, Penguin Popular Classics (London: Penguin)
JJ:	Ellmann, Richard. 1982. *James Joyce*, New and rev. ed (New York: Oxford University Press)
MBK:	Joyce, Stanislaus. 1958. *My Brother's Keeper* (London: Faber and Faber Limited)
P:	Joyce, James. 2008. *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, Oxford World's Classics (Oxford: Oxford University Press)
SH:	Joyce, James. 1960. *Stephen Hero. Part of the First Draft of A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, ed. by Theodore Spencer (London: Cape)
SL:	Joyce, James. 1975. *Selected Letters of James Joyce*, ed. by Richard Ellmann (London: Faber and Faber)

Mansfield:

CLKM:	O'Sullivan, Vincent, and Margaret Scott (eds.). 1984. *The Collected Letters of Katherine Mansfield*, 5 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press)
CS:	Mansfield, Katherine. 2007. *The Collected Stories*, Penguin Classics (London: Penguin).
DKM:	Kimber, Gerri, and Claire Davison (eds.). 2016. *The Diaries of Katherine Mansfield: Including Miscellaneous Works*, Edinburgh Edition of the Collected Works of Katherine Mansfield; v. 4 (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press).
PCW:	Kimber, Gerri, and Angela Smith (eds.). 2014. *The Poetry and Critical Writings of Katherine Mansfield*, Edinburgh Edition of the Collected Works of Katherine Mansfield; v. 3 (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press)

Pirandello:

MP:	Pirandello, Luigi. 1993. *Il fu Mattia Pascal* (Torino: Einaudi), Eng. tr. 1923. *The Late Mattia Pascal*, trans. by Arthur Livingston (New York: E.P. Dutton & Company)
MN:	Pirandello, Luigi. 1986. *Maschere nude*, Opere di Luigi Pirandello, 4 vols, ed. by Alessandro D'Amico (Milano: Mondadori)
SPSV:	Pirandello, Luigi. 1965. *Saggi, poesie, scritti varii*, Classici contemporanei italiani, ed. by Manlio Lo Vecchio Musti, 2a ed. accresciuta (Milano: Mondadori)
SI:	Pirandello, Luigi. 2006. *Saggi e interventi*, I Meridiani, ed. by Ferdinando Taviani (Milano: Mondadori)

TN: Pirandello, Luigi. 2007. *Tutte le novelle*, BUR Classici moderni, 3 vols, ed. by Lucio Lugnani (Milano: BUR)

TM: Pirandello, Luigi. 1984. *Tales of Madness: A Selection from Luigi Pirandello's Short Stories for a Year*, trans. by Giovanni R. Bussino (Brookline Village, MA: Dante University of America Press)

TS: Pirandello, Luigi. 1988. *Tales of Suicide: A Selection from Luigi Pirandello's Short Stories for a Year*, trans. by Giovanni R. Bussino (Boston: Dante University of America Press)

U: Pirandello, Luigi. 2017. *L'umorismo*, Oscar Moderni, ed. by Daniela Marcheschi (Milano: Mondadori), Eng. tr. 1974. *On Humor*, ed. by Antonio Illiano and David P. Testa (Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press)

UNC: Pirandello, Luigi. 2013. *Uno, nessuno e centomila*, Live (Roma: Newton Compton) Eng. tr. 2016. *One, None and a Hundred-Thousand* [Online], trans. by Samuel Putnam (Project Gutenberg)

Tozzi:

G: Tozzi, Federigo. 2018. *Giovani*, ed. by Paola Salatto, Edizione nazionale dell'opera omnia di Federigo Tozzi (Roma: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura)

LIV: Tozzi, Federigo. 2001. *Love in Vain: Selected Stories of Federigo Tozzi*, trans. by Minna Proctor (New York: New Directions Book)

Nov: Tozzi, Federigo. 1925. *Novale: diario*, ed. by Emma Tozzi (Milano: Mondadori)

O: Tozzi, Federigo. 1999. *Opere: romanzi, prose, novelle, saggi*, I Meridiani, 5a edizione, ed. by Marco Marchi (Milano: Arnoldo Mondadori Editore)

Referencing Style and Translations

References are given in the text in the Author-Date system. To facilitate retrieval across different editions, titles of short pieces included in collections are specified, and where letters or diary entries are cited, addressee and date are included.

Quotations from languages other than English are given in the original in the text and in English translation in the footnotes, with an indication of the translation's publication date. The Italian translation of English works certainly read by an Italian author is also provided. Published translations have been used wherever possible. Where an official edition could not be found, a support translation has been provided. Unless otherwise indicated, emphases are in the original and translations are of this second kind.

Introduction: Mapping a Family Resemblance

The scene appears unusually vivid. Maybe time stops, movement ceases, and there is silence. Maybe for a moment we even lose consciousness of ourselves and become one with what we perceive. Suddenly we seem to understand what it is, and what it has been all along while we were failing to see it; we may even feel we realise what it means, or we just enjoy the fullness and beauty of its existence. A term borrowed from Catholic liturgy has entered the vocabulary of literary criticism to indicate similar manifestations of significance in everyday experience. 'Epiphany' is the literary name for a rather common event: a flash of insight when, for no apparent reason, we become aware of something important we had not seen before. It can be something as simple as realising the full meaning of an old saying; something personal concerning one's memory or destiny; or even something cosmic, a spiritual moment when life seems to find a place within the mysterious order of the universe. What all these exceptional moments have in common is the feeling that our mind, just for an instant, is carried beyond its powers and can see deeper than our usual level of perception, piercing the crust of habit and reaching a more genuine truth.

At the outset of the 20th century, when modernity fostered the need for artistic forms which could reflect the new way individuals interpreted their existence, epiphanies became increasingly frequent in literature. This phenomenon has been widely recognized and studied, usually by focusing on James Joyce, who used the term 'epiphany' as the lynchpin of his character's aesthetic theory in the draft novel *Stephen Hero*. Yet it is not exclusive to Joyce: while his aesthetics still lived undisclosed in private notes, other authors of his time were grappling with something very similar. Not only French Marcel Proust famously organised his monumental novel around 'intermittences du coeur', but also Italian Luigi Pirandello related his poetics of humour to 'momenti di silenzio interiore', New Zealander Katherine Mansfield and British Virginia Woolf reflected on 'exceptional moments', and many other writers across Europe referred to analogous occurrences with different names, or with no name at all.

The poetics of epiphany has long been recognised as a broad aesthetic trend of modernism, related to the power of art to reveal the hidden essence of reality. We are still far, however, from a comprehensive definition of its features and implications, and that is partly because there is no unified theory at the root of all these occurrences. As Nichols (1987: 31) and Neuhold (2009: 12) passingly note, these independent experiences are related by what Wittgenstein called a 'family resemblance': they echo each other because they share a range of features in varying combinations, just like members of a family may resemble each other for some somatic traits, but not for others. What they frame is, accordingly, a blurred concept whose boundaries are constantly redefined in relation to the cases considered (Wittgenstein 2009: §65-67). This explains why it is so hard to elaborate a single definition of epiphany that can work for all the cases in which we may be prompted to apply it, and why there always remains an inevitable margin of approximation when it comes to establishing whether a scene in a text is or is not an epiphany. This does not mean, however, that the concept is unusable. On the contrary, linking its variations as diverse expressions of a unique phenomenon sheds light on the cultural context which produced it and on its aesthetic effects. Its fuzzy nature rather encourages a comparative approach: the gathering of a set of examples that make it possible to see what is in common.

This comparative route has been frequently explored, but with a tendency to limit the case studies to Anglophone production. Historical works on epiphany by Beja (1971), Langbaum (1983), and Nichols (1987), as well as more recent contributors such as Neuhold (2009) and Kim (2012), while generally recognizing the transnational breadth of the phenomenon and of its history, focus their enquiry mainly or solely on works written in English. Most of them acknowledge but very rarely engage with Proust, a challenge that is picked up by Azérad (2002) with excellent insights. However, while the critical concept of epiphany is used to read many authors from several traditions, attempts to study the concept itself outside this limited scope have been extremely rare. This work follows in the steps of previous scholarship by studying epiphany through a comparative approach, and aims to enrich the field by including in the sample an Italian perspective, often considered marginal in modernist studies. This allows us to recontextualise our understanding of

literary epiphany by diversifying the field of its critical application and by bringing together two scholarly traditions, whose insights and concerns only partially overlap.

This choice prompts the adoption of a rather uncommon angle of observation as far as genre and period are concerned. While certainly lagging behind other European countries in industrial modernisation, Italian culture nevertheless proved an 'extreme laboratory of modernity' where some of the most influential trends of twentieth-century art and politics were launched, for better or worse (Valesio 2004: xviii). This laboratory theme guides the present research in multiple respects. First, while most studies on epiphany focus on lyrical poetry or novels, this work will consider short stories. Between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the short story enjoyed a period of great success and profound renovation, particularly fruitful in Italian and English literature (Head 1992: 1-36; Luperini 2005: 89-102; Perosa 2013). According to Head, the coincidence between this flourishing and the beginnings of modernism is not casual: 'the short story encapsulates the essence of literary modernism, and has an enduring ability to capture the episodic nature of twentieth-century experience' (1992: 1). The genre's brevity, essentiality, and intensity embody precisely the same idea of life as meaningless repetition punctuated by significant events that underlies the popularity of epiphanies (Mazzoni 2011: 340). Moreover, its relative lack of codification encourages cross-genre solutions, merging narrative prose with lyrical concentration and dramatic intensity (Shaw 1983: 9-13). If it is true then, as Langbaum claims, that 'the epiphanic mode appears in fiction at just the time when fiction begins to approximate the intensity of the lyric', short stories were the form that allowed for this transition (1983: 343). It is significant that even some important masterpieces of modernist literature, including *Ulysses* and *Mrs Dalloway*, began as short stories. The short story is the laboratory sample where the technical revolutions of modernist fiction were developed, and where the fragmented, enigmatic, ambiguous view of modern life could first find expression.

All these reasons make this genre a vantage ground from which to observe the diffusion of the epiphanic moment in modernist prose fiction, specifically in Anglophone and Italian literature. Yet this form tends to receive less critical attention than poetry and

novels. The four authors this work brings together – Luigi Pirandello (1867-1936), James Joyce (1882-1941), Federigo Tozzi (1883-1920), and Katherine Mansfield (1888-1923) – were among the best writers of short fiction of their age. Pirandello's and Tozzi's stories have been deemed their highest literary achievement, yet, paradoxically, they are paid less critical attention than their novels. This is also true, on another plane, for Mansfield, who is cited as a revolutionary innovator of Anglophone fiction but much more rarely studied than her novelist peers. This work intends to address this gap, observing their short fiction in close reading. The critical challenge of handling multiple disconnected pieces is addressed by circumscribing their scope. The material analysed here pertains to the authors' production up to 1922. In that year, Pirandello launched his *Novelle per un anno*, a collection of the impressive number of short stories he had written in the previous decades. The case studies analysed here were selected among those written between 1907, when his poetics of humour was formally elaborated, and 1915, when his main focus started to shift to theatre. This is also approximately the timeframe of Joyce's *Dubliners*, whose stories were first composed in the years 1904-1907 and subsequently revised until their eventual publication in 1914. Tozzi's texts come from the only collection of short stories he personally curated before his early death, *Giovani* (1920), which included work written mostly between 1917 and 1919. Mansfield's case studies, also written from 1918 onward and collected in *Bliss and Other Stories* (1920) and *The Garden Party and Other Stories*, finally brings us back to 1922 - the 'annus mirabilis' of Western modernism.

According to currently available evidence, it appears that before this point these authors had heard nothing of their international colleagues. Contacts have been proven within their respective language areas: Tozzi and Pirandello became friends in the 1910s, and Mansfield had certainly heard of Joyce, although there is a suspicious silence in her papers regarding *Dubliners.* No evidence suggests direct influence of the Anglophone authors over the Italians or the reverse. However, their aesthetic research has much in common, including stylistic and thematic concerns that go beyond, and contribute to explaining, their use of epiphanies. These affinities encourage the employment of modernism as an international rubric also applicable to the early twentieth-century Italian

context, as has become common practice over the last three decades (Cianci 1991; Somigli and Moroni 2004; Luperini and Tortora 2012). In the present work, modernism is taken as a pragmatic category which allows us to acknowledge these authors' common cultural background and highlight their aesthetic convergence around comparable issues. Contributing to the discussion on international modernism, or Italian modernism specifically, is not the main aim of this thesis. However, its results confirm a substantial coherence of sources, methods, and intentions between the Anglophone and Italian writers here considered, and further study may be able to contextualise them in an early stage of modernism, the laboratory phase before the season of the 1920s and 1930s.

If these authors had not influenced one another, how did they come to including such similar experiences of illumination in their work and to giving them prominence as central aesthetic phenomena? How did each of them view it? And what can their individual reflection and practice reveal about the phenomenon as a whole? These questions guide the following chapters, each singularly focused on one author and their work. An analysis of their aesthetic ideas as they emerge from critical and private writings will help determine in what terms, and in what cultural frame, they conceptualised moments of illumination, and a close reading of selected texts will highlight how their aesthetic theories became artistic practice. Any comparative work implies difficult choices to strike a balance between breadth and depth. Preference here has been given to fewer exemplary texts analysed in closer reading. Substantial scholarly work has already been done on the theory of epiphany and its value in twentieth-century culture. What is still lacking, particularly in short stories, is a critical application of these ideas illustrating how a focus on epiphanies can enrich our understanding of literary texts and of the artistic vision behind them. This is what the present work sets out to provide. First, however, it will be necessary to sketch out its guiding concept: what is an epiphany?

I. Epiphanies and Their Discontents

At present, the word 'epiphany' is extensively used – occasionally overused – to indicate any sort of intuition; but in nineteenth- and twentieth-century literature there seem to arise distinctive features about the phenomenon it represents. Some of the earliest studies have looked for criteria to identify it. Beja applies the criteria of Incongruity and Insignificance: the manifestation is disproportionate to its source, as it comes from a detail that would seem irrelevant to anyone else or under any other circumstance (1971: 15-17). Langbaum adds further details: the epiphany is a sudden sensuous perception that triggers a psychological association; it 'lasts only a moment, but leaves an enduring effect'; and it is not fully rendered in the text, but relies on the reader's leap of understanding to achieve its full effect (1983: 341). These criteria distinguish the modern exceptional moment from, on the one hand, any purely rational inference and, on the other, abstract vision. At the same time, an epiphany is neither just an intense impression, nor a rhetorical tool: it 'involves no mere representation but revelation as well. The epiphany per se is not a symbol or an image, though it may arise from one' (Beja 1971: 75). Langbaum even claims 'epiphany is the opposite of allegory, conceit, metaphor; it really happens' (1983: 342). This needs not mean that all literary epiphanies have really been experienced, or that rhetorical devices cannot have a role in their rendering, but highlights an interesting bond between life and art. Epiphanies are conceived not as literary devices, but as real-life experiences that the artist must register and share: 'encounters when a natural or human object unexpectedly shows forth a meaning beyond propositional statement' (Abrams 1971: 390).

Assuming that the ideal epiphany is a real event, this encounter can happen to the author in real life, to a character in the story, or to readers in response to what they have read. The chief issue for its artistic rendering is its radical subjectivity: an epiphany is *literally* a commonplace detail that only becomes relevant because a subject in a certain disposition overloads it with significance. How it is possible, then, to convey its importance? According to Neuhold, 'to understand epiphany the reader needs help'; therefore, authors employ 'three levels of epiphany, the metaepiphany that reflects on itself,

a signal epiphany that uses the reader's readiness to detect key words, and non-signal epiphanies, which leave a lot to happen between text and reader and may differ between readers or readings'. This type of non-signal epiphany would be addressed to an 'expert' reader who completed his *éducation épiphanique* and is now able to perceive the intensity of the moment without further guidance (2009: 160, 136-37).

There remains the fact that, when dealing with a banal event that is not textually marked, the level of arbitrariness increases dramatically, to the point of making the search for epiphanies resemble the dilemma of the emperor's new clothes (Kim 2012: 5). In this requirement for the readers' direct involvement, almost forcing them to an interpretive 'bet', epiphany reveals its profound coherence with a modernist conception of art. This issue is particularly evident when instead of lyrical, auratic epiphanies we have prosaic moments which interrupt everyday repetition without inducing any rapture. These moments, increasingly frequent in the transition from Romantic poetry to modernist narrative, present life as more intense or meaningful without pointing at anything beyond it. Their fascination lies in their power of suggestion that restores an 'aura' around trivial things (Azérad 1999: 184-85), which means trying to reduce them within the specific boundaries of a rhetorical device risks missing their point altogether. Neuhold identifies the shortcomings of a systematic approach, discussing the scarce use of the many typologies of epiphany that have been attempted in the past. Then she valiantly tries to propose her own and break epiphanies up in features and components, only to end up recognising, once more, that these features are only guidelines and the actual relevance of an epiphany must be assessed case by case (2009: 154-161).

If typology can be of any use, however, it is precisely to give an idea of the variety and similarity between epiphanic moments. To this end, the inventory of prototypical forms of epiphany proposed by Tigges (1999) can be associated to iconic episodes from modernist texts to start identifying some of the common features of our family. One type that can be found is memorial epiphanies: moments when the mind is prompted by a present stimulus to produce new significance from a past experience. These can happen in

'retrospective' form, when a sudden sensation of new awareness arises in recalling an event at first ignored, as it happens in a well-known passage in Woolf's *To the Lighthouse* (1927):

> When she thought of herself and Charles throwing ducks and drakes and of the whole scene on the beach, it seemed to depend somehow upon Mrs Ramsay sitting under the rock, with a pad on her knees, writing letters. […] That woman sitting there, writing under the rock resolved everything into simplicity; made these angers and irritations fall off like old rags; she brought together this and that and then this, and so made out of that miserable silliness and spite […] something – this scene on the beach for example, this moment of friendship and liking – which survived, after all these years, complete […]. Ms Ramsay bringing them together; Mrs Ramsay saying 'Life stand still here'; Mrs Ramsay making of the moment something permanent […] – this was of the nature of a revelation. In the midst of chaos, there was shape; this external passing and flowing (she looked at the clouds going and the leaves shaking) was stuck into stability. (Woolf 2008: 132-33)

This very moment frames Lily Briscoe's reflection on 'little daily miracles, matches struck unexpectedly in the dark', one of Woolf's best known metaepiphanies (Woolf 2008: 133). Memorial epiphanies can also occur as a recapturing of the past, when an experience in the present – usually a sensory perception – allows the subject to relive a past event in all its vividness. This is the case in the enormously famous Proustian episode of the *madeleine* in *Du côté de chez Swann* (1913):

> Mais à l'instant même où la gorgée mêlée des miettes du gâteau toucha mon palais, je tressaillis, attentif à ce qui se passait d'extraordinaire en moi. Un plaisir délicieux m'avait envahi, isolé, sans la notion de sa cause. Il m'avait aussitôt rendu les vicissitudes de la vie indifférentes, ses désastres inoffensifs, sa brièveté illusoire, de la même façon qu'opère l'amour, en me remplissant d'une essence précieuse: ou plutôt cette essence n'était pas en moi, elle était moi. J'avais cessé de me sentir médiocre, contingent, mortel. D'où avait pu me venir cette puissante joie? [...] Et tout d'un coup le souvenir m'est apparu. Ce goût était celui du petit morceau de madeleine que le dimanche matin à Combray […] ma tante Léonie m'offrait après l'avoir trempé dans son infusion de thé ou de tilleul. [...] Quand d'un passé ancien rien ne subsiste, après la mort des êtres, après la destruction des choses, seules, plus frêles mais plus vivaces, plus immatérielles, plus persistantes, plus fidèles, l'odeur et la saveur restent encore longtemps, comme des âmes, à se rappeler, à attendre, à espérer, sur la ruine de tout le reste, à porter sans fléchir, sur leur gouttelette presque impalpable, l'édifice immense du souvenir. (Proust 1954: 58-61)[1]

[1] 'No sooner had the warm liquid mixed with the crumbs touched my palate than a shiver ran through me and I stopped, intent upon the extraordinary thing that was happening to me. An exquisite pleasure had invaded my senses, something isolated, detached, with no suggestion of its

Here, the pleasurable sensation is the sign of an involuntary memory which the protagonist deliberately chases, beginning the recovery of a part of himself that seemed permanently forgotten. Because of their double-bond with the past - which can be thus reassessed and repossessed - memorial epiphanies are often found in contexts where they contribute to a character's history, such as the Bildungsroman.

A second type of epiphany is a spiritual experience triggered in the present by a powerful perception: Nichols calls it 'adelonic', from *adelon*, a term in Epicurean philosophy for the unobservable part of experience that can be inferred from empirical data (1987: 74). This happens, for instance, in Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1914), when protagonist Stephen chances upon an unknown young woman on the beach who reminds him of a seabird:

> She was alone and still, gazing out to sea; and when she felt his presence and the worship of his eyes her eyes turned to him in quiet sufferance of his gaze, without shame or wantonness. Long, long she suffered his gaze and then quietly withdrew her eyes from his and bent them towards the stream, gently stirring the water with her foot hither and thither. The first faint noise of gently moving water broke the silence, low and faint and whispering, faint as the bells of sleep; hither and thither, hither and thither; and a faint flame trembled on her cheek.
> — Heavenly God! cried Stephen's soul, in an outburst of profane joy.
> He turned away from her suddenly and set off across the strand. His cheeks were aflame; his body was aglow; his limbs were trembling. On and on and on and on he strode, far out over the sands, singing wildly to the sea, crying to greet the advent of the life that had cried to him. (P: 144-45)

Even though nothing actually happens, under the protagonist's lyricising gaze this unknown girl becomes 'the angel of mortal youth and beauty' (P: 145) come to thrust open for him the way of art. This type of epiphany is more easily found in poetic form, and can

---

origin. And at once the vicissitudes of life had become indifferent to me, its disasters innocuous, its brevity illusory—this new sensation having had the effect, which love has, of filling me with a precious essence; or rather this essence was not in me, it was me. I had ceased now to feel mediocre, contingent, mortal. Whence could it have come to me, this all-powerful joy? […] And suddenly the memory revealed itself. The taste was that of the little piece of madeleine which on Sunday mornings at Combray […] my aunt Léonie used to give me, dipping it first in her own cup of tea or tisane. […] When from a long-distant past nothing subsists, after the people are dead, after the things are broken and scattered, taste and smell alone, more fragile but more enduring, more immaterial, more persistent, more faithful, remain poised a long time, like souls, remembering, waiting, hoping, amid the ruins of all the rest; and bear unflinchingly, in the tiny and almost impalpable drop of their essence, the vast structure of recollection' (1992: 60-64).

also feature dream-epiphanies (including reveries and day-dreams) or sudden illuminations arising from places, encounters, objects, auditive perceptions or words.

Depending on how the subject reacts to them, memorial and adelonic epiphanies can bring a positive illumination – which brings about elation or a sense of fulfilment – or a negative, 'demonic' one which induces longing, sense of emptiness or Sartrean nausea. The first usually contributes to the subject's formation and self-awareness, whilst the second is a sudden realisation of the reality of evil or of the senselessness of existence, through which '[r]ather than building a self, the narrator increasingly disembodies himself' to the point of dissolution of identity (Tigges 1999: 30). An example of the latter is in Pirandello's 1913 story 'Da sé' ['By Himself'], where an economically disgraced man meets an old friend who fails to recognise him:

> quegli occhi erano rimasti a mirarlo con tale espressione di smarrimento e insieme di pietà e ribrezzo, ch'egli a un tratto s'era veduto in essi morto, assolutamente morto, senza più neanche un briciolo in sé di quella vita che Matteo Sinagra aveva avuto. E allora, appena quell'amico, non sapendo più trovare una parola, uno sguardo, un sorriso da rivolgere a quest'ombra, gli aveva voltato le spalle, aveva avuto l'impressione strana che tutte le cose, a un tratto, proprio gli si fossero votate d'ogni senso, tutta la vita gli si fosse fatta vana. (TN II: 884-85)[2]

As a result of this 'strange impression', the protagonist will literally decide to disembody himself, by committing suicide.

A final variation on the theme, which takes on a particular significance because of the potential irony or disenchantment it can release, is the failed (or missed) epiphany. This takes place – or, rather, does not take place – when a highly charged emotional situation leads a character to expect a decisive turning point, or a revelation of some sort, and then fades without manifesting anything. This is how Mansfield ends 'The Daughters of the Late Colonel' (1921):

[2] 'Those eyes remained there staring at him with such an expression of bewilderment and, at the same time, with such pity and revulsion that suddenly he saw himself in them as being dead, absolutely dead, without even a little bit of the life that Matteo Sinagra had once had in himself. So, as soon as this friend, no longer able to find a word, a glance, a smile to address to this shadow, had turned his back on him, he had had the strange sensation that suddenly everything had actually become devoid of meaning, that all of life had become empty' (TS: 139).

> There had been this other life […]. But it all seemed to have happened in a kind of tunnel. It wasn't real. It was only when she came out of the tunnel into the moonlight or by the sea or into a thunderstorm that she really felt herself. What did it mean? What was it she was always wanting? What did it all lead to? Now? Now?
> […] She wanted to say something to Josephine, something frightfully important, about – about the future and what…
> 'Don't you think perhaps—' she began.
> But Josephine interrupted her. 'I was wondering if now—' she murmured. They stopped; they waited for each other.
> 'Go on, Con', said Josephine.
> 'No, no, Jug; after you', said Constantia.
> […] A pause. Then Constantia said faintly, 'I can't say what I was was going to say, Jug, because I've forgotten what it was…that I was going to say'.
> Josephine was silent for a moment. She stared at a big cloud where the sun had been. Then she replied shortly, 'I've forgotten too'. (CS: 284-85)

For an epiphany to be missed, however, the character - and the reader – must have an idea of what it could possibly have been. There must be, therefore, a tradition of revelatory moments grounding the expectation that the text will flout.

II. The Western Tradition of Illuminations

In addition to trying to make the evanescent moment amenable to critical definition, previous scholarship has devoted much effort to sketching its genealogy and historical evolution. Beja, Nichols, and Neuhold, in particular, detailed a history of the concept whose main evolutionary traits are the tendencies to secularise, aestheticise and embody the moment of illumination. The origins have been traced as far back as classical antiquity: the word 'epiphany' derives from an ancient Greek compound of the verb *phainein*, which means precisely 'to show forth, manifest, bring to light' or, in the medial and passive voice, 'to be manifest, to appear, to shine forth' (Liddell and Scott 1963). It is significantly the same root as 'phenomenon', as Levina rightly acknowledges (2017: 193-94). Its semantic field brings together the concepts of surface, patency, visibility, and radiance, with the important clarification that in this sphere 'appearance meant full presence' (Kim 2012: 8). According to Nichols, the Greek used the term *epiphaneia* in reference to 'a manifestation of the power of the divinity' which impacted human affairs, whether or not a deity was actually seen

(1987: 6). Early Christians chose this word for the moment the Magi recognised the divinity of the infant Jesus, 'when God clearly and directly made himself manifest in the lives of men' (Kim 2012: 8).

But the moment of enlightenment has a tradition that is independent of the exact word used. An important precedent is identified by Neuhold in Plato's philosophy, specifically in the idea that behind 'deficient everyday life' there is 'being-in-itself that can at least be glimpsed' (2009: 18). This is the origin of a current of idealism that remained extremely strong in Western philosophy. The other, certainly not unrelated, ancestor of modern epiphany is divine revelation, in the dual form of mysticism and religious conversion. In both cases the subject suddenly experiences intense exaltation or desperation and a new awareness, but the experience is heteronomous, initiated by God. The mystic temporarily transcends time, space, and body to merge with God, in an ecstasy that can be sudden and is often repeated. Conversion, on the other hand, is a single life-changing moment which regenerates the subject upon revelation of an otherworldly reality. The critical discourse tends to recognise conversion as the closest relative to modern epiphany. According to Beja, mysticism requires 'the denial and even the annihilation of the self' and a mortification of the senses, which makes the similarities with epiphany 'almost superficial and incidental' (1971: 25). For Neuhold, on the other hand, in mystical writing 'the mode is always mystical and there is no change from the everyday to the spiritual' which would make the vision stand out (2009: 38-40).

Without denying the importance of conversion, and particularly of St Augustine's description of it in his *Confessions* as a literary model, this view requires some correction. Modern epiphanies are certainly very different from medieval mystical *writing*, but as soon as, coherently with the understanding of epiphanies as real life moments, we shift our focus from literature to experience, they reveal an impressive closeness to mystical *states of mind*. These are the object of William James' psychological analysis of religion in *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, published in 1902 and very widely read in Europe (Bradley 2012: xxix). W. James identifies mystical states of consciousness as the 'root and centre' of personal religion, more primordial than conversions, which are one of their possible outcomes (2012:

290). He does not list the medieval obliteration of the senses and renunciation of the self as requirements of mystical states. Rather, he identifies them according to the four fundamental criteria of ineffability, noetic quality, transiency, and passivity: they are difficult to articulate, they grant a knowledge that is deeper than the discursive intellect, they are momentary, and they give the impression of being seized by a superior power (2012: 290-91). The similarities with modern epiphanies are actually substantial; indeed, as we shall see, certain epiphanic experiences appearing in modernist stories are strongly reminiscent of some of W. James' examples of mystical states. This work will argue that the cause of this proximity is the continuity of both epiphanies and mystical states with deep regions of the mind whose epistemological power is conveyed through the logic of emotions.

These experiences grant a sense of fulfilment and reconciliation based on the same psychological pattern. Except that, by the beginning of the 20th century, they had been detached from a theological frame of reference and largely redirected to art. Cornwell's 1962 seminal study of epiphanic experiences, which she grouped around the model of T.S. Eliot's 'still point', argued precisely that in an age when conventional religion has been undermined, a different outlet for spirituality may involve 'wholeness of being or vision, or both; and this by the reconciliation of such opposites as the past and the present, the self and the other, mind and matter, the conscious and the unconscious' (1962: 6). Along these lines she compared T.S. Eliot, Woolf, and Lawrence with Coleridge, identifying a strong connection between the modernist moments of mystical wholeness and their Romantic antecedents. Cornwell's intuition about the reconciliation of opposites as a core interest of epiphanic experiences is confirmed by the present study, with the important specification that modernists conceived this reconciliation in terms that are significantly different not only from the pre-modern religious visions, but also from their Romantic evolution.

Much scholarly work focused on the continuity between Romanticism and modernism, highlighting some aspects of the phenomenon that emerged in the late 18th century and persist to this day. Romantic authors 'reformulated religious concepts and turned them into secular ways of thinking about mind and nature' (Abrams 1971: 13). The

mind now relates to nature through a direct relationship that does not involve God. As a consequence, sensation becomes the locus of the manifestation: 'to the Romantic poet, all depends on his mind as it engages with the world in the act of perceiving. […] The persistent enterprise is […] defamiliarizing the familiar through a refreshed way of looking upon it' (Abrams 1971: 375-79). Through this revitalised outlook, an insignificant detail 'takes on the radiance of something beyond itself' (Nichols 1987: 10). This radiance should not be mistaken for a spelt-out revelation: the focus on perception implies that, while the sensory experience is very vivid and defined, its meaning remains undefined. Unlike a clear divine vision, 'the moment of revelation is absolute and determinate, but the meaning provided by the inspiration is relative and indeterminate' (Nichols 1987: xii). That is why, in discussing epiphany, it is useful to think about it not as a 'revelation', but as a 'manifestation': it conveys an indescribable sensation which only the fullness of the artistic image can convey, and only at a loss can be articulated through linguistic meaning (Debenedetti 1992: 308).

With the subjective perception of a commonplace detail which expresses the significance of something beyond itself, Romantic art creates the first modern epiphanies, where philosophical idealism and religious notions merge. These moments, which Taylor calls 'epiphanies of being', are based on recognising a particular detail as a symbol of a universal reality which would be otherwise inaccessible. Their literary rendering relies on the artist's ability to describe a particular detail so as to make it 'translucent' to this higher spiritual significance. This symbolisation of the trivial opposes a sense of ordinary experience as reified, mechanistic, and dead: the first industrial revolution evoked the idea that the break with nature is the Fall which has emptied human life of its meaning, and these privileged insights momentarily allow us to 'return to full contact with the great current which runs through all and which also resonates within us' (Taylor 1989: 419-20). We still largely think about epiphanies in these terms, and so did many modernists. The reasons that led the Romantics to look for antidotes to the flat meaningless repetition of everyday existence were, if anything, enhanced by twentieth-century mass culture, creating

a strong continuity: that is why Taylor sees 'the notion of the work of art as issuing from or realizing an "epiphany"' as a legacy of Romanticism that endures to date (1989: 419).

However, in the course of a century this culture developed not only in continuity but also in opposition to Romantic ideas, leading to important changes in the symbolic epiphanies of being. Taylor follows these developments in detail through some fundamental evolutions of the late 19th century. Realism denied that there was a spiritual meaning beyond nature, but still characterised art as an unveiling of things as they really are (1989: 430-34). Conversely, the experiences centred around a 'religion of art', from Baudelaire's poetry to Symbolism and Aestheticism, affirmed the existence of a spiritual realm but denied the goodness of being: nature was actually a source of ugliness and decay, against whose horrors art could bring about epiphanies of beauty (1989: 434-441). A third, extremely influential thread found expression in the philosophy of Schopenhauer, where the great current running through all living beings is amoral, even cruel, while aesthetic contemplation momentarily arrests its impetus and liberates humans from its constant urge. Nietzsche also started from nature's lack of morality, but paradoxically reasserted its goodness, seeing its manifestations as points of contact with its enlivening force (1989: 441-447). These experiences, in Taylor's view, irreversibly changed the Romantic notion of Nature as an unquestionably good source of subjective fulfilment, replacing it with the idea that the goodness of being relies on 'our being able to "see that it is good"' (1989: 448). This 'affirming power, which can help realize the good by recognizing it' (1989: 454) makes epiphanies even more crucial to the modernist ability to give value to experience and rescue it from the threat of meaninglessness, and is still very inspiring for the modernists, as Mansfield's experience in particular will show.

As a result of these complex transformations, modernist epiphanies end up differing from their nineteenth-century origins both conceptually and formally. These differences can be linked to a new philosophical sensitivity and to the scientifically inspired interest in psychology. The philosophical aspect, sometimes evoked but frequently underplayed in scholarship, can be summarised as a move away from Romantic idealism toward phenomenology. In this context, 'phenomenology' is used in very broad terms to group

together different thinkers, from Bergson, to Husserl, Heidegger, and Merleau-Ponty, who focused on the modalities of contact between the self and the world: the way reality is experienced and mentally processed (Taylor 1989: 460). This causes a renewed attention to the surface of things (the ancient *epiphaneia*!) and changes profoundly the notion of epiphany: now 'reality shows in appearance, rather than being veiled or deformed by it' (Levina 2017: 194). Truth is still hidden most of the times and only becomes accessible in privileged instants, but not because the world hides it: because human perception is usually biased. While Aestheticism aimed to overcome the limitations of the real to grasp the spiritual, modernism aims to overcome the limits of ordinary perception to recover the truth and fullness of lived experience.

Phenomenology also changes the role of the perceiving subject. While Wordsworth's spots of time 'give / Profoundest knowledge to what point, and how, / The mind is lord and master — outward sense / The obedient servant of her will' (1992: ll. 208-223), modernist epiphanies happen when the subject gives up this illusion of mastery. They are, rather, instances of mutual opening, when the object makes itself visible and the subject surrenders to its wonder, accepting to be shaped by the genuine encounter with the world (Azérad 1999: 185, Kim 2012: 11-12). Psychological discoveries reinforce this decentring of the subject, showing how 'the turn inward may take us beyond the self as usually understood, to a fragmentation of experience which calls our ordinary notions of identity into question'. As a result, 'the epiphanic centre of gravity begins to be displaced from the self to the flow of experience' (Taylor 1989: 462, 465). With this stark awareness of the limitations in our perception, of the composite nature of inner and outer reality, and consequently of the partiality and relativity (but also, paradoxically, reliability) of any truth, the exceptional moments still retain their value: for twentieth-century authors, 'truth may be multiple and complex, it may even be Absurd, and certainly it can never be firmly or conclusively known; but some of them hoped to catch a glimpse of it' (Beja 1971: 51).

Hence follow the formal differences in the structure and literary rendering of epiphanic moments. We can still have symbolic epiphanies, but their value is now deeply ambiguous: they manifest a transcendent principle embodied in reality, but this is no longer

unquestionably good. Quite the opposite, its recognition often destroys previous illusions of coherence, goodness, and human value. This is a case that Taylor recognises in Mann and Proust; it also leads to the notion that 'somehow the epiphany is undesirable and dangerous, and that we should or even must suppress its revelation', an attitude that Beja found 'unique in Conrad' (1971: 54), probably because he did not think of Pirandello. On the other hand, as a result of this new composite and fragmented view of the self and of its understanding of reality, a new form of epiphany emerges, which Taylor calls 'epiphany of interspaces'. This does not evoke transcendence through a symbolic description of reality; it tries to point to it through a frame of realistic details which are not symbolic in themselves, but, when juxtaposed, create an intensity that evokes the ineffable (1989: 476-77). This new epiphanic mode, built on a discontinuity between what appears and what is revealed, brings back allegories, particularly as Walter Benjamin conceived them, as possible catalysts of a manifestation. Their value, however, remains paradoxically symbolic: even when images are knowingly arbitrary and detached from the reality they try to frame, this reality remains inaccessible by any other means, and its meaning remains an unspecified significance, which it is up to the reader to unwrap. In this sense, somewhat disconcertingly, 'the multiplicity of possible interpretations increases the potential value of the modern epiphanic moment' (Nichols 1987: 27). How, and in what terms, we will try to disentangle in the following chapters.

1. 'A hole in the paper sky': Luigi Pirandello

> Se, nel momento culminante, proprio quando la marionetta che rappresenta Oreste è per vendicare la morte del padre […], si facesse uno strappo nel cielo di carta del teatrino, che avverrebbe? […] Oreste sentirebbe ancora gl'impulsi della vendetta, vorrebbe seguirli con smaniosa passione, ma gli occhi, sul punto, gli andrebbero lì a quello strappo, donde ora ogni sorta di mali influssi penetrerebbero nella scena, e si sentirebbe cader le braccia. Oreste, insomma, diventerebbe Amleto. Tutta la differenza […] fra la tragedia antica e la moderna consiste in ciò, creda pure: in un buco nel cielo di carta. (MP: 164-65)[1]

The possibility to lacerate appearances and become aware of what lies beyond can be found in Pirandellian aesthetics from an early stage. The hole in the paper sky from *Il fu Mattia Pascal* (1904) is one of its most iconic renderings, condensing, within the ruminations of the outlandish character Anselmo Paleari, several Pirandellian reflections. Man is no greater or more serious than a puppet, but with strong and tragic feelings commensurate to the world around him. Except that, all of a sudden, he can become conscious that his horizon of meaning, in which his dilemmas used to find a sense and a justification, is a construct. This new perspective, which forces him to see his world from the outside, cannot quench his former impulses, but calls their significance into question.

Pirandello's epiphanies, narrated in his fiction or his plays, work just like this, confronting the character with what was always there, but remained unnoticed. They are moments of wonder at the obvious, when the subject's understanding exceeds itself and achieves a deeper insight into what the world is, beyond what it appears to be. The 'beyond' (*oltre*) is a fundamental and extremely prolific concept in Pirandello (Lauretta et al., 1991). It is deduced negatively from an acknowledgement of the limitations of human understanding, and has at least three facets that are key to shaping the role of epiphanies: a psychological dimension, leading beyond consciousness to a discovery of the

[1] 'Supposing that, just at the climax, when the marionette representing Orestes is about to avenge his father's death […], someone should suddenly tear a hole in the paper ceiling over the stage–what would happen, do you think? […] Orestes would be in the throes of his vengefulness, and intent on assuaging his thirst for blood; but lo, a rent in the sky! His eyes would turn up toward that, wouldn't they, and all sorts of evil influences would become apparent on the stage. He would droop and collapse. Orestes, in other words, would become Hamlet. The whole difference between the ancient theatre and the modern comes down to that […] – to a rent in a paper sky!' (1923: 181-82).

unconscious; a philosophical dimension, suspended between existentialism, metaphysics, and epistemology, which concerns the possibility of overcoming illusions and learning the truth; and, finally, a spiritual dimension, which tends to consider life beyond its individual limits as participating in a greater order.

When the many Orestes peopling Pirandello's stories discover themselves to be small puppets in a much greater and mysterious world than the one they know, their reactions vary. Vicentini inventoried some of their forms: estrangement from familiar things, moments when life appears as a dream, imaginative opening up of possibilities, pantheistic fusion with nature, up until a consciousness of eternity itself (1985: 172-74). Crossing ordinary knowledge, for Pirandello, happens indeed through an estrangement that can go as far as ecstasy - in the etymological sense of going out of one's self. In these situations, Pirandello often evokes a lyrical, Romantic-Leopardian naturalistic suspension. Critics interpreted this *topos* as a relieving escape from everyday pain in the simplicity of pure perception (De Castris 1962: 200-208), or, on the other hand, suggested that its gratuitousness stands in implicit resistance to the utilitarianism of associate life (Barilli 1986: 30-31). The most widespread interpretation is, however, that the power of these moments lies in their interruption of everyday repetition: no matter how uplifting in themselves, by their transitory, mysterious, and purposeless nature they ultimately reinstate the machinic nonsensicality of ordinary life (Maggi 1977: 35, Dashwood 1991: 170, Klem 1991).

Pirandello's own description of exceptional moments appears in his 1908 essay *L'umorismo* [*On Humour*], where ideas developed over the course of a decade were systematised in a personal aesthetics. These interrelated thoughts guided his entire production thereafter, so that the book can be considered with good reason the 'theoretical epicentre' of his art (Mazzacurati 1990: 295). In order to understand the place exceptional moments occupy within the system, it is necessary to take a step back and sketch out their context. Pirandello spent his youth participating in the intellectual debates of the *fin de siècle*, absorbing the conviction to live in a time of crisis and developing an aesthetics rooted in the contrasts of his age: 'non mai, credo, la vita nostra eticamente ed esteticamente fu più

disgregata. Slegata, senz'alcun principio di dottrina e di fede […] la coscienza moderna dà l'imagine d'un sogno angoscioso […] d'una battaglia notturna, d'una mischia disperata […]. È in lei un continuo cozzo di voci discordi, un'agitazione continua' ('Arte e coscienza d'oggi', 1883, SPSV: 901, 906).[2] These lines may appear as an indictment of a precise historical condition. Behind them, however, lie no less than the great existential questions – 'Che cos'è il vero?' 'Donde si viene? dove si va? […] A quale scopo vivo io?' (SPSV: 897, 898).[3] As Vicentini noted, Pirandello here enucleates an impasse that is not historical, but ontological (1985: 20). Modernity has brought to light with unprecedented evidence the tragic condition of humankind, which is able to perceive the mystery of its existence, but unable to solve it. Pirandello himself is at an impasse. On the one hand, he accepts the positivist objections to transcendence ('Mi fa bensì meraviglia che si chiami Dio quel che in fondo è bujo pesto', (SPSV: 893)[4]), but at the same time he recognises that spiritualist needs are irrepressible ('l'uomo […] non si sentì d'imitare il savio bestiame, per cui la sola verità, ch'esista, è l'erba che gli cresce sotto il mento' (SPSV: 897)[5]) (Vicentini 1985: 19).

In order to represent an age in which human consciousness exposes this conflicted nature, Pirandello argues, art must not try to compose, but delve into contradictions. There is an inclination that favours this type of art: a 'feeling of the opposite' that is a purview of the humoristic disposition.

> Un umorista dovrebbe dirsi solamente chi ha il sentimento del contrario, chi ha cioè una filosofica tolleranza spinta fino a tal segno da non sapere più da quale parte tenere. Finge talvolta l'umorista di tenere soltanto da una parte; ma dentro, intanto, gli parla l'altro sentimento […] e comincia a muovere ora una timida scusa, che smorza il calore del primo sentimento, ora un'arguta riflessione, che ne smonta la serietà, e induce a ridere. (SI: 581)[6]

[2] 'Never, I believe, was our life more ethically and aesthetically disintegrated. Unhooked, without any principle of doctrine or faith […] modern consciousness conveys the picture of an anguished dream, of a nocturnal battle, of a desperate brawl. It hosts a continuous clash of discordant voices, a ceaseless unrest'.
[3] 'What is truth?' 'Where did we come from? Where do we go? To what end do I live?'.
[4] 'I rather marvel at our calling God what, in reality, is complete darkness'.
[5] 'Man did not feel like imitating the wise livestock, for whom the only existing reality is the grass growing under their chin'.
[6] 'Per Salvatore Farina' (1907). 'We should only call a humorist a person who has the feeling of the opposite; that is, a philosophical tolerance pushed so far as not to know which part to support. The humourist pretends, sometimes, to support one side only; but meanwhile, the other feeling speaks inside him […] and advances now a faint excuse, which attenuates the verve of the first feeling, now a sharp reflection, which deflates its seriousness and provokes laughter'.

Thus humour, the ability to understand conflict by holding for both sides, is not simply a useful additional quality in an artist, but a central requisite of modern art. It is presented as an attitude which, instead of abstracting and idealising, takes in all the complexities and incongruences of life in order to deconstruct them and lay them bare in their most genuine terms (U: 151-154). Humour as *sentimento del contrario* is thus a picklock to crack reality open by assuming that everything can be seen as radically double-faced.

Epiphanic moments are no exception. They circle around the insoluble mystery of existence, now focusing on its all too human mystification, now aspiring to transcend human perspective. Criticism has emphasised these different sides, each time finding the greatest interest in ecstatic or destructive moments. Although telling them apart is less straightforward than could be assumed, a dichotomy can indeed be perceived. O'Rawe identified the respective paradigms by distinguishing between 'narrative' and 'lyrical' epiphanies. Narrative epiphanies are moments of deconstruction in which the illusion of coherence crumbles and characters are pervaded by an anguish of emptiness and nonsense. They have a considerable impact on the plot, as they tend to set off in characters a chain reaction of thought processes which often ends up in disaster. Many a Pirandellian protagonist has their life dismantled by one of these moments: some are prompted to suicide ('Da sé', 1912), more fortunate ones are left to carry on their usual existence in full awareness of its inauthenticity ('Il treno ha fischiato…', 1914); only occasionally are some protagonists prompted to restructure their existence for the better (and this, too, often happens to the detriment of their social position, as in the novel *Uno, nessuno e centomila* [*One, None, and a Hundred-Thousand*], 1926).

At the other end of Pirandello's epiphanic spectrum we find poetic epiphanies: lyrical moments, often triggered by an encounter with nature, when characters abandon themselves to a pacifying contemplation. These are not interpreted, but merely described, and although they can have narrative consequences (e.g. in 'La vita nuda', 1907), most often they appear as interruptions of the narrative flow, or inexplicable 'truces' from the torture of life ('Va bene', 1905). In a narratological sense, this is not surprising, given that the

manifestation of something out-of-time is likely to interfere with the essentially temporal dimension of storytelling (Debenedetti 1992: 300-301). Both types of epiphany have their nineteenth-century precedents, and both have heuristic value in Pirandello's exploration of the human condition. Rather than trying to determine which is 'more modern', original, or artistically accomplished, it is worth exploring each according to its logic and philosophical background, before considering how they fit together in Pirandello's conceptual system.

1.1 Demystification

Far from comprising a causal succession of feelings, thoughts and events, human reality is an intricate tangle of contrasting instances and illusions which must be debunked. As *L'umorismo* explains, illusions are the result of an unavoidable process of construction by which the interpretation we give of phenomena we only vaguely understand becomes for us, in good faith, solid truth. This happens socially, when we take convenience as truly ethical behaviour, but also within ourselves: we internalise our well-intentioned social lies to the point of genuinely believing that we are exactly what we present to others. That is how we end up consciously knowing only the surface of our self, while there is a whole universe lying in the deep:

> pensieri e affetti già da un lungo oblìo oscurati, cancellati, spenti nella nostra coscienza presente, […] a un urto, a un tumulto improvviso dello spirito, possono ancora dar prova di vita, mostrando vivo in noi un altro essere insospettato. […] Ciò che noi conosciamo di noi stessi, non è che una parte, forse una piccolissima parte di quello che noi siamo. E tante e tante cose, in certi momenti eccezionali, noi sorprendiamo in noi stessi, percezioni, ragionamenti, stati di coscienza, che son veramente oltre i limiti relativi della nostra esistenza normale e cosciente. (U: 143-144)[7]

[7] 'Thoughts and emotions which are, in our present consciousness, obscured and obliterated by the long period of forgetfulness, […] as a result of a shock or a sudden turmoil of the spirit, can still give sign of life and reveal another unsuspected being within our present self. […] What we know of ourselves is only a fraction, perhaps a very small fraction, of what we are. At certain exceptional moments we come upon so many surprising things within ourselves – perceptions, reasonings, states of consciousness – which really lie beyond the relative limits of our normal and conscious existence' (1974: 135).

Pirandello took this idea of a layered consciousness from Alfred Binet's study *Les altérations de la personnalité*, which he referenced from early on in his career (Andersson: 1966). He thus elaborated his idea of personality as multiple, continuously challenged by a powerful subconscious life which is usually repressed by socially induced self-censorship. Most interestingly, this view of the psyche as exceeding the limits of consciousness leads to a first type of 'exceptional moments': those in which what is usually lurking below the surface of the self suddenly becomes perceptible.

Debenedetti argues that Pirandello's psychological 'beyond' is the inward face of the modernist exploration of the 'unknown' and defines the aim of his fiction as 'l'epifania del personaggio, la rivelazione dell'oltre che è nel personaggio' (Debenedetti 1992: 347).[8] This is undoubtedly one of the facets that the Pirandellian epiphany can assume. However, for Debenedetti manifesting the character's split personality was a matter of acknowledging his true and repressed needs in order to rebuild a life in harmony with his true self (1992: 333-338). For Pirandello, on the other hand, the truer dimension lying beyond our conscious selves is not singular: 'la semplicità dell'anima contradice [*sic*] al concetto storico dell'anima umana; la sua vita è equilibrio mobile […]. Questa lotta di ricordi, di speranze, di presentimenti, di percezioni, d'idealità, può raffigurarsi come una lotta d'anime fra loro, che si contrastino il dominio definitivo e pieno della personalità' (U: 144, 145).[9]

This problem, in connection with the power of illusions, is staged in the 1907 story 'Tra due ombre' ['Between two Shadows'], where a man meeting an old romantic rival is brought to face his past self:

> Tutti i ricordi scottanti, gli errori, i rimorsi della prima gioventù, improvvisamente, alla vista di quell'uomo, gli avevano fatto un tale impeto dentro, che n'era come stordito. […] avvertiva, con una lucidità che gl'incuteva quasi ribrezzo, che non soltanto lui qual era adesso, ma lui anche qual era stato tant'anni addietro […] viveva tuttora e sentiva e ragionava […]; ma così vivo,

[8] 'The epiphany of the character, the revelation of the beyond that is in the character'.
[9] 'The oneness of the soul contradicts the historical concept of the human soul. Its life is a changing equilibrium […]. This conflict of memories, hopes, forebodings, perceptions, and ideals can be seen as a struggle of various souls which are all fighting among themselves for the exclusive and final power over our personality' (1974: 136).

così 'presentemente' vivo che, quasi non parendogli più vero in quel momento tutto ciò che lo circondava […] ecco qua, sorrideva […]; proprio come se lui non fosse questo Faustino d'adesso, ma quello: diviso in due vite distanti e contemporanee; vere tutt'e due, vane tutt'e due nello stesso tempo. (TN II: 292)[10]

The unexpected meeting unleashes a past personality which, far from bringing a liberation, dwells uncomfortably next to the present one making the character 'unreal' to himself and to others. The value of the moment is in its questioning power: who is Faustino Sangelli? His passionate younger self is not his true identity: back then he had run away from his constricting role of young fiancé. Neither is he what he appears in the present circumstance, because we are told he is usually very different with his wife and children. Several personalities are in conflict here, contending with an empty space where no actual 'self' can acquire the consistency of reality.

Compelling Sangelli to look at his present self through the eyes of someone else who had known him from before, this 'blast from the past' has a lacerating effect: 'd'un tratto spariva in lui l'immagine di ciò che era stato, come un'ombra, e un'altra ombra d'improvviso sottentrava, l'ombra miserabile di se stesso, ombra irriconoscibile, se colui non l'aveva riconosciuto' (TN II: 294).[11] The other's perspective fails to validate the continuity between his younger and his present self, dismantling his sense of reality as a single person. Yet being finally identified does not restore this unity, as Sangelli discovers when the woman he used to love appears toward the end: 'quegli occhi, così stupiti, gli dicevano quant'era cambiato; lo guardavano come di là da un abisso ove adesso anche il ricordo della sua lontana immagine precipitava […]. E di qua dall'abisso […], ecco, c'era lui, lui quale s'era ridotto' (TN II: 297).[12] The acknowledgement he simultaneously feared

[10] 'All the burning memories, the mistakes, the regrets of his early youth, suddenly, at the sight of the man, had surged in such a rush inside him that he felt almost dizzy. […] He felt, with a lucidity that almost disgusted him, that not just himself as he was now, but also himself as he had been many years ago […] still lived, felt, and thought […]; but so alive, so 'presently' alive, that, almost with the impression that what surrounded him was no longer true […] here, there you are, he was smiling […]; just as if he weren't this present Faustino, but the other one: split between two lives, distant and simultaneous; both true, both vain at the same time'.

[11] 'Suddenly his image of what he had been, like a shadow, disappeared, and another shadow suddenly supplanted it, the wretched shadow of himself – unrecognizable, if that man hadn't recognised him'.

[12] 'Those eyes, so surprised, told him how much he had changed; they looked at him from across an abyss where now even the memory of his long-gone image plummeted […]. And on this side of the abyss […] there was him, what he had made of himself'.

and sought rather brings him a confirmation of discontinuity, since his past and current selves are so different that one must subside and be forgotten as soon as another one is granted the status of reality.

The profound gulf opened in between (where, supposedly, a countless group of different intermediate personalities could be found) highlights the sore spot in this resurfacing of the past: the fall of juvenile illusions. When looking at himself from the outside, Sangelli feels insubstantial and ashamed because he sees how far he is from what he had intended to become: 'a diciott'anni, innamorato di Lillì, aveva sognato la gloria. Era finito professor di liceo, non tanto miserabile perché la moglie gli aveva portato una buona dote' (TN II: 295).[13] In this disappointment, social judgement counts less in itself than as an internalised force. For all Sangelli's constant worrying about what they may think, Crispo's or Lillì's real impressions have no bearing on the questioning dynamics that their presence activates in him. In fact, the protagonist's preoccupations appear to be rather misleading about what is actually going on. 'Che voleva? Che pensava?'[14] are questions he is obsessed with; it does not cross his mind that his answers may not correspond to objective truth, but what comes across through description arouses legitimate doubts. Sangelli thinks of his rival as faring better than himself: 'forse felice, quell'uomo lì. Mentre lui…' (TN II: 293).[15] Yet Crispo is anything but the image of happiness: 'già tutto grigio e più ispido e più cupo di […] tanti anni addietro' at the beginning, 'fosco e solo' in the conclusion (TN II: 291, 296).[16] Even accepting that the man standing at night on the second class deck is him (but that is again only Sangelli's assumption, who 'al bujo non discerneva bene'[17]) his attitude betrays an inner turmoil: 'insaccato nelle spalle, anch'esso col bavero del pastrano tirato su e il berretto rincalcato, guardava il mare. Da guardare però non c'era nulla, in quella tenebra. Dunque pensava' (TN II: 295).[18] Sangelli supposes to be the object of such thinking,

[13] 'At eighteen, when he was in love with Lillì, he had dreamt of glory. He had ended up a school teacher, not too miserable because of his wife's good dowry'.
[14] 'What did they want? What did they think?'.
[15] 'Maybe that man, he was happy. Whilst him…'.
[16] 'Already fully grey and pricklier and darker than […] many years before', 'sombre and alone'.
[17] 'Could not discern well in the dark'.
[18] 'Shrugging his shoulders, the lapel of his greatcoat also lifted to his chin and his beret pulled down, he was looking at the sea. But there was nothing to look at in that darkness. Therefore, he was thinking.'

but given Crispo did not even recognise him, it seems likely his anguish has nothing to do with their old intrigue. The fact itself that on arrival Crispo does not join his family at the harbour and gloomily goes through customs alone might mean that another untold story is unfolding under Sangelli's eyes.

The contrast between reality and personal perception thus emerges as a powerful understated theme, showcasing the irrepressible human tendency to take illusions as proven truth. Sangelli's experience verifies the mistake that happens 'quand'io dismento nostra vanitate, / trattando l'ombre come cosa salda', as Dante famously put it (*Purg.* XXI, ll. 135-136).[19] Treating shadows as substantial things, Pirandello seems to say, is what all humans necessarily do in the unconscious effort to belie the vanity of their existence. This core vanity is actually perceived by Sangelli, in the first encounter with his two 'equally true and equally vain' lives and again in his nocturnal rapture, which extends his private discovery to all existing things. While his awareness is short lived, the validity of his insight is confirmed by the evidence that every character in this story is a shadow. Crispo, Lillì, Sangelli's wife and children are never present as themselves, but only as the phantoms haunting his thoughts, and the protagonist himself is showed to be a very vague entity. The text identifies the two shadows of the title as his two diachronically different selves, but they could just as well be the shadows of Lillì and Crispo as they are for him, the shadows of his past lover and present wife, and, generally speaking, the shadow of an individual as he is for himself and as he inevitably is for others.

Through Sangelli's epiphanic recovery of the past and the psychological journey it initiates, insubstantiality is thus shown to be a general predicament. As soon as we trespass the limits of consciousness and start exploring its beyond, we find ourselves lost in a multiplicity of contrasting impulses among which it is impossible to distinguish one 'true' self among the many. This same issue, about a decade later, troubled Katherine Mansfield, whose reflection on the multiplicity of personality and the necessity of social masks is reminiscent of some famous Pirandellian motifs. However, Mansfield seemed hopeful that

[19] 'When this our vanity I disremember / Treating a shadow as substantial thing' (trans. Longfellow 1867).

the different manifestations of personality would lead, one day, to the flourishing of a 'true self'. For Pirandello, on the other hand, the chaotic multiplicity of inner life does not allow for any ground to identify one true self, because, as we will see, mutation itself is the truth.

As the surfacing of an inner 'beyond' disintegrates the illusion of one coherent personality, exposes its constructed nature, and consequently undermines the individual's unified perspective, it prepares the ground for the most fundamental experience of humouristic insight. This is the vision of oneself from the outside, from a diametrically opposing position of external 'beyond', that Pirandello explores in *L'umorismo*: 'alziamo una mano, nell'incoscienza; e il gesto ci resta sospeso. Ci pare strano che l'abbiamo fatto noi. *Ci vediamo vivere*' (U: 146).[20] This moment of self-observation, an extremely productive aspect of Pirandello's art, is originally one of the core ideas of nineteenth-century philosophical irony. In fact, the awareness of contradiction and paradox, the simultaneous idea of human greatness and smallness in the cosmos, the connection with artistic creativity, and the foundational concept of *dédoublement*, among others, were all part of the reflections of the German Romantics, to whom Pirandello is much more indebted than he is ready to acknowledge. In *L'umorismo* Pirandello concedes, to some extent, that humour and philosophical irony have a common ground (U: 11). He objects, however, that 'dall'ironia, anche quando si usa a fin di bene, non si sa disgiungere l'idea di un che di *beffardo* e di *mordace*', whilst being mocking and biting is not the essence of humour (U: 12-13).[21] Yet this too is a point which a theorist of Romantic irony such as the late Schlegel touches, in a way that Pirandello - had he not needed to present his own argument as different - would not have found reason to contest.[22]

This substantial link becomes extremely interesting when considering the way Paul de Man reads Romantic irony through an important antecedent of *L'umorismo*: Baudelaire's essay 'De l'essence du rire' (1855). Participating in a nineteenth-century French tradition that interprets laughter as socially repressive mockery (Godioli 2015a: 9-19), Baudelaire

[20] 'We lift a hand unconsciously, and that gesture remains suspended. It seems strange that *we* did it. *We see ourselves live*' (1974: 137).
[21] 'Even when irony is employed towards a good end, one cannot remove from it the notion of a certain *mockery* and *mordancy*' (1974: 8).
[22] For an overview of the philosophical reflection on Romantic irony see Behler 1988.

deems laughter 'satanic', an expression of man's sense of superiority and pride, either addressing someone else's misfortune (in what he calls *comique significatif*), or nature itself (in the *comique absolu* of artistic absurdity) (Baudelaire 1976: 535). In both cases, only the spectators laugh, unless the comic situation involves a philosopher or an artist, someone 'qui ait acquis, par habitude, la force de se dédoubler rapidement et d'assister comme spectateur désintéressé aux phénomènes de son *moi*'. Indeed, philosophers and artists 'dénotent dans l'être humain l'existence d'une dualité permanente, la puissance d'être à la fois soi et un autre' (Baudelaire 1976: 532, 543).[23] De Man finds in this process of self-doubling the potential for an instantaneous, disruptive type of insight. When a philosopher stumbles and falls - in a typically comedic situation - he realises human distance from nature, because although man usually stands upright in an apparently powerful position, 'nature can at all times treat him as if he were a thing and remind him of his factitiousness' (De Man 1983: 214). Thus, through falling the philosopher is able to identify his previous mystification, which, for De Man, consists in the Romantic illusion that man participates in Nature in a communion of rational spirits.

Bearing in mind that Pirandello put himself in the category of 'philosophical writers' ('Come e perché ho scritto i *Sei personaggi*' (SI: 1287)), thus merging in his personality both Baudelairian figures of ironical self-doubling, it is now interesting to reconsider Pirandello's most famous definition of epiphany, where he illustrates the effects of humouristic *dédoublement* precisely along the lines described by De Man:

> In certi momenti di silenzio interiore, in cui l'anima nostra si spoglia di tutte le finzioni abituali, e gli occhi nostri diventano più acuti e più penetranti, noi vediamo noi stessi nella vita, e in se stessa la vita, quasi in una nudità arida, inquietante; ci sentiamo assaltare da una strana impressione, come se, in un baleno, ci si chiarisse una realtà diversa da quella che normalmente percepiamo, una realtà vivente oltre la finzione colorata dei nostri sensi, oltre la vista umana, fuori delle forme dell'umana ragione. Lucidissimamente allora la compagine dell'esistenza quotidiana, quasi sospesa nel vuoto di quel nostro silenzio interiore, ci appare priva di senso, priva di scopo; e quella realtà diversa ci appare orrida nella sua crudezza impassibile e misteriosa, poiché tutte le nostre fittizie relazioni consuete di sentimenti e d'immagini si sono scisse e disgregate

[23] 'Who acquired through habit the necessary strength to quickly double himself and to observe as a disinterested spectator the phenomena of his *self*'; 'denote in the human being the existence of a permanent duality, the power to be at once oneself and someone else'.

> in essa. Il vuoto interno si allarga, varca i limiti del nostro corpo, diventa vuoto intorno a noi, un vuoto strano, come un arresto del tempo e della vita, come se il nostro silenzio interiore si sprofondasse negli abissi del mistero. Con uno sforzo supremo cerchiamo allora di riacquistar la coscienza normale delle cose, di riallacciar con esse le consuete relazioni, di riconnetter le idee, di risentirci vivi come per l'innanzi, al modo solito. Ma a questa coscienza normale, a queste idee riconnesse, a questo sentimento solito della vita non possiamo più prestar fede, perché sappiamo ormai che sono un nostro inganno per vivere e che sotto c'è qualcos'altro, a cui l'uomo non può affacciarsi, se non a costo di morire o d'impazzire. È stato un attimo; ma dura a lungo in noi l'impressione di esso, come di vertigine, con la quale contrasta la stabilità, pur così vana, delle cose: ambiziose o misere apparenze. La vita, allora, che s'aggira piccola, solita, fra queste apparenze ci sembra quasi che non sia più per davvero, che sia come una fantasmagoria meccanica. E come darle importanza? come portarle rispetto? (U: 146-147)[24]

This quote is very dense in the number of interrelated motifs it evokes. For the moment, we will focus on its 'deconstructionist' side. Romantic irony, as De Man points out, is 'an instantaneous process that takes place rapidly, suddenly, in one single moment […]. This is the instant at which the two selves, the empirical as well as the ironic, are simultaneously present, juxtaposed within the same moment but as two irreconcilable and disjointed beings' (1983: 225-226). That is a perfect description of the Pirandellian moment, which is repeatedly characterised as sudden ('certi momenti', 'in un baleno', 'è stato un attimo'), and which indeed implies a radical explosion of the individual perspective in two coexistent selves, one who is *in* life, and one who is looking at himself from a hypothetical distance. This estrangement means specifically abandoning the vantage point of human

[24] 'In certain moments of inner silence, in which our soul strips itself of all its habitual fictions and our eyes become sharper and more piercing, we see ourselves in life, and life in itself, as if in a barren and disquieting nakedness; we are seized by a strange impression, as if, in a flash, we could clearly perceive a reality different from the one that we normally perceive, a reality living beyond the reach of human vision, outside the forms of human reason. Very lucidly, then, the texture of daily existence, almost suspended in the void of our inner silence, seems meaningless, devoid of purpose; and that new reality appears to us dreadful in its sternly detached and mysterious crudeness, for all our usual fictitious relationships, both of feelings and images, have separated and disintegrated in it. The inner void expands, surpasses the limits of our body, and becomes a weird emptiness that engulfs us as if time and life had come to a stop, as if our inner silence had plunged into the abyss of mystery. With a supreme effort we then try to recapture the normal consciousness of things, to renew our usual relationship with them, to reassemble our ideas and to feel alive again in the usual way. But we can no longer trust this normal consciousness, these newly recollected ideas and this habitual sense of living because we now know that they are deceptions which we use in order to survive and that underneath them there is something else which man can face only at the cost of either death or insanity. It was only an instant; but its impression lasts for a long time, as a sort of dizziness which contrasts with the stability, itself so illusory, of things; ambitious or miserable appearances. And life, the small usual life that roams among these appearances, almost seems to us no longer to be real; it is like a mechanical phantasmagoria. How could we give importance to it? How could we respect it?' (1974: 138).

reason, leading to a place where 'tutte le nostre fittizie relazioni consuete di sentimenti e d'immagini si sono scisse e disgregate'.[25] So, ironic insight is unsettling rather than conciliating, and tends to set up a progressive questioning of the self: 'from the small and apparently innocuous exposure of a small self-deception it soon reaches the dimensions of the absolute' (De Man 1983: 215). So central is this dynamics in Pirandello's aesthetics that this statement happens to be an accurate plot summary of his 1926 novel *Uno, nessuno e centomila*, where the protagonist's discovery of an imperfection in his nose leads him to progressively tear apart his entire life.

Indeed, Pirandello is not immune from the main logical danger of this intuition. As De Man points out, the dialectics of irony is an infinite process that allows no synthesis. If irony relies on its freedom to question itself, it inevitably produces an infinite sequence of acts of consciousness in which the previous demystification is, in turn, subject to be questioned. The spiral of the 'irony of irony', the recurrence of an act of consciousness that is a never-ending escalation of the self, does not allow for any landing place. That is how the very clarity of this questioning ('lucidissimamente') brings the subject to a point where it is impossible to recover the ordinary consciousness of things. For Pirandello, humans cannot peep through the veil of appearances without dying or losing their reason: the shattering of conventions leaves an unsettling impression, 'come di vertigine', whose effects are irreversible. De Man focuses on the very same image: 'irony is unrelieved vertige, dizziness to the point of madness. Sanity can exist only because we are willlling to function within the conventions of duplicity and dissimulation'. That is why recognising his own social mask leaves the individual on the brink of alienation. And that is also why De Man talks about irony as lucid madness, identifying yet another concept that is crucial in Pirandello's maturity. Absolute irony is consciousness of folly, and at the same time is the end of consciousness itself. It is a consciousness that reflects on its own un-consciousness thanks to the double structure of ironic language, which allows the ironist to separate a part

[25] 'All our usual fictitious relationships, both of feelings and images, have separated and disintegrated' (1974: 138).

of himself that is mad but doesn't know its madness, and then start reflecting on his madness thus objectivated (De Man 1983: 216-17).

'Prima di tutto chiedo licenza di premettere che ora sono savio. […] Quand'ero ancora io, voglio dire, il riverito signor Fausto Bandini, […] è però provato provatissimo ch'ero matto' begins the protagonist of the story opportunely titled 'Quand'ero matto' ['When I Was Crazy'], as early as 1902 (TN I: 761).[26] A related condition, 'la voluttà d'una divina, cosciente follia, che per un attimo mi libera e mi vendica di tutto' is the narrative trigger of the 1915 story 'La carriola', where ironic epiphany in its fierce deconstructionist verve finds the clearest enactment (TN III: 154).[27] The core of the story is a moment of inner silence whose effect, we are told by the protagonist, can be appreciated 'solamente da quei pochissimi, a cui la vita si sia rivelata come d'un tratto si è rivelata a me' (TN III: 155).[28] This revelation seems to happen upon his return home from a business trip, in front of the plaque with his professional titles:

> vidi a un tratto, come da fuori, me stesso e la mia vita, ma per non riconoscermi e per non riconoscerla come mia. Spaventosamente d'un tratto mi s'impose la certezza, che l'uomo che stava davanti a quella porta, con la busta di cuoio sotto il braccio, l'uomo che abitava là in quella casa, non ero io, non ero stato mai io. […] Io non avevo mai vissuto; non ero mai stato nella vita; in una vita, intendo, […] da me voluta e sentita come mia. Anche il mio stesso corpo, la mia figura, quale adesso improvvisamente m'appariva […] mi parve estranea a me […]. Chi lo aveva fatto così, quell'uomo che figurava me? […] Chi lo faceva muovere e parlare così? Chi gli aveva imposto tutti quei doveri, uno più gravoso dell'altro? (TN III: 156)[29]

[26] 'First of all, let me preface my story by stating that I am now sane. […] But when I was still myself, I mean, when I was the respected and wealthy Mr. Fausto Bandini […] I was crazy, crazy beyond the shadow of a doubt' (TM: 15).
[27] 'The delight of a divine, conscious madness that for an instant frees me and allows me to get even with everything' (TM: 117)
[28] 'Only by those very few individuals whose lives have revealed themselves to them as mine all of a sudden did to me' (TM: 118).
[29] 'Suddenly I saw, as if from outside my body, myself and my life, but so that I couldn't recognize myself or recognize my life as being my own. I suddenly felt frightfully certain that the man standing in front of that door with the leather case under his arm, the man who lived in that house, was not me, had never been me. […] I had never lived. I had never been in life; in a life, I mean to say, […] desired and felt as my own. Even my own body, my own shape as it now suddenly appeared to me […] seemed alien to me. […] Who had made the man whom I was supposed to be that way? […] Who made him move and speak that way? Who had imposed all those duties upon him, one more weighty and hateful than the other?' (TM: 119-120).

With the typical suddenness and randomness of epiphanic manifestations, a violent estrangement sets off an avalanche of ironical acts of consciousness bringing the character to a psychological dissociation. His public persona is recognised as a sort of automaton which he had previously inhabited without intimately participating to its function. Now the associations and mindset linking him to that specific body and temperament are rescinded, and a wide gap opens between his concrete person and his real self. His social identity is reified into a puppet, and the ironic, dissociated 'I' can begin to question the principles that until then kept the machine going: 'che m'importava di tutte le brighe in cui quell'uomo stava affogato dalla mattina alla sera, di tutto il rispetto, di tutta la considerazione di cui godeva […] e della ricchezza e degli onori che gli erano venuti dall'assiduo scrupoloso […] esercizio della sua professione?' (TN III: 157).[30] In terms that, years later, would be popularised by Adriano Tilgher (1923) (but which are already fully formulated here) we can say that this epiphanic moment brings the protagonist an awareness of his form, the structure in which, despite himself, his life has taken shape. This concept, as it often happens in Pirandello, is allegorically materialised in the character's name, house, and physical body, signifiers of the social and biological determinations imposed on the free evolution of the individual self.

Once the unity of the self and the solidity of reality have been disaggregated, a sense of desperate emptiness is left. Life does not make sense, it cannot be taken seriously: it is no more than a mechanical phantasmagoria. The word 'mechanical' here is key. Throughout Pirandello's work, mechanics, a synecdoche for the constructed and the artificial, is contrasted with the organic laws of the natural world. The central concept of De Man's analysis thus brings into light the working of Pirandello's ironical insights. The *momenti di silenzio interiore* are epiphanic intuitions that trigger the demystifying process of philosophical irony, bringing the subject all the way through the recognition of his biblical fall: the detachment from nature, after which he can no longer find a perspective of meaning or personal transcendence. De Man upholds irony as an antidote to a tendency of Romantic

[30] 'What did I care about all those cases with which that man was swamped from morning to night? And about all the respect, all the esteem he enjoyed […] and about the wealth and honors that had come to him from the assiduous […] practice of his profession?' (TM :120)

poets to mystify their relationship to Nature, feigning a communion with its eternal cycles in order to escape the anguish of mortality. In Italy this type of demystification was championed by Leopardi, for whom facing Nature's extraneity and indifference was a foundation of aesthetics and ethics alike. Pirandello admired Leopardi (whom he notably considered a great humourist), and was deeply affected by his ideas (Stasi 1995; Federici 1996). The unsettling 'different reality' that in his moments of inner silence can be sensed but not approached is indeed nature as the late Leopardi pictured it, no longer nurturing and pliable to human domination, but 'dreadful in its sternly detached and mysterious crudeness'. In 'La carriola', it appears as the force of life itself, which the protagonist can sense running around him while he is trapped into a prison of duties he does not feel he can break.

As stated in *L'umorismo*, this ironical estrangement is permanent. Even after making the decision to reenter his form, the character continues his escalation of questioning, which grows to reach existential proportions: 'Chi vive, quando vive, non si vede: vive…Se uno può vedere la propria vita, è segno che non la vive più […]. Come una cosa morta, la trascina. Perché ogni forma è una morte' (TN III: 157).[31] On this basis, the very possibility of self-knowledge is questioned: 'se possiamo vederla, questa forma, è segno che la nostra vita non è più in essa: perché se fosse, noi non la vedremmo […]. Possiamo dunque vedere e conoscere soltanto ciò che di noi è morto. Conoscersi è morire' (TN III: 158).[32] By this point, however, the apparently unshakeable logic of the character's reasoning reveals its gaps. The fact that we can only know in ourselves what is fixed, and therefore dead, does not warrant the conclusion that to know ourselves is to die; it only means that when we can know something of ourselves we are already past it. To know oneself is, rather, to go beyond oneself. The truth of this will be explored in greater detail later on in the chapter. Meanwhile, the very vehemence of the character's rebellion suggests that he is all but dead:

[31] 'He who lives, doesn't see himself while he's living: he simply lives…If one can see his own life, that only means that one no longer lives it […]. Like a dead thing, one drags it along, because every form is a death' (TM: 121).
[32] 'If we can see this form, that's an indication that our life is no longer in it, because if it were, we wouldn't see it […]. Therefore we can see and know only what has died in us. To know oneself is to die.' (TM: 121)

'l'anima mia grida dentro questa forma morta' (TN III: 158),[33] he states, while other characters who happen to discover their condition of death-in-life, such as Matteo Sinagra in 'Da sé', welcome the news without resistance, as a statement of fact and even with relief.

All in all, it would seem that through his side of ironical insight the lawyer of 'La carriola' does not keep ascending to new heights of philosophical understanding, as is suggested by De Man, but rather ends up stuck in the vicious cycle of his dissatisfaction. He opts to remain fully within his form, deciding (rather one-sidedly) that the persona he is caught in is exactly what his family members want, and that the consequences of past actions leave him no room for change. It is important to recognise that this reasoning, although not uncommon among Pirandellian characters, is entirely his own. The recurrence of familiar arguments and the presence of a narrating voice that seems close to the author's own should not obscure the fact that every character speaks for him or herself. Pirandello's stories are not exempla of how certain circumstances should be dealt with, but rather case studies of how individual characters negotiate their way through similar (and yes, inescapable) predicaments. The lawyer's 'conscious folly' is confined within the boundaries of an escapist gesture, through which he repeats the act of getting out of himself: 'le mani mi ballano dalla voluttà che sto per concedermi, d'esser pazzo, d'esser pazzo per un attimo solo, d'uscire per un attimo solo dalla prigione di questa forma morta' (TN III: 159).[34] This is an option that many protagonists of stories written in this period, from 'Il treno ha fischiato…' to 'Rimedio: la geografia' embrace to keep the structure of their life in place once an ironical epiphany has awakened them to its beyond.

This reading of irony as a way to philosophical insight goes hand in hand with another aspect that has been noticed in Pirandello: his tendency to allegory. De Man associates allegory and irony, attributing to both an analogous power to lay bare human distance from a hypothetical 'wholeness' of eternity and meaning, and bring out the sense of mortality (1983: 226). Luperini found this same connection in the Pirandellian epiphany, noting that 'avendo una natura ironica, essa scinde, divide, scompone, non persegue la

[33] 'My soul cries out from within this dead form' (TM: 121).
[34] 'My hands tremble from the pleasure I am about to concede myself, the pleasure of being mad, of being mad for just a moment, of leaving the prison of this dead form for just a moment' (TM: 123).

sintesi e la capacità unificante del simbolo, [ma] punta […] sulla decostruzione critica e sul ragionamento. […] Mostra l'inganno del mondo come (falsa) rappresentazione e la necessità di non farvisi coinvolgere' (2007: 270-271).[35] While some interpret epiphany in terms of seeing a real object or event as a symbol, Pirandello's deconstructionist revelations tend indeed to take an allegorical route, where the event's interpretation is clearly the subject's own, sometimes very laborious, attribution of meaning. It makes sense, for that matter, that it should be a figure regarded as artificial and arbitrary to convey the subject's discovery of his disharmony with the life of nature, 'un distacco dalla realtà che porta con sé una impotenza alla significazione' (Luperini 2007: 22).[36] Although Luperini promotes deconstructionist fury as the most important mood of the Pirandellian epiphany (2007: 270), however, his preference should not lead us to overlook the other half of Pirandello's epiphanic keyboard: the lyrical suspension, where the focus is not on debunking the masquerade of society, but precisely on the individual's intimate connection to life, a communion so profound that can lead the individual subject to dissolve.

1.2 Metaphysical Intuition

In order to reach the other end of the spectrum, it is necessary to understand the ground on which the two poles of Pirandello's epiphany meet and coexist. We can call this area Pirandello's metaphysics, although he is (deliberately) far from elaborating a logically coherent philosophical view. The possible outcome of seeing oneself in life is twofold. On the one hand, the ironic debunking of conventional mystification, which leads to recognising the dissonance between the self, the world, and the individual form. On the other, the recognition of something behind appearances which tests the limits of human understanding: 'una realtà diversa da quella che normalmente percepiamo, una realtà

[35] 'Having an ironical nature, it distinguishes, divides, takes things apart, it does not pursue the synthesis and unifying power of the symbol, [but] relies […] on critical reasoning and deconstruction. […] It shows the deception of the world as a (false) representation and the need to avoid becoming involved with it'.
[36] 'A detachment from reality which brings along an inability to signify'.

vivente oltre la finzione colorata dei nostri sensi, oltre la vista umana, fuori delle forme dell'umana ragione' (U: 146).[37] If our focus remains on human reason, this sentence is a desperate acknowledgement of radical incomprehension. If, however, we move our attention to its object, the reality 'beyond', we notice that the value of this statement lies not merely in negation. Underpinning this idea is a vision of life as a continuous flow clashing with form, or the stability of convention:

> La vita è un flusso continuo che noi cerchiamo d'arrestare, di fissare in forme stabili e determinate, dentro e fuori di noi, perché noi già siamo forme fissate […] che però possono seguire il flusso della vita […]. Le forme, in cui cerchiamo d'arrestare […] questo flusso continuo, sono i concetti, sono gli ideali a cui vorremmo serbarci coerenti, tutte le finzioni che ci creiamo, le condizioni, lo stato in cui tendiamo a stabilirci. Ma dentro di noi stessi, in ciò che noi chiamiamo anima, e che è la vita in noi, il flusso continua, indistinto, sotto gli argini, oltre i limiti che noi imponiamo, componendoci una coscienza, costruendoci una personalità. In certi momenti tempestosi, investite dal flusso, tutte quelle nostre forme fittizie crollano miseramente. (U: 145)[38]

This model, particularly explicit in 'La carriola', is evidently construed by analogy to the structure of consciousness inspired by Binet, and reframes the unceasing current of inner life as the psychological side of a configuration that is valid in universal terms. The psychology of the character is thus only the starting point for a greater metaphysical insight, concerning 'la natura stessa della condizione umana, un'ontologia dell'essere, e, se si preferisce, la nuova antropologia del modernismo' (Luperini 2007: 268).[39] This existential view is not inherently bleak. Its roots are in vitalism, a philosophical current that was popular in the late 19th century, and which Pirandello had surely encountered through Séailles' *Essai sur le génie dans l'art* and its commentaries (Andersson 1966). It is not Séailles

[37] 'A reality different from the one that we normally perceive, a reality living beyond the reach of human vision, outside the forms of human reason' (1974: 138).
[38] 'Life is a continuous flux which we try to stop, to fix in stable and determined forms, both inside and outside ourselves, because we are already fixed forms […] which however can follow the flow of life […]. The forms in which we seek to stop […] this constant flux are the concepts, the ideals with which we would like consistently to comply, all the fictions we create for ourselves, the conditions, the state in which we tend to stabilize ourselves. But within ourselves, in what we call the soul and is the life in us, the flux continues, indistinct under the barriers and beyond the limits we impose as a means to fashion a consciousness and a personality for ourselves. In certain moments of turmoil all these fictitious forms are hit by the flux and collapse miserably under its thrust' (1974: 137).
[39] 'The very nature of the human condition, an ontology of being, and, if you prefer, the new anthropology of modernism'.

directly, however, but his reader Henri Bergson who can be of greatest assistance in understanding the implications of Pirandello's 'tempestuous moments' when we look at them from the perspective of the 'beyond'. There is as yet no philological evidence that Pirandello had read Bergson at the early stage when he was writing *L'umorismo*, and demonstrating direct influence is not within the scope of this thesis. However, their affinity of views, pointed out by several critics but rarely explored in depth, is so powerful that Bergson's thought provides a background against which Pirandello's conception of life can be understood with greater clarity.

The central point of contact between Pirandello and Bergson is precisely this idea of life as a current that runs through matter, animating it whilst finding in it a progressive obstruction:

> De bas en haut du monde organisé c'est toujours un seul grand effort; mais, le plus souvent, cet effort tourne court [...] absorbé par la forme qu'il est occupé à prendre [...], il est à la merci de la matérialité qu'il a dû se donner. […] La vie en général est la mobilité même; les manifestations particulières de la vie n'acceptent cette mobilité qu'à regret et retardent constamment sur elle. [...] Parfois cependant se matérialise à nos yeux, dans une fugitive apparition, le souffle invisible qui les porte. (Bergson 1907: 138-39)[40]

Reading Bergson's quote from his 1907 *L'Évolution créatrice* alongside Pirandello's 1908 passage from *L'umorismo* highlights a common understanding of life's process. For both, the existence of living organisms is the result of an encounter between the dynamism of life and the resistance of matter. Pirandello tends to speak of form, rather than matter, because his focus is on the human psyche rather than biological evolution. However, he conceived form and matter in close relation, as it is attested by his reference to the material body as the epitome of all forms: 'può rappresentare talvolta una tortura, rispetto all'anima che si muove e si fonde, il nostro stesso corpo fissato per sempre in fattezze immutabili' (U:

[40] 'From the bottom to the top of the organized world we do indeed find one great effort; but most often this effort turns short, […] absorbed by the form it is engaged in taking […], it is at the mercy of the materiality which it has had to assume. […] Life in general is mobility itself; particular manifestations of life accept this mobility reluctantly, and constantly lag behind. […] At times, however, in a fleeting vision, the invisible breath that bears them is materialized before our eyes' (2001: 123-124).

146).[41] In this conception, life is seen as a force of change, a continuous impulse to evolve, which also means pure creative potential. In order for this potential to become actual, however, life must be materialised. This means, quite literally, that it must reach a compromise with matter: giving concrete existence to one of its infinite potential shapes, at the price of slowing down its rhythm of creative mutation (Bergson 1907: 197).

Thus, life ends up 'trapped' in matter: it is artificially arrested in one phase of its development, which immediately stops corresponding to where it would be if it were following its authentic movement, and during an organism's lifetime is progressively slowed down to the point of death. As Pirandello's character glosses in 'La trappola' ['The Trap'] (1912):

> Che vuol dire […] darsi una realtà, se non fissarsi in un sentimento, irrigidirsi, incrostarsi in esso? E dunque, arrestare in noi il perpetuo movimento vitale, far di noi tanti piccoli e miseri stagni in attesa di putrefazione […]. Noi tutti siamo esseri presi in trappola, staccati dal flusso che non s'arresta mai, e fissati per la morte. (TN II: 696-97)[42]

It is important to keep in mind, however, that for both Bergson and Pirandello both sides are equally necessary: it is only possible to act in the world, shaping matter and relating to other living beings, by having a material existence. This has consequences, including the fact that it is *necessary* for human beings to interpret themselves and others as fairly stable, thus ignoring the inner thrust of life which pushes them to constantly evolve. On this basis Pirandello develops a tragic view of social existence: authenticity is never attainable, as in order to be authentically alive we would need to go back to that state of continuous mutation and fusion where we, quite simply, would not even exist as conscious individuals. True life and actual existence are thus incompatible, and humour is in charge of laying bare all the contradictions that necessarily arise as a result.

[41] 'That is why, moreover, our bodies, forever fixed as they are in immutable features while our souls flow and change into new forms, can sometimes be a torture for all of us' (1974: 137).
[42] 'What does giving oneself a reality mean if not fixing oneself in a feeling, becoming congealed, stiff and encrusted in it? Therefore, arresting in ourselves the perpetual vital movement, making of ourselves so many small miserable pools destined for putrefaction […]. We are all beings that have been caught in the trap, separated from the ceaseless flux and fixed to die' (TS: 119).

However, this situation of 'equilibrio mobile' (U: 144) also implies that human beings are, in a way, connected to the rest of the cosmos, and that this connection can become perceptible, giving us access to the most authentic (because not yet reified) part of ourselves and allowing us to tap directly into the mystery of universal life.

> Vi sono anime irrequiete, quasi in uno stato di fusione continua, che sdegnano di rapprendersi, d'irrigidirsi in questa o in quella forma di personalità. Ma anche per quelle più quiete, che si sono adagiate in una […] forma, la fusione è sempre possibile: il flusso della vita è in tutti' (U: 146)[43].

Both Pirandello and Bergson mention instances in which life's force, buried under the solidified strata of habit, can become manifest. Pirandello's image in this instance is explosive, picturing a compression that builds up to a sudden, disruptive release. Bergson evokes the manifestation in more contemplative terms as a success of philosophical insight. It is in fact one of the cornerstones of his thought that metaphysical insight, the perception of life in its unfolding, can be achieved, albeit not through the intellect.

Several Pirandellian stories revolve around the character's perception at once of their own reification and of the life which keeps flowing around, and 'La carriola' offers again the clearest example. The lawyer's estrangement on his staircase, indeed, does not come from nothing, but is set up by another exceptional moment occurring right before, as during his journey home he looks out of the train window:

> Restai, per un tempo incalcolabile, come in una sospensione vaga e strana, ma pur chiara e placida. Ariosa. Lo spirito mi s'era quasi alienato dai sensi, in una lontananza infinita ove avvertiva appena, chi sa come, con una delizia che non gli pareva sua, il brulichio d'una vita diversa, non sua, ma che avrebbe potuto esser sua […]; d'una vita remota, che forse era stata sua, non sapeva come né quando; […] con una pena di non essere, angosciosa, vana e pur dura, quella stessa dei fiori, forse, che non han potuto sbocciare; il brulichio, insomma, di una vita che era da vivere, là lontano lontano, donde accennava con palpiti e guizzi di luce; e non era nata; nella quale esso, lo spirito, allora sì, ah, tutto intero e

[43] 'There are restless souls, almost in a continuous state of fusion, who are disdainful of becoming congealed or solidified into a particular form of personality. But even for the more peaceful souls, who have settled into one form […], fusion is always possible: the flux of life is in all of us' (1974: 137).

> pieno si sarebbe ritrovato; anche per soffrire, non per godere soltanto, ma di sofferenze veramente sue. (TN III: 156)[44]

This passage, which deploys much of the Pirandellian epiphanic lexicon, pictures life precisely as an ever-present reservoir of potential alternatives to what has been concretised into existence. Its perception cannot but be contradictory, in line with the principles of Pirandellian humour, because it highlights at the same time the delightful amplitude of possibility and its painful uselessness in the face of reality's limitations. It is an epiphany of life as much as what follows is an epiphany of form, and having experienced the first is in this case a necessary premise for the second. This experience proves deeply fulfilling, not because it arouses feelings of positivity, but because it is felt to open an authentic dimension, where suffering is not eliminated but reintegrated in a life lived in earnest, in stark contrast with the automatism of duty in which the character is ordinarily absorbed. We can read the sense of authenticity as a coming closer to the kernel of constant creative unfolding which is the original source of individual life. It is significant, in this respect, that the experience appears to take place at the threshold of unconsciousness, between the moment in which the character stops thinking and when he imperceptibly falls asleep.

In the strongest tradition of epiphanic revelations, Pirandello pictures many of these illuminations as sudden and involuntary. On the basis of the analogical relation between psychic life and biological life, Bergson theorised a way in which human consciousness can, actually, push itself towards its very origin. Already in his 1903 article 'Introduction à la métaphysique' he described two possible means of knowledge: analysis, through which one tries to seize the object rationally by juxtaposing many relative points of view on it, and

[44] 'I remained for an incalculable spell as if in an indefinite, eery state of suspension, and yet one that was clear and peaceful. Ethereal. My spirit had almost become estranged from my senses and had taken refuge in an indefinitely distant place where, inexplicably and with a sense of joy that didn't seem its own, it caught a glimpse of the seething of a different life. Not its own, but one that could have been its own. […] A remote life which perhaps had been his own, it knew not how or when […]. And there was the feeling of not existing, which, though empty, was sad and painful. It was perhaps the same sorrow felt by flowers that were unable to bloom. In short, it was the seething of a life that had not come into being, but that was to be lived, there, far, far away, where it was beckoning with throbs and flickers of light. There, ah yes, certainly there, my spirit would find itself quite complete and full, ready not only to enjoy itself but also to endure sufferings – sufferings, however, that would be truly its own' (TM: 118-19).

intuition, 'cette espèce de *sympathie intellectuelle* par laquelle on se transporte à l'intérieur d'un objet pour coïncider avec ce qu'il a d'unique et par conséquent d'inexprimable' (Bergson 1903: 3).[45] The reality par excellence which we seize by intuition is our own self, at the heart of which we find a 'continuité d'écoulement'[46] that is analogous and continuous with the flux of cosmic life (Bergson 1903: 4-5). The psyche, therefore, is the essential starting point to grasp the absolute, and enables the individual to experience its most authentic dimension, the one that participates in the fluidity, mutability and duration of life in universal terms. We saw that for Pirandello inward analysis did not convey a unified principle, but exposed a mess of contradictions. That is because this unity of inner life, simultaneously one and manifold, poses a challenge to human reason:

> il n'est guère de réalité concrète sur laquelle on ne puisse prendre à la fois les deux vues opposées […] qu'on chercherait en vain à réconcilier logiquement […]. Mais de l'objet, saisi par intuition, on passe sans peine, dans bien des cas, aux deux concepts contraires; et […] on saisit du même coup comment cette thèse et cette antithèse s'opposent et comment elles se réconcilient. Il est vrai qu'il faut procéder pour cela à un renversement du travail habituel de l'intelligence. (Bergson 1903: 16)[47]

Thus, when we attempt to get to the root of our consciousness through the tools of intelligence we find ourselves lost within insoluble contradictions. Grasping the principle through intuition *first* will instead enable our reflection to explore it analytically and identify its conflicting components while still providing the broader picture in which they are reconciled. This is a key point to unpack one of the puzzles of the Pirandellian epiphany, which seems to hold together two incompatible instances, the spontaneity of artistic creation and the role of lucid reflection. For Pirandello, too, the flow of life is grasped through intuition and then subject to the scalpel of reflection which dissects its impact on

[45] 'We call intuition here the *sympathy* by which one is transported into the interior of an object in order to coincide with what there is unique and consequently inexpressible in it' (2007: 173).
[46] 'Continuity of flow' (2007: 175).
[47] 'There is scarcely any concrete reality upon which one cannot take two opposing views at the same time […] that it would be vain for us to try logically to reconcile […]. But from the object, seized by intuition, one passes without difficulty in a good many cases to the two contrary concepts, and […] one grasps at the same time how this thesis and antithesis are opposed and how they are reconciled. It is true that in order to do that one must institute a reversal of the habitual work of the intelligence' (2007: 190).

the embodied and social existence of human beings. In this perspective we can also better understand 'le caractère […] presque violent de l'intuition métaphysique' (Bergson 1903: 22),[48] whose victim is intelligence itself. Intelligence, the part of human consciousness that leads to rational knowledge, is calibrated to matter in order to facilitate practical action; it is thus structurally unsuitable to understanding the living principle. Forcing it 'fuori delle forme dell'umana ragione' toward its origin is disruptive, and cannot be sustained for long (Bergson 1907: 258). This explains the instantaneous character of Pirandello's *momenti di silenzio interiore* and their profoundly shocking effect. The 'different reality' can appear horrid, impassive, mysterious, because 'all our ordinary fictitious relations of feelings and images', that is, the normal working of the intellect, 'are split and disintegrates in it': they are re-melted into the flux, against which 'the stability of things', the solid shapes which are extraneous to the dimension of the living, clashes. His epiphanies can be traumatic because they override the very principle that makes each human being a conscious individual.

Our normal approach to knowledge being so deeply challenged, it is not surprising that the 'reality beyond' has been sometimes interpreted as simply nothingness, and the despair of the Pirandellian epiphany as the idea that under the veil of appearance there could just be the void. The idea of nothingness is in effect a tendency of the intellect whose repercussions sound rather familiar: 'c'est elle qui pousse en avant, droit sous le regard de la conscience, les problèmes angoissants, les questions qu'on ne peut fixer sans être pris de vertige. […] De là tout le mystère' (Bergson 1907: 299).[49] In anguishing problems, mystery and vertigo we find the watermark of Pirandello's spiral of irony, which can now be seen as a natural reaction of the intellectual faculty when confronted with something that escapes its principles. However, the image of nothingness, for Bergson, is an intellectual misunderstanding:

[48] 'The essentially active character of metaphysical intuition' (2007: 198).
[49] 'From the first awakening of reflexion, it is this that pushes to the fore, right under the eyes of consciousness, the torturing problems, the questions that we cannot gaze at without feeling giddy and bewildered. [...]Hence all the mystery' (2001: 266-67).

> entre la vision d'une réalité extérieure et celle d'une réalité interne […] il y a un point […] où il nous semble que nous n'apercevons plus l'un et que nous n'apercevons pas encore l'autre: c'est là qui se forme l'image du néant. En réalité, nous apercevons alors l'un et l'autre, […] et l'image du néant, ainsi définie, est une image pleine de choses, une image qui renferme à la fois celle du sujet et celle de l'objet, avec, en plus, un saut perpétuel de l'une à l'autre et le refus de jamais se poser définitivement sur une d'elles. [...] ce n'est pas ce néant-là que nous pourrions opposer à l'être [...] puisqu'il renferme déjà l'existence en général. (Bergson 1907: 303)[50]

If Pirandello's epiphany discovers 'nothingness', it is precisely a 'nothingness' of this kind - not a sensation of emptiness, but of radical relativity: a continuous bouncing back and forth between multiple perspectives and a proliferation of potential alternatives to what exists, so intense that the intellect that is looking for a unique, stable and unchangeable 'truth' would find in it nothing *of what it is looking for*. A vacuum in this sense is the mental state that, in 'La carriola', makes the intuition of life possible:

> Veramente non potrei dire che non vedessi nulla. […]. Ma io, certo, non prestavo attenzione a ciò che gli occhi vedevano. Se non che, a poco a poco, cominciò ad allentarsi in me quella che prestavo alla difficoltà che m'occupava, senza che per questo, intanto, mi s'avvistasse di più lo spettacolo della campagna […]. Non pensavo a ciò che vedevo e non pensai più a nulla. (TN III: 155)[51]

Deactivating rational thought and allowing the mind to wander freely between its creative possibilities is thus the necessary premise to descend into the depth of consciousness. That's why Pirandellian humour explicitly intends to evoke this type of nothingness, programmatically undermining the 'infernal machine' of logic (U: 148-49).

In order to set aside the illusory absolutes of logic and make contact with the real Absolute 'il faut s'habituer à penser l'Être directement […] sans s'adresser d'abord au

[50] 'Between the vision of an outer and that of an inner reality […] there is a point […] in which it seems to us that we no longer perceive the one, and that we do not yet perceive the other: it is there that the image of "Nothing" is formed. In reality, we then perceive both, […] and the image of Nothing, so defined, is an image full of things, an image that includes at once that of the subject and that of the object and, besides, a perpetual leaping from one to the other and the refusal ever to come to rest finally on either. Evidently this is not the nothing that we can oppose to being, […] for it already includes existence in general' (2001: 270).

[51] 'Actually I shouldn't say I saw nothing. […] But I certainly paid no attention to what my eyes were seeing. Nevertheless, the attention I was paying to the problem occupying my mind gradually began to wane, without meanwhile increasing my awareness of the countryside that continued to pass before my eyes […]. I wasn't thinking about what I was seeing, and finally I ceased thinking about anything' (TM: 118).

fantôme de néant […]. Il faut tâcher ici de voir pour voir, et non plus de voir pour agir. Alors l'Absolu se révèle très près de nous et, dans une certaine mesure, en nous' (Bergson 1907: 323).[52] In this light, the view of Pirandello's epiphanies as purposefully unnecessary descriptions acquires new meaning. Barilli reads the appearance of unrelated, gratuitous details that challenge the utilitarian criteria of society and naturalistic narration as a socio-economical critique of bourgeoisie (1986: 30-31). When considered against Bergson's principle of 'seeing to see, and not to act', however, this interpretation also finds its place within Pirandello's metaphysical puzzle. It now seems clearer why Pirandello's lyrical epiphanies, illuminations of a more ecstatic kind, do not appear to trigger the same deduction cascade as the deconstructionist ones; they are trying to capture an intuition that is direct and ineffable, and remains the more unexplained and self-contained the deeper it reaches into depths of life with which the intellect cannot contend.

> Eppure, appena […] uscì dall'ombra della scala sulla via, nell'abbagliamento del sole al tramonto, sotto un cielo tutto di fiamma che dalla parte della marina lanciava come un immenso nembo sfolgorante sul Corso lunghissimo, e vide tra le vetture entro quel baglior d'oro il brulichìo della folla rumorosa, […] i guizzi di luce, gli sprazzi colorati […] delle vetrine, delle insegne, degli specchi delle botteghe; la vita, la vita soltanto si sentì irrompere in subbuglio nell'anima per tutti i sensi commossi ed esaltati quasi per un'ebbrezza divina; né poté avere alcuna angustia, neppure un fuggevole pensiero per la morte prossima e inevitabile […]. No, no, la vita, la vita! E quel subbuglio interno che le sconvolgeva lo spirito, le faceva impeto intanto alla gola, ove […] quasi un'antica pena sommossa dal fondo del suo essere le si era a un tratto ingorgata, ed ecco la forzava alle lagrime, pur fra tanta gioia. (TN II: 549)[53]

[52] 'We must accustom ourselves to think being directly, […] without first appealing to the phantom of the nought […]. We must strive to see in order to see, and no longer to see in order to act. Then the Absolute is revealed very near us and, in a certain measure, in us' (2001: 288).

[53] 'She left the shadow of the stairs and was on the street, there in the light of the dazzling setting sun, beneath a flaming sky which launched from the marina what seemed like an immense cloud over the very long Corso. In that golden glow, among the carriages, she saw the noisy, swarming crowd of people […], flickers of light and colored flashes […] that came from the windows, signs and mirrors of the shops, and she felt life, life, only life, violently entering her soul. It came through her overexcited senses as if from a divine intoxication. Nor did she feel any anguish. She didn't give a fleeting thought to death, which was near at hand and inevitable […]. No, no, she thought of life, only life! Meanwhile, this inner turmoil that threw her mind into confusion assailed her throat where […] something like an old pain stirred up from the depths of her being suddenly choked her up and now made her burst into tears, even amid so much joy' (TS: 96).

That is what Adriana Braggi comes to experience during her first and only trip out of her hometown, portrayed in the 1910 story 'Il viaggio' ['The Trip']. This is one of the stories that most directly deal with the motif of a reawakening to life. The power of social convention, always at work in moulding Pirandellian characters, is particularly heavy-handed in a remote village of Sicily's mountainous interior, where 'i rigidi costumi per poco non imponevano alla moglie di seguire nella tomba il marito' (TN II: 541).[54] We do not need an epiphany to recognise Adriana's condition of death-in-life: the narrator's emphasis on silence, isolation, decay, immobility, and a sterile draught make clear that tamely languishing until the end is the natural course of existence in her context. In this village, Pirandello's imagistic cruelty condenses the vivid allegorical picture of life stagnating in the stasis of matter.

Adriana 'con la morte del marito era quasi morta anche lei per il mondo' (TN II: 541);[55] and yet it is precisely the arrival of death, physical death, first for her tyrannical husband and then for herself, that enables her awakening to life. This occurrence is aided by two favourable conditions. First and foremost, contrarily to what happens to the lawyer in 'La carriola', her family, the main social network which until then had determined her self-annihilation ('e a che avrebbe dovuto pensare, se non a loro?' (TN II: 544))[56] actively pushes her out of her mouldy comfort-zone. Once a year her brother-in-law would leave that 'vasta casa antica, ove il tempo pareva stagnasse in un silenzio di morte' and 'andava […] a tuffarsi nella vita' (TN II: 543).[57] Going with him on this trip in search for a cure to her tumor, she is carried away from her deathly form and reconnected to the movement of life in its unfolding, which is for Bergson the ideal condition for vitalistic insight: 'pour avancer avec la réalité mouvante, c'est en elle qu'il faudrait se réplacer. Installez-vous dans le

[54] 'Strict local customs virtually required that a wife follow her husband to the grave' (TS: 88).
[55] 'She too was all but dead as far as the world was concerned' (TS: 88).
[56] 'What was she to think of, if not of them?' (TS: 91).
[57] 'The large and ancient house where time stagnated in a deathly silence', 'go to […] plunge into each city's life' (TS: 90).

changement, vous saisirez à la fois et le changement lui-même et les états successifs en lesquels il *pourrait* à tout instant s'immobiliser' (Bergson 1907: 333).[58]

The second favourable condition is that Adriana's terminal illness and related journey places her directly among those characters who are '*philosophical*, *resigning*, *death-bound*, *unrooted* (*out-of-their-element*, if you prefer)', and therefore have the troubled privilege of being able to observe life from a distance (Lugnani et al 1980: 275). In this sense, Adriana manifests some common symptoms of humouristic self-detachment, including a 'meraviglia quasi infantile', 'l'ilare ansia febbrile dello sguardo', 'lo stordimento e la vertigine' which she makes an effort to dominate during her first journey by train (TN II: 547):[59]

> A ogni giro di ruota, aveva l'impressione di penetrare, d'avanzarsi in un mondo ignoto, che d'improvviso le si creava nello spirito con apparenze che, per quanto le fossero vicine, pur le sembravano come lontane e le davano, insieme col piacere della loro vista, anche un senso di pena sottilissima e indefinibile: la pena ch'esse fossero sempre esistite oltre e fuori dell'esistenza e anche dell'immaginazione di lei; la pena d'essere tra loro estranea e di passaggio, e ch'esse senza di lei avrebbero seguitato a vivere per sé con le loro proprie vicende. (TN II: 548)[60]

As a passing stranger, she is thus able to acknowledge the limitations of her previous life, with the multifocal perspective, mixed with both pleasure and anguish, of the outsider who has just become aware of her own transience before the vastness of the world. She even sees a glimpse of herself in the population of a village seen from the train: 'oltre a quello che gli occhi arrivavano a vedere, non esisteva più nulla per quella gente; il mondo era un sogno' (TN II: 548).[61] This position of estrangement does not, for once, determine a psychological dissociation, but leaves Adriana without goals to drive her rational thinking:

---

[58] 'In order to advance with the moving reality, you must replace yourself within it. Install yourself within change, and you will grasp at once both change itself and the successive states in which it might at any instant be immobilized' (2001: 297).
[59] 'Wonderment', 'cheerful, feverish eagerness of her glance' 'stupefaction and dizziness' (TS: 94).
[60] 'At every moment, at every revolution of the wheels, she had the impression of penetrating, of advancing, into an unknown world that was suddenly being created in her soul. It was a world of images that, however close they may have been to her, all the same seemed far and gave her, together with the delight she felt in seeing them, a most subtle and indescribable feeling of pain, the pain caused by the realization that they had always existed beyond and outside her existence and her imagination—the pain of being a stranger among them and just passing through, and knowing that without her they would continue living for themselves, caught up in their own lives. (TS: 94-95).
[61] 'Beyond what their eyes managed to see, nothing else existed for those people. For them the world was a dream' (TS: 95).

being removed from the conventions she used to observe and entrusting herself to Cesare as her guide, she definitely starts, as Bergson has it, to look for the sake of looking, and not in order to act. Her rational faculties are twice unsettled, by her physical disorientation, which rescinds usual patterns of thinking and behaviour, and by her long-suffocated unconscious impulses, which become progressively more uncontrollable with the interruption of everyday repetition. In Bergsonian terms, and apparently for Pirandello as well, she is thus in a position of absolute epistemological privilege to make contact with the force of life at its very source.

Bergson explains that intuition happens through an accumulation of images: 'un échange d'impressions qui, se corrigeant entre elles et se superposant aussi les unes aux autres, finiront par dilater en nous l'humanité et par obtenir qu'elle se transcende elle-même' (1907: 209).[62] This is also how Pirandello tries to involve the reader in the character's epiphany. By the accumulation of impressions that come to the character's mind in an ever more poetic and ecstatic language, emotion grows in readers, too, as we participate in her experience. The build-up is also macroscopically observable throughout the story as the initial immobility of village life, evoking Adriana's existence in the timeless tone of a dark folk tale, progressively accelerates in a succession of events, images, and impressions that leave her dazed. This progression characterises her trip as a journey *beyond*, leading her from 'la fede cieca in un compenso oltre la vita', which alone could make her village life bearable, to discovering a beyond within life itself, in 'un mondo, che lei non riusciva nemmeno a immaginare' (TN II: 542, 543).[63] What is, on the practical plane, a geographical beyond also requires her to shed her imposed form in order to encounter her vital principle. Significantly, as the distance from her hometown grows and life manifests itself more strongly, Adriana seems to progressively gain agency. If at first she is driven by the pressure of her children and of Cesare's unusual 'desidero così', after crossing the sea she finally embraces her own physical desire, acknowledging 'il bisogno d'accecarsi, di perdersi, di non vedersi quali finora l'uno per l'altra erano stati per tanti anni, nelle

[62] 'An interchange of impressions which, correcting and adding to each other, will end by expanding the humanity in us and making us even transcend it' (2001: 185).
[63] 'A blind faith in the rewards of the hereafter', 'a world that she couldn't even imagine' (TS: 89, 90).

composte apparenze oneste, laggiù' (TN II: 551, 553).[64] It is now her own decision to keep moving forward, to have 'her day of Venice' and even to defeat death by anticipation, choosing to leave behind the last remainder of her devastated form.

This existential crossing is intensely symbolised by the crossing of the sea. With a clairvoyant premonition, Adriana senses that the passage is irrevocable: 'se con lui si fosse avventurata ancor più lontano, con lui sperduta nella tremenda, misteriosa lontananza di quel mare […] non avrebbe più rivalicato quelle acque, se non fosse morta' (TN II: 553).[65] The source of life appears always at a distance from the concrete, in the usual 'infinite remoteness' of Pirandello's epiphanies, and trying to navigate it ultimately means assenting to getting lost. Adriana's feelings confirm that jumping into boundlessness goes hand in hand with a detachment from reality: 'di nuovo si sentì smarrire nel sogno, in un altro sogno maraviglioso, che le faceva però sgranare gli occhi di sgomento, quanto più, su quel piroscafo […] entrava nelle due immensità sterminate del mare e del cielo' (TN II: 552).[66] In the brief parenthesis between her non-life and her actual death, Adriana is granted the contradictory privilege of experiencing the beyond in its progressive gradations through a journey that is at the same time physical, psychological, and metaphysical. The rising of the moon, a frequent catalyst of revelations, first lugubriously dominating her reign as a threatening presence, then illuminating it with her rapturous otherworldly light, sums up in her appearance Adriana's ambivalent gift. It is of paramount importance that these conquests happen thanks to and at the price of death, and that the peaks of elated insight are always intermingled with anguish. Adriana's experiences confirm that life, real life, only exists as a compromise: going completely beyond its structures in a permanent union with the current of becoming is only possible when leaving embodied existence behind.

[64] 'This is what I want'; 'their need to blind themselves, lose themselves, not see themselves as they had been to each other during those many years, with their falsely honest appearances down there' (TS: 98, 100).
[65] 'If she were to venture with him still farther, lost with him in that tremendous and mysterious expanse of sea […] she would never again cross that water. At least, not alive' (TS: 98).
[66] 'Once again she felt lost in a dream, another marvelous dream that, nevertheless, made her eyes open wide in dismay. And so much more so because on that ship […] she was entering the two measureless immensities of sky and sea' (TS: 99).

Thus the moments of inner silence are not only instances in which the human intellect is confronted with its limits, but also 'tempestuous moments' of metaphysical intuition in which the working of reason is reversed and it becomes possible to make contact with the blind creative force, ultimate origin of life and most authentic part of the self, by being at once with the universal flow. From here to a properly mystical self-dissolution in the larger current of cosmic life is but a step. And Pirandello takes it.

1.3 Cosmic Consciousness

> Questo sentimento della vita […] era appunto come un lanternino che ciascuno di noi porta in sé acceso; […] che projetta tutt'intorno a noi un cerchio […] di luce, di là dal quale è […] l'ombra paurosa che non esisterebbe, se il lanternino non fosse acceso in noi […]. Spento alla fine a un soffio, ci accoglierà la notte perpetua […], o non rimarremo noi piuttosto alla mercé dell'Essere, che avrà soltanto rotto le vane forme della nostra ragione? […] Se la morte, insomma, […] fosse soltanto, non l'estinzione della vita, ma il soffio che spegne in noi questo lanternino, lo sciagurato sentimento che noi abbiamo di essa, penoso, pauroso, perché limitato […]? Noi […] abbiamo sempre vissuto e sempre vivremo con l'universo; anche ora, in questa forma nostra, partecipiamo a tutte le manifestazioni dell'universo, ma […] non lo vediamo, perché purtroppo questo maledetto lumicino piagnucoloso ci fa vedere soltanto quel poco a cui esso arriva. (MP: 183-86)[67]

It is again Anselmo Paleari who, from the pages of *Il Fu Mattia Pascal*, introduces us to the mystical side of Pirandello's epiphany. It is a side that some scholars find uncomfortably nineteenth-century, as, in that novel, it intertwines spiritual afflatus with actual spiritualism and tends toward the occultist fashion that was all the rage in *fin-de-siècle* Europe. It is no mystery that Pirandello took an interest in esoteric doctrines,

[67] 'This sense we have of life is a lantern, as it were, which each of us carries within himself. […] Our lanterns cast about us a greater or a lesser area of light, beyond which all is blank darkness. Now this fearful gloom would not exist were our lanterns not there to make us conscious of it […]. Well now, imagine that our lamps are blown out; this fictitious darkness will engulf us entirely […]. Or is it simply that we have fallen into the arms of Essence which has broken down the insubstantial forms of our Reason? […] Supposing, in a word, that […] death should prove to be not the extinction of life but a gust of wind, merely, which blows out the light in our lantern, extinguishes this dolorous, painful, terrifying sense of life we have–terrifying, because it is limited […]. We are part of that greater life already, and always shall be […]. Right now, in our present bodily forms, we participate in all the manifestations of Universal Life. We are not aware of this […] because, unfortunately, this puny weepy little lantern of ours reveals to us only the amount that it can actually illuminate. (1923: 203, 206-07).

particularly Theosophy (Macchia 1981: 49-55). In this passage he exhibits an ambivalent attitude, presenting occultist ideas while at the same time distancing them through an eccentric character. Proof that he agrees with Paleari, however, is that these words recur in other works, including *L'umorismo* (U: 149-150) and the poem *Esame* published on *Nuova Antologia* as late as 1910 (SPSV: 842-847), and echo yet again in the 1914 story 'La Rosa' (TN III: 78). Like others among his peers, however, Pirandello did not fully subscribe to esoteric doctrines, but was attracted by their syncretic power to merge the suggestions of several philosophies in response to a need for spirituality (Bramble 2015: 2-3).

The topic of Pirandello's religious belief has been approached many times from several angles. Like other authors, particularly Joyce, his childhood was marked by a traditional Catholic upbringing and religious fervour in the company of an old servant 'che aveva una sua religione contaminata da antichi rituali e strani sortilegi' (Lauretta 1984: 56).[68] Traces of these biographical experiences and of the subsequent disappointment that led him to agnosticism and anticlericalism can be seen particularly in his poems, together with a persistent nostalgia for his faith and envy of those who still can believe (Lauretta 1984: 57). To the first critic who tried to unearth the religious vein within him - in what now looks like an attempt to constrain the work that won him a Nobel Prize within a Catholic morale approved by the Fascist regime - Pirandello responded very warmly: 'io vedo che Lei ha saputo leggere nella mia opera ciò che, non per deliberato proposito, ma perché è vero che la vita la sento così, religiosamente, ho pur dovuto trasfondervi; e che pure a molti occhi attenti, e non d'avversarii, è sempre sfuggito'.[69] More than for any specific reading of his work ('il Suo libro su me (non so dire più su la mia opera)'), Pirandello declared to be grateful for the eventual acknowledgement of a 'libero e schietto amore per la vita' as an inspiration for his work (Mignosi 1937: 176-77).[70]

[68] 'Who had a religion of her own, contaminated by ancient rituals and strange incantations'.
[69] Pirandello's letter, 6 February 1935, in response to the first part of the study. 'I see you have been able to read in my work something I must have infused in it, not deliberately, but because it is true that I feel life that way, religiously; something which many attentive and not unfriendly eyes have always missed'.
[70] 'Your book on me (I can no longer say on my work)'; 'free and sincere love of life'.

These statements from an old and by then largely canonised Pirandello seem hardly reconcilable with the deconstructionist verve of the early years. Yet even in the full sway of his poetics of humour this vein of love for life was present and active, surfacing particularly in moments of naturalistic contemplation and complicating his monolithic image as a tragic pessimist. Not only do we find cases where characters lose their faith for an *excess* of spirituality ('Va bene', 1905; 'Canta l'Epistola', 1911), but his stories are punctuated by instances in which, even in the thicket of pain and worry, characters are reminded of how 'poteva, poteva esser bella la vita' ('Va Bene', 'La corona' (TN II: 140, 315))[71]. It is also rather curious that his instances of revelation are accompanied by a recurrence of the adjective 'divine': Adriana feels her senses excited 'quasi per un'ebbrezza divina',[72] the lawyer's folly in 'La carriola' is 'una divina, cosciente follia';[73] the very language of epiphanic moments, as Debenedetti observes, evokes 'lo stato psichico misto di apprensione, angoscia, e riverenza, che si prova di fronte al sacro' (1992: 371).[74] Already in 1896 Pirandello asked himself 'non si chiama oggi in fondo natura quel che prima con più poesia si chiamò Dio?' and explicitly recognised the need for a perspective of transcendence (SPSV: 1059).[75] It thus appears that all along, beside the disenchanted sceptic, in Pirandello dwells 'un idealista che […] non voleva acquietarsi all'irritante rinunzia della scienza di fronte ai formidabili problemi dell'esistenza, al comodo (egli diceva vigliacco) ripararsi del così detto pensiero filosofico entro i confini del conoscibile' ('Dal naso al cielo', TN II: 305).[76]

In this light, the main difference traced by Pirandello between Romantic irony and his idea of humour becomes crucial. Pirandellian humour identifies a complex attitude, of which ironical demystification and superiority is but one side. The other side is, coherently with his initial formula, the opposite of satanic superiority: a human pity founded on empathy, which Pirandello occasionally characterises in terms of sheer saintliness. If, on

[71] 'Life could, yes, it could be beautiful'.
[72] 'As if from a divine intoxication' (TS: 96).
[73] 'A divine, conscious madness' (TM: 117).
[74] 'The mental state mixed with apprehension, anguish, and reverence, which one feels in the presence of the sacred'.
[75] 'Is it not now called nature what in earlier times, with greater poetry, was called God?'
[76] 'An idealist who […] did not want to quiet himself at the irritating surrender of science before the formidable problems of existence, at the convenient (cowardly, he said) sheltering of philosophical thought within the boundaries of the knowable'.

the one hand, the humourist can feel superior to his fellow humans because he has understood the game of illusions that informs life, on the other hand he sees the necessity of those illusions, because he also needs them in order to participate in life at all. Characters who despise illusions or try to fight them do not face a happier end than those who accept them, as it is made clear in stories like 'Leviamoci questo pensiero' (1910) and 'Paura d'esser felice' (1911). That is why Pirandello's humour very closely resembles the 'irony of irony' paradox, except that, for him, in the place of a spiral we have a vicious cycle between a demystification of life's illusions, leading to the ascetic condition of 'outsider from life', and the demystification of the outsider's condition as an equally foolish aberration that brings one farther from the true movement of life. Bergson talks about intuition as a process that moves from intelligence by exposing its limits, and proceeds to carry us beyond them: 'par la communication sympathique qu'elle établira entre nous et le reste des vivants, […] elle nous introduira dans le domaine propre de la vie, qui est compénétration réciproque […]. Mais si, par là, elle dépasse l'intelligence, c'est de l'intelligence que sera venue la secousse' (1907: 193).[77] Bouncing back and forth between these polarities, Pirandello's principle of humour ends up being a perfect application of Bergson's theory: a juxtaposition of the contrasting images provided by analytical reflection which expands our human consciousness toward a feeling of deep comprehension and participation to the communion of all living things.

Thus, it appears that Pirandello's relationship to spirituality is not limited to a (disputable) endorsement of Catholic morals. Rather, we can recognise in him a religious sentiment in the broadest definition in which William James studied it: what occurs when we go 'behind the foregrounds of existence and reach down to that curious sense of the whole residual cosmos as an everlasting presence, intimate or alien, terrible or amusing, lovable or odious, which in some degree everyone possesses' (2012: 35). We have explored above how Pirandello felt life precisely as an everlasting force animating the cosmos. As is clear from his lanternosophy, he also considered the individual consciousness as a structure

[77] 'By the sympathetic communication which it establishes between us and the rest of the living […] it introduces us into life's own domain, which is reciprocal interpenetration […]. But, though it thereby transcends intelligence, it is from intelligence that has come the push' (2001: 172).

that prevents communion with this absolute dimension of being, in implicit accord with W. James' suggestion that the roots of religious sentiment lie in the subconscious, not in the waking mind. The most iconic rendering of this idea is in the 1912 story 'L'Avemaria di Bobbio', which humoristically thematises the difference between religious superstition and genuine belief, showing the conscious mind subsiding to a psychical impetus coming from deep areas that rationality can find too much to bear. Yet the epiphanies in which the religious feeling of connection to the cosmos is most clearly captured go further down this spiritual path and display a real phenomenology of mystical experience in Jamesian terms.

W. James' pragmatism enjoyed great popularity in the Italian context, particularly between 1903 and 1907 under the enthusiastic promotion of intellectual Giovanni Papini, because, offering a platform to reconcile the biological dimension of the mind with man's spiritual dimension, it became a 'third way' between dry positivism and abstract idealism (Martini 1999: 29-39). Given Pirandello's interest in psychology and his own need to find a 'third way' between materialism and idealism, it is plausible that he may have heard of him. However, what interests us here is not the possibility of a direct influence, but the way in which W. James' analysis of mysticism as a psychological phenomenon illuminates the textual working of some Pirandellian moments.

Mystical traits are noticeable in the description of epiphanic moments found in *L'umorismo*. The mention of 'inner silence' leaves room for phenomena coming 'from a deeper level of your nature than the loquacious level which rationalism inhabits' (James 2012: 63). The impression of transcending the limits of perception by going 'beyond human sight', 'beyond the limits of the body' matches language itself, which becomes progressively more suggestive and rarefied: 'il vuoto interno si allarga, varca i limiti del nostro corpo, diventa vuoto intorno a noi, un vuoto strano, come un arresto del tempo e della vita, come se il nostro silenzio interiore si sprofondasse negli abissi del mistero' (U: 146).[78] Among the forms of mysticism that W. James inventoried, there are indeed two categories in which Pirandello's epiphanies can comfortably find their place.

[78] 'The inner void expands, surpasses the limits of our body, and becomes a weird emptiness that engulfs us as if time and life had come to a stop, as if our inner silence had plunged into the abyss of mystery' (1974: 138).

The first is what W. James describes as a 'wave of scepticism', characterised precisely by a sudden obliteration of space, time, and sensation, where the sense of identity fades, replaced by a growing awareness of 'an abstract self' and, most interestingly, *of the unreality of reality*. Adriana's experiences in Palermo display some analogies with this type: 'come in un incanto sovrumano, a cui una certa angoscia le impediva di abbandonarsi interamente, l'angoscia destata dal dubbio che non fosse vero quanto vedeva, si sentiva lontana, lontana anche da se stessa, senza memoria né coscienza né pensiero, in una infinita lontananza di sogno' (TN II: 550).[79] Although the intensity of mystical language would seem more attuned to lyrical epiphanies, however, these moments, according to W. James' case studies, can also bring a sense of approaching dissolution. They are described as immersions into an 'abyss', where 'the riddle of what is meant by life' remains unsolved, but the person is left with the shocking sensation of having reached a new insight into scepticism (James 2012: 294-95). They are therefore excellent terms of comparison also for epiphanies of the more bitterly ironic kind. Thinking back to 'La carriola', a more accurate description of Pirandello's precipitation into his ravine of deconstruction could hardly be found. The lawyer too experiences a form of ecstasy in which 'lo spirito […] s'era quasi alienato dai sensi' and perceives 'una vita remota [….], una vita che era da vivere, là lontano lontano' in the vaporous atmosphere of a dream (TN III: 155).[80] The discovery of his unexpressed selves who are not allowed concrete existence by his actualised social persona and the realisation of the unreality of his social figure take on precisely the language and shape of a mystical experience of this kind, before the conscious mind starts elaborating on it with desperate logic.

But Pirandello is also capable of abandoning his characters to the fully religious form of mysticism that W. James lists under the label of 'cosmic consciousness': a sense of pervasive cosmic life where individual existence finds its place and meaning is a well-

[79] 'Bewildered as if in a superhuman spell to which a certain anguish hindered her from abandoning herself totally—an anguish occasioned by the doubt that what she was seeing wasn't real—she felt distant, distant even from herself, bereft of memory, consciousness and thought, in an infinitely distant dream' (TS: 96).
[80] 'My spirit had almost become estranged from my senses'; 'a remote life […] that was to be lived, there, far, far away' (TM: 118-19).

established literary *topos*. It is an intellectual enlightenment associated with moral exaltation, elation and joyousness, and implies again a surrender of the conscious mind, but this time in favour of a holistic fusion (James 2012: 300). In Pirandello's lyrical moments, it usually takes the form of a return to the most essential dimension of pure existence, close to the elements of nature who most simply and truly are, because they just 'live and don't feel themselves':

> Mi pareva che l'aria tra me e le cose intorno divenisse a mano a mano più intima; e che io vedessi oltre la vista naturale. L'anima, intenta e affascinata da quella sacra intimità con le cose, discendeva al limitare dei sensi e percepiva ogni più lieve moto, ogni più lieve rumore. E un gran silenzio attonito era dentro di me […]. Man mano, dal sassolino, dal fil d'erba assorgevo, accogliendo e sentendo in me la vita d'ogni cosa, finché mi pareva di divenir quasi il mondo, che gli alberi fossero mie membra, la terra fosse il mio corpo, e i fiumi le mie vene, e l'aria la mia anima; e andavo un tratto così, estatico e compenetrato in questa divina visione. ('Quand'ero matto', TN I: 766)[81]

However, they can also take a more definitely spiritual turn, as it is the case in the culminating experience of Adriana in Palermo in front of the fountain of Hercules:

> lì, davanti a quella fontana, sotto il cobalto del cielo così intenso che quasi pareva nero attorno alla fulgida statua marmorea […] un gran silenzio di stupore le allargò smisuratamente lo spirito; e, come se un lume d'altri cieli le si accendesse improvviso in quel vuoto incommensurabile, ella sentì d'attingere in quel punto quasi l'eternità, d'acquistare una lucida, sconfinata coscienza di tutto, dell'infinito che si nasconde nella profondità dell'anima misteriosa, e d'aver vissuto, e che le poteva bastare, perché era stata in un attimo, in quell'attimo, eterna. (TN II: 550)[82]

[81] 'I felt that the air between me and the things around me became gradually more intimate, and that I could see beyond the limits of natural vision. My spirit, attentive to and fascinated by that sacred communion with nature, descended to the threshold of the senses and perceived the slightest of motions, the faintest of sounds. And a great, bewildering silence was within me […]. Little by little, from a pebble, from a blade of grass, I arose, absorbing and feeling within me the life of all things, until it seemed that I was almost becoming the world, that the trees were my limbs, the earth my body, the rivers my veins, and the air my soul. And for a while I went on like that, ecstatic and pervaded by this divine vision' (TM: 21).

[82] 'She stood there, in front of the fountain, under the cobalt blue sky, which was so intense that it almost seemed black around the fulgent marble statue […]. At once a great astonishing silence enlarged her spirit immeasurably and, as if a light had suddenly come from other heavens to brighten that incommensurable void, she now felt as if she was almost touching eternity and acquiring a lucid, boundless knowledge of everything, of that infinity that lurks in the depths of the mysterious soul. She felt as if she had lived and that this would be enough for her because for an instant, that instant, she had experienced eternity (TS: 97).

In these two texts so far apart in time, Pirandello is not afraid to let his narrators speak of soul, spirit, eternity, and of a 'sacred intimacy with things' with sincere participation in the characters' rapture. Both these passages describe an experience that the esoteric texts of the age would call 'vastation of spirit'[83]: an ecstatic moment in which individual consciousness is expanded to embrace the totality of the living, in a communion that closely recalls the Romantic concept of nature as the divine source of all meaning. De Man would most likely identify the source of this feeling in one of the backwards 'mystifications' that irony belies. Yet in Pirandello it appears so closely connected to the working of ironical insight to require a different interpretation.

Looking at Pirandello's use of mystical traits, we see an example of W. James's idea that the religious sentiment includes 'a new zest which adds itself like a gift to life, and takes the form either of lyrical enchantment or of appeal to earnestness and heroism' (2012: 368). These correspond to two of the currents that Charles Taylor identified in late-nineteenth-century epiphanic art as a reaction to the Romantic equation between nature and the divine: on the one hand, an unveiling of reality that must be stoically confronted, on the other a reconnection with nature as a force devoid of moral valence (Taylor 1989: 429-447). These outlooks in Pirandello are reconciled through a Bergsonian metaphysics that grants a philosophical backing to the feeling of cosmic interconnectedness. One possible root of the word 'religion' is the Latin verb *religare*, which means 'to tie', 'to bind together'. If all living beings are but manifestations of a singular creative current of life, an epiphany of their connection to the universe can easily be considered a religious experience. As Taylor puts it, 'the goal here seems to be a kind of unity across persons, or across time […]. As a result of this, the epiphanic centre of gravity begins to be displaced from the self to the flow of experience' (1989: 465). Tapping into the flow can have the energising effect of a faith state, because it puts the individual in contact with the source itself of creative power. At the same time, it is perfectly reconcilable with the sense of vanity that arises from

[83] See ch. 2: 86.

ironical insight, because it reveals how within this force the single human consciousness is just a casual, ephemeral side-effect with no significance of its own.

Calling this aspect of Pirandello's sensitivity 'religious' does not automatically imply that it should be positive in any particular way. As Taylor specifies, after Schopenhauer (and Leopardi, in Pirandello's case), the aforementioned force of nature had lost any Romantic association with a divine law or a rational Spirit proceeding teleologically in the right direction. By the modernist age, nature is amoral. This is also the case in Bergson's conception, where the vital principle is infinitely creative, but not oriented towards a goal: evolution is an end in itself. In the same way, the moments of Pirandellian cosmic consciousness do reveal how individual existence ultimately finds its most authentic dimension in the greater life of the universe, but this greater life is not guided by any principle. It is neither intrinsically right, like a Hegelian Spirit, nor intrinsically cruel like Schopenhauer's will to power; it just is and cannot help being.

This absence of moral colour adds a further shade of complexity to Pirandello's lyrical moments, allowing us to notice alongside euphoric illuminations a more sombre genre of mystical ecstasy. The protagonist of 'Tra due ombre' has a taste of it during his sleepless hours on the deck:

> Faustino Sangelli stette a spiarlo un pezzo con una pena, che, a mano a mano crescendo, gli si faceva più amara e più angosciosa: pena della vita che è così; pena delle memorie che dolgono, come se i dolori presenti non bastassero al cuore degli uomini. Ma a poco a poco cominciò a svaporargli, quella pena, nella vastità sconfinata, tenebrosa, sotto quella polvere di stelle, e si vide, si sentì piccolissimo, e piccolissimo vide il rivale; piccolissima, la sua miseria annegarsi nel sentimento che gli s'allargava smisurato, della vanità di tutte le cose (TN II: 296).[84]

As is the case in one of Leopardi's most famous poems, the perspective of the starry sky elicits a bird's-eye view from which all human preoccupations are dramatically

[84] 'Faustino Sangelli spied on him for a while with a pain which, gradually growing, was becoming more bitter and anguishing: pain because that's how life is; because memories hurt, as if present sorrows weren't enough for the heart of men. But little by little that pain started to evaporate in the boundless, tenebrous expanse, under the sky dusted with stars, and he saw himself, he felt he was very small, and saw his rival very small; very small, his misery drowned in the immeasurable expanding feeling of the vanity of all things'.

downscaled. In Pirandello, this view from above could be called the Orestes effect, considering it as the same dynamics caused by the tear in the paper sky. On the one hand, this experience participates in the sphere of mystical consciousness, as seems to be suggested by the drowning of Sangelli's misery 'in the immeasurably expanding feeling of the vanity of all things'. On the other, it is neither casual nor secondary that this awareness of the cosmos is focused on its vanity, another paramount Leopardian concept that demonstrates once more its ambivalent potential. The realisation that existence is lacking any comprehensible purpose can be taken as adding insult to injury, or, as in the present case, can actually soothe one's individual pain in the recognition that toiling in vain is the condition that connects all living things.

'Le brighe umane non han requie neanche nella notte; e […] soprattutto nella notte appajon vane, prive come sono delle illusioni della luce, e anche per quel senso di precarietà angosciosa che tien sospeso l'animo di chi viaggia e che ci fa vedere sperduti sulla terra'.[85] The non-euphoric mystical moment becomes thus central precisely in the 1912 story called 'Notte' ['Night'] (TN II: 737), which presents itself from the beginning as a questioning of existence. The male character Noli feels trapped in a (by now familiar) devitalised condition, and during his journey starts looking for his life: 'se l'era dunque portata via lui con sé? E che ne aveva fatto? Dov'era più in lui la vita?' (TN II: 734).[86] His acute desperation prompts him to read in anything around him, from his sooted handkerchief to the faces of other travellers 'un'agra nausea della vita che, lontana dai consueti affetti, fuor della traccia delle abitudini, si scopriva a tutti vacua, stolta, incresciosa' (TN II: 737).[87]

The encounter with an old acquaintance in desperate condition after her recent widowhood confirms that this nocturnal angst is not exclusively his. Mrs Nina Ronchi is presented in full humoristic duplicity. Referred to as a 'vedovina' or even 'donnetta', she is pictured as slightly grotesque in her overexcitement, with an emphasis on her physical

[85] 'Human troubles never get some rest, not even at night; and especially at night they appear vain, devoid as they are of the illusions of light, and also because of that sense of anguishing precarity that holds the spirit of the traveller suspended, and makes us see ourselves lost on earth'.
[86] 'Had he then brought it away with him? And what had he made of it? Where was now life in him?'
[87] 'A sour nausea of life which, far from the usual attachments, out of the track of habit, everyone discovered as shallow, foolish, disagreeable'.

smallness, her linguistic affectation and her profusion of bodily fluids. Yet her pain is real, as serious as anyone else's, and it is on this ground that empathic understanding can happen:

> I due si fermarono sotto una delle lampade elettriche e si guardarono e si compresero. […] Si videro tutti e due, nella notte, sperduti in quel lungo, ampio viale deserto e malinconico […]. E sentirono l'uno per l'altra una profonda pietà, che, anziché ad unirsi, li persuadeva amaramente a tenersi discosti l'uno dall'altra, chiuso ciascuno nella propria miseria inconsolabile (TN II: 739).[88]

Although empathy is a key element of Pirandello's humour, such reciprocity is a rare occurrence. It is not just a matter of one character observing another and experiencing an unexpected personal insight; this is a shared illumination, which brings both characters together to see themselves and each other from a distance, and offer as much sympathy to the other as to themselves. Even as they acknowledge their unbridgeable separation, they are on the same wavelength as they quietly sit side by side facing the nocturnal sea. The situation is reminiscent of 'Tra due ombre', with two characters together staring in the darkness at their respective burden; except that here their connection harmonises the individual grief in a conscious unison.

The landscape is poetic as usual: 'il mare, sterminato, non si vedeva, ma si sentiva vivo e palpitante nella nera, infinita, tranquilla voragine della notte',[89] where the lexicon of indeterminacy, the alteration of sensory perception and the unusual image of a 'tranquil chasm' start to stretch the language towards the ineffable. Pirandello does not even resist a moonfall giving the horizon 'alcunché di sanguigno e di torbo',[90] while the thousands of shiny stars, 'così vive, che pareva volessero dire qualcosa alla terra, nel mistero profondo della notte'[91] bring the attention back to the central interrogation, reinforced by the transiency of the characters' footprints in the sand. In this atmosphere, the resurfacing of a

[88] 'The two stopped under one of the electric streetlamps and looked at each other and understood each other. […] They saw the two of them, in the night, lost in that long, wide boulevard, deserted and melancholic […]. And they felt a profound pity for each other, which, rather than bringing them together, persuaded them bitterly to keep apart, each enclosed in their own inconsolable misery'.
[89] 'The boundless sea could not be seen, but could be heard alive and pulsating in the black, infinite, quiet chasm of night'
[90] 'A blood-red murkiness'
[91] 'So lively that they seemed about to say something to the earth, in the deep mystery of the night'.

forgotten memory seems to bring a partial result to Noli's initial quest: 'era dunque vero ch'egli se l'era portata via con sé la vita, dalla casa paterna di Torino; ancora laggiù la aveva con sé, certo, se cantava…' (TN II: 740).[92] Perhaps, like the sea can be perceived to be 'alive' but not seen in the darkness, Noli's life is actually closer to him than he expected. A hint is thus given that his desperation at the thought of having lost his life forever in leaving Turin was as far from the truth as any other consciousness-driven speculation could be.

In fact, the story's finale, in an extended cosmic-mystical moment, builds up to include the whole universe in the same question on meaning:

> Guardando entrambi nella notte, sentivano ora che la loro infelicità quasi vaporava, non era più di essi soltanto, ma di tutto il mondo, di tutti gli esseri e di tutte le cose, […] di tutta la vita che non può sapere perché si debba nascere, perché si debba amare, perché si debba morire. La fresca, placida tenebra […] avvolgeva il loro cordoglio, che si effondeva nella notte e palpitava con quelle stelle e s'abbatteva lento, lieve, monotono con quelle ondate su la spiaggia silenziosa. Le stelle, anch'esse, […] chiedevano perché; lo chiedeva il mare con quelle stracche ondate, e anche le conchiglie lasciate qua e là sulla rena (TN II: 741).[93]

The characters' grief is extended to the entire cosmos, not in a euphoric, Dannunzian pantheism, but in a communion of beings who all exist and cannot know why; life itself cannot know why. Thus, the Romantic ideal of a unison between Nature and the self is reframed to be the opposite of a celebration of the self. The content of this experience is substantially akin to Sangelli's Orestean moment, but its overall valence is reversed. Sangelli's intuition was presented as a philosophical truth that the light of day, bearer of illusions, quickly swept away. Here the 'frigid' sunrise does the opposite, shedding a severe light on the feelings of the characters and scaling them down to size; and whilst Sangelli's conquest is ephemeral, for Noli and Mrs Ronchi the experience is unusually cathartic.

[92] 'It was true, then, that he had carried his life away with him from his father's house in Turin; he must still have had it with him down there, if he sang…'
[93] 'Both looking in the night, they now felt their unhappiness almost evaporated. It was no longer only their own, but belonged to the whole world, to all beings and to all things, […] to the whole of life, who cannot know why one must be born, why one must love, why one must die. The fresh, peaceful darkness […] surrounded their grief, which effused into the night and fluttered with the stars and fell slowly, lightly, repetitively with the waves on the silent beach. The stars, too, […] asked why; the sea asked why with its weary waves, and even the shells scattered on the sand'.

Lyrical abandon can thus have the soothing power identified by De Castris and offer much-needed respite from the ordinary sufferance of life, not only through a straightforward self-oblivion in the contemplation of nature, but also through the very self-distancing that can be achieved by adopting the perspective of the beyond. The epiphanic perception of our continuity with the vast, obscure, purposeless universe that is completely extraneous to one's individual suffering can dramatically downscale the intensity of that suffering. As Paleari commented, it is only our little inner lantern that makes us see certain circumstances as terribly lamentable that, in another life, would rather make us laugh.

Pirandello's mysticism is assuaging, yet not redemptive. It deserves to be fully recognised as a manifestation of the 'love of life' he shared with Woolf, Joyce, Mansfield and other peers, while keeping in mind that it is still a humoristic love: an acceptance of life as something sacred with a good degree of resignation as to its tragic component. As W. James put it:

> this sort of happiness in the absolute and everlasting is […] parted off from all mere animal happiness, all mere enjoyment of the present, by that element of solemnity. […] A solemn state of mind is never crude or simple – it seems to contain a certain measure of his own opposite in solution. A solemn joy preserves a sort of bitter in its sweetness; a solemn sorrow is one to which we intimately consent. […] In its most characteristic embodiment, religious happiness is no mere feeling of escape. It cares no longer to escape. (2012: 45-46)

1.4 Conclusion

This journey through theoretical affinities clarified how Pirandello's epiphanies have a deconstructionist, denying face, and a mystical, affirming side, both grounded in a metaphysical take on life which Pirandello shares with Bergson, 'the thinker *par excellence* of open systems' (Ansell-Pearson 2007: 59). The metaphysical perspective not only offers a bridge between the two attitudes, but connects them deeply and intertwines them to the point where they are merged. The narrative epiphany as it appears in 'La carriola' is not 'the' Pirandellian epiphany, or the most modern part of it, as Luperini claims and O'Rawe

seems to imply. Pirandello's view of life and art is founded on duplicity, and his epiphanies are no exception. The two types of moments, which we have artificially polarised, have equal weight and importance, and more often than not appear intermingled in the texts. They are two sides of the same coin, and Pirandello himself, each time, focused more on one or the other as the circumstances of his stories required.

This view is supported by the linguistic unity of these moments. Both types are indeed characterised by the same lexicon, formulaic expressions and recurrent situations which Argenziano Maggi (1977) inventoried. This is likely due to the way Pirandello composed his stories: he checked his notebooks for inspiring phrases and transcribed them wherever he found useful (Andreoli 1997). Hence the justified impression that Pirandello's epiphanies are mass-produced (Barilli 1984: 94). Yet the question remains as to why he felt that these expressions, and no others, served the exact purpose he needed. O'Rawe proposed that the choice of this vocabulary is driven by a sort of 'fetishistic attachment to the same group of words' which are able to evoke the feeling of the sublime by an almost magical incantation (2005: 54). This suggestion can be expanded by focusing on the Leopardian nature of this epiphanic vocabulary.

Leopardi had a theory on the ability of poetry to express infinitude. The human mind cannot conceive infinity, nor can our language express it; however, poetry can resort to words and images that express indefiniteness and vagueness, suggesting to the mind an absence of boundaries that is infinity's best approximation.[94] On this principle, he built an entire stock of sublime-generating imagery and phrases,[95] which Pirandello generously reused in his epiphanies. The Leopardian vocabulary of the sublime (a concept possibly named after Latin *sub-limen*, 'below the sill') must have appeared appropriate to Pirandello to convey the existential truth that lies 'beneath the threshold' of our human awareness, and which Leopardi's philosophy had identified: the infinite cycle of generation and destruction, the blind flow of cosmic life in which humans participate without being able

[94] See for instance *Zibaldone*, §472,1[2], Leopardi 2001:136.
[95] See for instance *Zibaldone*, §1534,1 (poetic words); §1744,1 - 1747,1 (poetic situations: light, countryside); §1826,2 - 1827,2 (poetic situations: sea); §1927,2 - 1930,1 (sound effects, night time) (Leopardi 2001: 345,383, 396-97, 413-14), and others.

to conceive it. It is thus possible that Pirandello found those specific images particularly effective at lulling the mind into a state in which it could have an intuition of the 'absolute' he was interested in exploring.

It seems relevant that this careful choice of images to create a short circuit is what Taylor identified as the proper method of modernist epiphanies: juxtaposing images or words whose collective configuration manages to crack reality open 'as though the words or images set up between them a force field which can capture a more intense energy' (1989: 475). Zooming out to the broader picture, it is possible to see how intrinsic this method is to the working of Pirandello's mind as a whole. It is precisely in a particular juxtaposition of opposites - laughter and sympathy, scorn and pity, but also Romanticism and Realism, ordinary people and absurd events - that he tried to convey the bittersweet picture of what he felt as life. His epiphanies arise 'in the interspace' between these polarities and replicate them on their narrative plane. This is why it is ultimately misleading to try and tell apart 'narrative' and 'lyrical', 'deconstructionist' and 'mystical', 'negative' and 'positive' moments of inner silence, as their role and their effect rely on the presence of both instances in the same enchantment. A last story will help shed light on this point.

Pirandello himself defined 'Il coppo' ['The Fish Trap'] (1912) as 'il soliloquio d'un esaltato, nel quale anche operano i fumi del vino' (letter to Alberto Albertini, 26 April 1912, TN: 1173 n. 1).[96] The author's ironic distance relativises the protagonist's self-portrait as a martyr, but addresses genuine sympathy for his condition of faded artist, who had once dreamt of painting 'come i grandi!' (TN II: 278)[97] before his unhappy marriage dried out his sensitivity to life. This is a tragedy for Bernardo, who, finding himself with plenty of means to pursue his art, realises he is now deprived of the capacity for enchantment that would make it possible: 'che scherno l'eredità del suocero, tutto quel denaro ora che il sentimento della vita gli s'era indurito in quella realtà ispida, squallida, come in un terreno sterpigno, pieno di cardi spinosi e di sassi aguzzi, nido di serpi e di gufi!' (TN: 730).[98] Significantly,

[96] 'The soliloquy of a hot-head, where alcohol also plays a part'.
[97] 'Like the masters!' (TS: 131).
[98] 'What a mockery his father-in-law's inheritance was—all that money—now that the feeling for life had hardened for him into a harsh and squalid reality that was like a patch of scrub full of thorny thistles and sharp rocks, a nest for snakes and owls!' (TS: 133)

however, this sentiment of artistic dryness is conveyed as a landscape: a waste land that the shower of gold cannot fertilise.

The origin of such thoughts is a moment of inner silence that made him feel dead inside:

> S'era sdrajato per più ore sull'erba di un prato, e...sì, forse per il vino...aveva anche pianto, sentendosi perduto come in una lontananza infinita; e gli era parso di ricordarsi tante cose, che forse per lui non erano mai esistite. […] Che strazio, in mezzo a quel primo verde, così vivido e fresco d'infanzia, sentirsi grigi i capelli […]. Sapersi vecchio. Riconoscere che nessun grido poteva più erompere a lui dall'anima, che avesse la gioja di quei trilli, di quel cinguettio; […] riconoscere che tutta quella delizia per le anime giovani, si convertiva per lui in una infinita angoscia di rimpianto. Passata per sempre, la sua stagione. (TN II: 730-31)[99]

The contemplation of nature and the lexicon of indeterminacy ('lontananza infinita', 'infinita angoscia di rimpianto') qualify this as an epiphany of the lyric repertoire, which reveals the character's dissonance with the world and the certitude that it is now too late to realise his unexpressed potential. In De Man's terms, receiving the bequest too late is an ironic event that highlights the distance between the ageing subject and the reviving natural world. Although the inheritance has put Bernardo, unlike the lawyer from 'La carriola', in a condition to recover some of the lost opportunities, he also feels his condition is irreversible. Gloomy images of desolation reinforce the acknowledgement of his exclusion from life. The only presences he notices in his wandering are an elderly lady with a 'black, teary-eyed poodle' and a funeral procession unrolling under green trees with the accompaniment of a dissonant band. The funeral procession, in particular, reinforces this impression of alienation, becoming a concrete metaphor for the dissonance of life. Bernardo is therefore outside nature and society, in an altered state of mind and inclined to over-interpret what he sees – in other words, perfectly predisposed to experiencing epiphanies.

[99] 'He had stretched out on the grass in a field for several hours and... yes, perhaps because of the wine... he had even cried. He had felt as if lost in an infinitely remote place. It seemed he recalled so many things that perhaps had never existed for him. […] What torture it was to be in the midst of that vernal green, so vivid, fresh and youthful, and to realize that you've got gray hair […]. To know that you're old. To realize that a cry that had the joy of those trills, of that twittering could never again erupt from your soul […]. To realize that all that joy for youthful spirits was being converted into an infinite, agonizing regret for you. His season had passed forever' (TS: 133-34).

This potential is actualised indeed in another exceptional moment, a repetition of the episode in Villa Borghese. Again, he lies on the grass and contemplates the landscape with a strongly pictorial eye, noticing shadows, reflections in the water, and the colours enhanced by the sunset as a 'smalto soavissimo'. But he also notices something else:

> il silenzio profondo, quasi attonito, era lì presso però, non rotto, ma per così dire animato da un certo cupo tonfo cadenzato, a cui seguiva ogni volta uno sgocciolio vivo. Incuriosito, Bernardo Morasco si rizzò sul busto a guardare, e vide dalla sponda allungarsi nel fiume come la punta d'una chiatta nera, terminata in una solida asse, che reggeva due coppi, due specie di nasse di ferro giranti per la forza stessa dell'acqua. Appena un coppo si tuffava, l'altro veniva fuori dalla parte opposta, sgocciolante. Non aveva mai veduto quell'arnese da pesca; non sapeva che fosse, né che significasse; e rimase a lungo stupito e accigliato a mirarlo, compreso quasi da un senso di mistero per quel lento moto cadenzato di quei due coppi là, che si tuffavano uno dopo l'altro nell'acqua, per non prender che acqua. L'inutilità di quel girare monotono d'un così grosso e cupo ordegno gli diede una tristezza infinita. (TN II: 732)[100]

An 'astonishing silence' – one of Pirandello's favourite epiphanic expressions – introduces the unusual object which catalyses the revelation. The epiphanisation is described here in its phases, almost didactically. In other circumstances, the fishing machine could have passed unnoticed; in Pirandello's novel *I vecchi e i giovani* the same landscape is presented, but no device is mentioned (TN II: 1175, n 18). Here instead, the fishing tool is introduced in all its mysterious gratuity: under Bernardo's defamiliarising eye it becomes an infernal machine, an incarnation of life's 'mechanical phantasmagoria': 'gli parve che tutto fosse vano nella vita come il girare di quei due coppi nell'acqua' (TN II: 732).[101] The constant, empty movement of the fishnet evokes thus the 'crudezza impassibile

[100] 'There was a deep, almost astonishing silence. It was not broken, but animated, so to speak, by a sort of hollow, rhythmic splash, repeatedly followed by the lively sound of trickling water. His curiosity aroused, Bernardo Morasco sat up to look, and saw what seemed like the tip of a black barge stretching out from the bank into the river. It ended in a solid axle that held two fish traps, two sorts of iron baskets rotating from the force of the water itself. As soon as one of the traps plunged into the water, the other emerged from the opposite side, all dripping wet. He had never before seen this fishing apparatus. He did not know what it was nor what it meant, so he remained there a long time, looking at it in puzzled astonishment. He was stricken with a sense of mystery by the slow, rhythmic motion of those two fish traps that plunged one after the other into the water, to draw water, nothing but water. The useless, monotonous rotation of such a large and gloomy contraption gave him a sense of infinite sadness' (TS: 135).

[101] 'He felt that everything in life was as useless as the rotation of those two fish traps in the water' (TS: 135).

e misteriosa' (U: 146) that is the negative polarity of the Pirandellian *oltre*. Bernardo wished to paint 'living ideas embodied in living images', and precisely a living pictorial image, a black device against the chromatic enchantment of the evening sky condenses for him the disturbing sense of the vanity of life. Whilst in other nocturnes the rapture is completely irreflexive, here the cerebral aspect of the Pirandellian epiphany, analysing an attribution of meaning that in epiphanic perception is supposedly immediate, is clearly noticeable.

The epiphany of the fishnet marks a turning point in the story. First, Bernardo's unacknowledged suicidal impulse is liberated, although, interestingly, only recognised as a hypothesis: 'si mosse per la sponda, ma solo quasi per curiosità di osservare da vicino quello strano ordegno da pesca [...] avrebbe potuto spiccare un salto, balzar dentro a uno di quei coppi, e farsi scodellare nel fiume. Bello! Nuovo! Sì...e afferrò con tutte e due le mani il palo, *come per far la prova*' (TN II: 733, emphasis added).[102] Bernardo's suicide, unlike other Pirandellian instances, is not 'philosophical': it is the momentary prevalence of a preconscious impulse. Intriguingly, however, the project gains his *aesthetic* consent: he considers his plan 'beautiful' and 'new' – certainly not usual terms to think about a suicide, even among Pirandellian characters. This adds a further layer of meaning to the trick of chance that reverses the predictable course of events.

The moment of physical suspension, as Bernardo's weight delays the rotation of the fishnet, is enough for another inner drive to regain control of his mind: 'Perdio, no... aveva atteso troppo... quell'esitazione, quell'arresto momentaneo dell'ordegno per il peso del suo corpo gli era già sembrato uno scherzo, e quasi ne aveva riso... Ora, oh Dio, guardando in alto, mentre il coppo si risollevava, vide come schiantarsi tutte le stelle del cielo' (TN: 733).[103] The momentary halt of the machine that had been associated with time and life, is, in fact, no less than another materialisation of a crucial Pirandellian metaphor: the 'arresto del

[102] '[He] walked to the river bank but only out of curiosity to observe that strange fishing device from up close. […] By holding on to the pole, he could take a leap and fall into one of those fish traps and have himself dished out into the river. Beautiful! Original! Yes... With both hands he grabbed hold of the pole as if to attempt it' (TS: 136).

[103] 'Good Lord, no... He had waited too long... The hesitation, the momentary stopping of the contraption's motion on account of the weight of his body had seemed like a joke to him, and he had almost laughed about it... Oh God! While the fish trap rose again, he looked up and saw all the stars in the sky seemingly crashing downward' (TS: 136).

tempo e della vita' that happens precisely in the moment of revelation. The same image reappears, twelve years later, in Montale's poem *Mediterraneo*: 'volli cercare il male / che tarla il mondo, la piccola stortura / d'una leva che arresta / l'ordegno universale; e tutti vidi / gli eventi del minuto / come pronti a disgiungersi in un crollo' (Montale 2010: 147, ll. 10-15).[104] The poetic 'I' in this poem has much in common with Bernardo: he observes the heat of life and is hesitant to take action, seized by contradictory impulses. He does not regret his lack of resolution, however, because the sea that inspires him still grants exhilaration: 'tu sciogli / ancora i groppi interni col tuo canto. / Il tuo delirio sale agli astri ormai' (ll. 22-24).[105] Bernardo does not seek the lever that arrests the device: he chances upon it, or, rather, he *is* it, since his own body weight causes the mechanism to stop. His inhibitions lowered by alcohol, he is able to follow his aesthetic inspiration and, literally, jump back into the thicket of time and life. As Mansfield will later confirm, this abandonment that artistically embraces life and death is precisely what appeals more to aesthetic meaning, restoring a sense of attachment to existence. Bernardo's epiphany, his aesthetic perception, and the impulse to follow it put him back in touch with the source of his being, with the life in him that he thought had withered, and which is instead revitalised by a splash of water.

Water often takes on symbolic value in association with birth, death and purification: here, as well, it receives both Bernardo's suicidal plans and the change of heart which pushes him back to life. 'E l'incanto della notte gli apparve ritrovato, con le stelle ben ferme e brillanti nel cielo, e quelle sponde e quella pace e quel silenzio' (TN II: 734).[106] As seen in *L'umorismo*, the moments of inner silence reveal life as a machine deserving no respect; but in Bernardo's case, it is precisely emptying life of importance, perceiving it as a 'joke', that makes him overcome the fear of having wasted it. The story seems thus to enact Pirandello's theory of epiphany in reverse: whilst in *L'umorismo* the process of

[104] 'I wanted to find the evil / that gnaws at the world, the smallest bend / in the lever that jams / the universal machine; and I saw /all the events of a moment/as if leading to total collapse' (2017: 92).
[105] 'you still unravel/ the internal knots with your song. /And now your delirium rises to the stars' (2017: 92).
[106] 'He felt that he had rediscovered the enchantment of the night, with the stars quite steady and brilliant in the sky, and those river banks, that peace and that silence' (TS: 136).

revelation leads to permanent disenchantment, here that is only an intermediate phase, while the conclusion signals a reconciliation with life in the form of re-enchantment.

This rebirth continues the motif of spring, which was used earlier to picture Bernardo's death-in-life: 'chi può dire, d'inverno, quale tra tanti alberi sia morto? Tutti pajono morti. Ma, appena viene la primavera […] rifioriscono. Uno solo, che tutti gli altri finora avevano potuto credere come loro, resta spoglio. Morto. Era lui' (TN, II: 731).[107] The image, however, is ambivalent. The dead trunk has been associated with rebirth since the Bible: 'there is hope for a tree, if it be cut down, that it will sprout again […]. Though its root grow old in the earth […] yet at the scent of water it will bud and put out branches like a young plant' (Job 14: 7-9). Bernardo, too, is an apparently dead trunk who 'at the scent of water' comes back to life and to his pristine sensitivity to beauty: 'he felt that he had *rediscovered* the enchantment of the night' (my emphasis). If, as it is stated in *L'umorismo*, 'thoughts and emotions which are, in our present consciousness, obscured and obliterated by the long period of forgetfulness, […] as a result of a shock or a sudden turmoil of the spirit, can still give sign of life and reveal another unsuspected being within our present self' (1974: 135), his averted suicide can be the moment in which his soul and his art flourish again. Yet Job goes on: 'but a man […] lies down and rises not again' (14: 10-12).

We cannot know if Bernardo's rebirth is real or is just the relief of a sad drunk who recovers just before making a big mistake. But if for once Pirandello stops his narration of the peaks and throughs of human existence at a high point, it is interesting that this happens in a euphoric moment marking artistic rebirth. In a 1932 play, *Trovarsi*, it is precisely the painter who presents a connection between epiphanies and artistic creation as a permanent philosophy of life:

> Dipingo male - grazie - lo so; ma perché non è facile, sai, dipingere come vorrei io... le cose come appajono in certi momenti... lo scoppio, lo scompiglio di tutti gli aspetti consueti che hanno ridotto la vita, la natura, oh Dio, come una moneta logora, senza più valore. [...] Ti sarà avvenuto qualche volta - non sai come - non sai perché - di vedere all'improvviso la vita, le cose, con occhi nuovi... - palpita

[107] 'In winter, who can say which tree among so many is dead? They all seem dead. But as soon as spring arrives [they] blossom again. Only one of them, one that all the others up till then might have thought was like them, remains bare. Dead. That was he' (TS: 134).

> tutto, a fiati di luce - e tu, sollevata in quel momento e con l'anima tutta spalancata in un senso di straordinario stupore... - Io vivo così! In questo stupore! (MN II: 928-29)[108]

Macchia wrote that, for Pirandello, in spite of everything, the lonely man can recover a Dionysian force, a vital energy which pain and social misery did not manage to suffocate (1981: 68). It is a side of Pirandello that critics tend to overlook, granting more attention to his demystifying verve than to his mystical raptures. However, it is an essential component of his double-faced *umorismo*, and keeping it in mind helps us reconsider his modernity while avoiding some stereotypes of *Pirandellismo*. This is indeed the origin of his dual presentation of his moments of inner silence, as negative deconstructions of appearances and as moments when the sentiment of life is reaffirmed as a positive force. This duplicity, however, only partially coincides with the binary of mystical fusion vs. lucid outlook on a nonsensical existence, because, as the final manifestation of 'Il coppo' shows, a life-affirming moment can also happen without a holistic fusion, and even after having gone through disenchantment. It is true that positive epiphanies usually call for a more mystical-metaphorical imagery and manifestations of void bring with them a logical fury bordering on wordiness. The opposite situation, where the euphoric moment is presented under the dissecting lens of reason, never occurs. There could be a simple explanation for that: while, as Leopardi teaches, human unhappiness can be deduced from logical premises, the charm of a spring blossoming cannot be argued for or against. The irrational polarity of Pirandello the logician is, indeed, perfectly aligned with the principle he was interested in exploring, whose life-affirming creative movement, as Bergson explained, is unattainable by intellectual means.

Coherent with his poetics of duplicity, Pirandello's exceptional moments thus offer a bifocal view. The mystical epiphany comes with the achievement of an aerial perspective. Looking at things from a point of view that embraces life at a higher scale allows us to go

[108] 'I don't paint well – thanks – I know; but that's because it's not easy, you know, to paint as I'd like to…things as they appear in certain moments…the explosion, the havoc of all familiar appearances which have reduced life and nature, oh God, to a worn-out, worthless coin. It may have occurred to you some time – you don't know how – you don't know why – to suddenly see life, things, with new eyes… - everything flutters in breathes of light – and you, lifted up in that moment and with your soul burst open in a sense of extraordinary stupefaction… - that's how I live! In this stupefaction!'

deeper into the understanding of their connections: 'giacché è certo' as Leopardi already said, 'che chi scopre grandi e lontani rapporti, scopre grandi e riposte verità' (*Zibaldone*, §2019-20).[109] This idea will be important for other authors too, particularly Woolf and Mansfield. In Pirandello, it leads to realising that the only constant in life is change, and therefore our authentic core is the same incessant impulse to evolve that drives the outside world. The only way to achieve authenticity is thus to tap into the current of being, to become a thing among things who 'live, and don't feel themselves', and are therefore 'true'. This post-anthropocentric approach repositions individual existence in a whole that transcends it and mysteriously makes sense, thus soothing, in a non-rational way, the anxiety of meaninglessness that so tormented Pirandello.

His disaggregating moments rely, upon closer inspection, on the same perception of the flow of life, but from the point of view of the human constructions that its power sweeps away. This perspective is not reconciling but tragic, insofar as the construction of the self is inevitable, and inevitably swept away. There is a sincere participation in the pain of seeing one's beliefs crumble, which is heightened by the awareness that, remaining within one's intellectual capacity, no greater design can ever be apparent: outside the circle of our 'small lantern', we only see darkness and void. This is the direction in which the Pirandellian epiphany takes the deconstructionist power of Romantic irony into the 20th century. His *dédoublement* is, in this sense, interestingly close to the *Ichspaltung* ('splitting of the ego') which, in Husserl's phenomenology, is necessary to orient consciousness to its own activity, and which shows the same permanent effects: 'there is no going back after the *epoché*, no healing of the split in consciousness. Genuine transcendental idealism requires living both in the natural attitude and in the transcendental philosophical attitude' (Moran 2008: 277).

The greatest significance of this duplicity of outlook lies, indeed, in the very interaction between the two perspectives. 'Così il contrasto ci si dimostra inovviabile, inscindibile, come l'ombra dal corpo. Noi l'abbiamo veduto, in questa rapida visione umoristica, allargarsi man mano, varcare i limiti del nostro essere individuale, ov'ha radice,

[109] 'For it is certain that he who discovers great and distant relations, discovers great and hidden truths'.

ed estendersi intorno. Lo ha scoperto la riflessione' (U: 150).[110] With Pirandellian coherence, these two sides - the value of human life from the point of view of the cosmos or from the point of view of the individual - coexist. They represent the alternative moments of an eternal dialectic between life, which cannot but flow, and human reason, which cannot help building anchorage that will be swept away. It is a closed dialectics, with no third stage leading out of the circle. Embracing the somewhat pacifying mystical side comes at the cost of death or social emargination. Remaining in the human dimension implies a continuously repeated cycle of illusion and disillusionment. The two aspects, however, do not stand in ontological polarisation, but interpenetrate each other in every single occurrence. The moments of inner silence are the existential outcome of Pirandellian humour and are, therefore, metaphysically double-faced. They create a clash between a 'realist' illumination, which aims at laying bare the harshness of life beyond our lies, and the romantic aspiration to be reconciled with nature in a meaningful whole. In the light of the spark that ensues, they discover a force of life which escapes all human criteria of judgement. Borrowing a motto from a colleague who was pondering similar issues, 'la vita non è né brutta né bella, ma è originale' (Svevo 2004a: 275)[111] is the message that Pirandello's epiphanies in their spectrum of variations seem ultimately to convey.

[110] 'Thus the contrast reveals itself to be irreparable and its conflicting elements prove as inseparable as the shadow from the body. In this rapid vision of humor we have seen it expand gradually, go beyond the limits of our individual being, where it is rooted, and extend itself all around us. It was discovered by reflection' (1974: 141).
[111] 'Life is neither ugly nor beautiful, but it's original'.

2. 'The significance of trivial things': James Joyce

> Do you see that man who has just skipped out of the way of the tram? Consider, if he had been run over, how significant every act of his would at once become […] for anybody who knew him. And his thoughts, for anybody that could know them. It is my idea of the significance of trivial things that I want to give the two or three unfortunate wretches who may eventually read me. (Joyce, in JJ: 163).

Something basic in Joyce's way of talking about epiphanies arouses a suspicion that his understanding of the phenomenon was perhaps simpler than much well-intentioned scholarship would have it. At the same time, it is extremely difficult to grasp. The usual starting point to investigate what epiphany is for Joyce is the definition he gave in *Stephen Hero*: 'a sudden spiritual manifestation, whether in the vulgarity of speech or gesture, or in a memorable phase of the mind itself' (SH: 216). This shows a strong affinity with other authors' special moments, but poses interpretive issues when passing from aesthetic theory to practice. What is its relationship to *Dubliners*? Why does the word disappear in the revised *Portrait*? Did the principle, if not the word, remain an active force in Joyce's creative process, or was it just an early inspiration, soon abandoned? Perhaps it is in the nature of the Joycean epiphany to remain inscrutable. But to figure out how Joyce initially applied the concept – an application that, for chronological reasons, likely affected *Dubliners* – it is worth taking a look at the season in which it took shape.

The term has several dimensions of existence in Joyce's evolution: it features as an experience (the epiphanic moment), as an aesthetic concept (epiphany), and as a textual unit with a compositional function (Epiphany). On the most tangible level, 'Epiphanies' is the working title Joyce used for a series of annotations gathered between 1900 and 1904: brief dialogues, prose sketches, dreams, where he captured moments of his life that seemed to him significant.[1] Already at this germinal stage the 'epiphany' is pluralised: it is the name of the notebook, of the sketches, and of their content (McFadzean 2015: 37). The notes are

[1] First published by Silverman (1956) and then by Scholes and Kain (1965).

self-contained, unrelated to each other and scribbled anywhere, including on cigarette packs; yet, Joyce planned to publish them as a single work. He seems to have conceived this direct recording as a literary genre of its own, like the lyrics he was composing in the same period, and indeed he made copies to show to Yeats and Russell together with his poems (MBK: 185; SL: 13). If, however, the lyrics were eventually published as *Chamber Music*, the project of an independent publication of *Epiphanies* was dropped at the beginning of 1904. Another project from this season remained incomplete, but had a profound influence on Joyce's work: his allegedly monumental *Esthetic*. He had started collecting material for it during his first stay in Paris in 1903, when, aiming to describe beauty and its apprehension, he studied Aquinas' *Summa Theologiae* and Aristotle's *De Anima*, *Metaphysics* and *Poetics*, among others. At this stage, as Noon (1957) notes, his attention was absorbed by the psychological perception and processing of beauty, and very little by questions of style and poetic form. This focus swayed over time, but it seems coherent that Joyce, whose talent was best fuelled by an attentive analysis of actual events, should find the cornerstone of his aesthetics in a perspective on life.

In January 1904, after the journal *Dana* rejected his autobiographical story 'A Portrait of the Artist', Joyce began to draft a novel titled *Stephen Hero*, which would recount his own coming into being as an artist. Here he started recycling all his annotations as 'building blocks', turning epiphanies into episodes and the notes for the *Esthetic* into his character's own aesthetic theory. In this transformation, the Epiphanies ceased to exist as self-standing works, while the epiphanic moments and the aesthetic concept of epiphany were linked and presented as a mainstay of artistic creation. As this was underway, in the same crucial year of 1904, Joyce was commissioned the story that inspired him to write a whole series about Dublin. The composition of *Dubliners* is perfectly coeval with the long elaboration of *Stephen Hero*, and it seems significant that immediately after completing it with 'The Dead', in 1907, Joyce announced to his brother Stanislaus he would rethink the novel completely, opening the new period that would lead to the definitive *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. Thus, *Stephen Hero* and *Dubliners* characterise Joyce's evolutionary phase between

1904 and 1907 just like the epiphanies sketches and the lyrical poems had characterised the season 1900-1903.

However, despite occasional echoes, the stories in *Dubliners* do not show an evident reuse of the epiphany sketches, and make no reference to aesthetic theory. Scholes (1964) took this to mean that epiphanies were for Joyce a kind of prose poem he briefly toyed with and soon abandoned: hence they have little prominence in *Dubliners*, and in the reworking of *A Portrait* their name disappears.[2] Yet, given that both were composed at a time when young Joyce was developing his thoughts on art, it appears likely that *Stephen Hero* and *Dubliners* were both inspired by the aesthetic ideas he had in mind at the time. It seems plausible that as, on the one hand, he was writing the story of how he became a rigorous impersonal artist, on the other he was creating narratives where he applied his rule to stay aside, 'paring his fingernails' (P: 181). Moving from this hypothesis, we will look at how epiphany is described in the aesthetic theory of *Stephen Hero* before exploring how, if at all, its principles can be also recognised in *Dubliners*.

2.1 Aesthetic Theory

Two testimonies report on Joyce's early epiphany-noting activity. The first is his 'medical student pal', Gogarty, who in his memoir relates an evening at the theatre:

> James Augustine Joyce slipped politely from the snug with an 'Excuse me!' [...]
> I was trying to recall what spark had been struck or what 'folk phrase' Joyce had culled from Ellwood or me that sent him out to make his secret record.
> Secrecy of any kind corrupts sincere relations. I don't mind being reported, but to be an unwilling contributor to one of his 'Epiphanies' is irritating.
> Probably Father Darlington had taught him, as an aside in his Latin class - for Joyce knew no Greek - that 'Epiphany' meant 'a showing forth'. So he recorded under 'Epiphany' any showing forth of the mind by which he considered one gave oneself away. (Gogarty 1954: 298-99)

[2] See the debate between Scholes and Walzl 1967, Feschbach 1972, e Beja 1972.

Unfortunately, previous paragraphs appear unrelated to the moment Joyce rushes to write down, so his sudden exit catches the reader off-guard, just like the memorialist. Gogarty's wonder about 'what spark had been struck' is reminiscent of Virginia Woolf's later 'matches struck unexpectedly in the dark' (Woolf 2008: 133), but the illumination here is not as poetic. He suggests, in practice, that Joyce was collecting anecdotes about Dublin intellectuals, either for mockery ('He's codding the pair of us!', 1954: 298) or for their supposed historical value. His account, published before the draft of *Stephen Hero*, confirms that Joyce really had the habit of roaming around Dublin, notebook at hand, recording real events for future use; but those events were so insignificant that even in Gogarty's indulgently matter-of-fact report they appear to have gone unnoticed.

A more reliable source partly confirms these observations. In his account of his brother's youth, Stanislaus Joyce considers epiphanies in some detail:

> Another experimental form which his literary urge took […] consisted in the noting of what he called 'epiphanies' - manifestations or revelations. Jim always had a contempt for secrecy, and these notes were in the beginning ironical observations of slips, and little errors and gestures - mere straws in the wind - by which people betrayed the very things they were most careful to conceal. "Epiphanies" were always brief sketches, […] but always very accurately observed and noted, the matter being so slight. […] The revelation and importance of the subconscious had caught his interest. The epiphanies became more frequently subjective and included dreams which he considered in some way revelatory. […] I could see what he was driving at: the significance of unreflecting admissions and unregarded trifles, delicately weighed, in assaying states of mind for what is basic in them. The noise and pomp of big events and our own imagination are so apt to mislead us. (MBK: 134-35, 137)

The purpose of this passage is at least partially to correct Gogarty, clarifying that James was unconcerned with the would-be historical figures around him. On the other hand, it does corroborate some details, and introduce further nuances. Stanislaus confirms that Joyce used epiphanies to catch people in the act of unwittingly disclosing something of themselves they would rather keep secret. But the secrets Joyce chased were presumably different from the social anecdotes Gogarty had in mind. Stanislaus mentions James' interest in the subconscious, which he apparently tried to explore not only by scrutinising its minimal traces in others, but also in himself, through the recording of dreams that could

reveal something of his own mind. In the beginning, the interpretation of such dreams did not have any particular psychological subtlety – James tended to interpret dream-images as re-elaborations of his waking life (MBK: 135-36) – but an increasing familiarity with psychoanalysis later enriched his interest in the inner depths of the psyche.

Interestingly, while episodes concerning 'a vulgarity of speech or of gesture' were mainly recorded as impersonal dramatic dialogues, dreams were artistically reworked. This could have been due to making a virtue out of necessity: dream-images resist a word-for-word account, but lyrical re-elaboration evokes their blurred nature with greater accuracy. In both cases, epiphanies were noted, not invented; they captured a moment that really happened, using the most evocative form. In this sense, Scholes' suggestion that the distinction between a '*vulgarity* of speech or gesture' and a '*memorable* phase of the mind' (my emphases) implies a discrimination of the value of these manifestations, where those of the artist's mind appear more important than those of others, is unconvincing (1964: 71). The superiority Joyce claims for himself is precisely the ability to see the beauty of what others label vulgar; far from making him 'more a man of the nineteenth century', this is an important facet of his modernity. Stanislaus's view seems more insightful: epiphanies of both kinds are tools to investigate the essential aspects of the mind by accessing it, as it were, from the back door, avoiding the snares of 'important' events.

Gogarty's and Stanislaus' accounts both present epiphanies as potential tools for fictional objectivity: spotting the minute detail that 'betrays' the characters causes them to reveal themselves without overt authorial intervention. In this light, even considering Stanislaus' mention of the subconscious, Joyce's description of the manifestation as 'spiritual' seems somehow disproportionate. Yet, this detective eye does not do justice to the way epiphanies are presented in *Stephen Hero,* whose aesthetic theory enriches the view outlined by Stanislaus in very significant ways. First of all, the famous scene in Eccles Street, presented by Joyce's protagonist as the Ur-epiphany, is not unrelated to its context as the notebook sketches but comes at the end of a longer piece where Stephen criticises women's 'insincerity' towards religion. The women in question are Stephen's mother and, above all, Emma, who had flirted with him earlier, then refused his sexual advances with moral

outrage. Stephen admittedly exaggerates his resentment, and yet this leads him to a discovery:

> He discovered that it was a menial fear and no spirit of chastity which had prevented her from granting his request. Her eyes, he thought, must look strange when upraised to some holy image and her lips when poised for the reception of the host. He […] said to himself that though her eyes might cajole the half-witted God of the Roman Catholics they would not cajole him. In every stray image of the streets he saw her soul manifest itself and every such manifestation renewed the intensity of his disapproval. (SH: 215)

This angered passage displays some traits mentioned by Stanislaus. Identifiying the subconscious motif – cowardice – which Emma's ostensible virginity supposedly conceals, Stephen decides that there must be a clue that gives it away, something in her countenance that manifests the discomfort of the repressed soul. It should become visible during the communion, a well-consolidated habit – 'trivial', as it were – and at the same time the very scene of her crime of insincerity. As he becomes mindful of this, and starts finding anywhere around him a 'manifestation of her soul', reality gives him ubiquitous evidence of how this trait of hers is a pervasive aspect of Irish culture, which had always been present without him noticing. Thus, amidst teenage resentfulness an insight into truth emerges, highlighting a relation of synecdoche between the particular (Emma) and the general (Ireland). The revealing potential of the ordinary and the symbolical reading of reality that become apparent here are the prerequisites of the Joycean epiphany. They also provide the structure for *Dubliners*, where the characters are individual cases through whom the understated forces influencing their lives become apparent: 'I call the series 'Dubliners' to *betray the soul* of that hemiplegia or paralysis which many consider a city' (SL: 22, emphasis added).

Stephen perceives that this hyper-susceptibility is conducive to art, particularly to a poetry of 'symbolical allusion' to 'the twin eternities of spirit and nature' (SH: 215). These thoughts are 'dancing the dance of unrest in his brain' when the trivial incident in Eccles Street happens:

> A young lady was standing on the steps of one of those brown brick houses which seem the very incarnation of Irish paralysis. A young gentleman was leaning on the rusty railings of the area. Stephen as he passed on his quest heard the following fragment of colloquy out of which he received an impression keen enough to afflict his sensitiveness very severely.
> The Young Lady - (drawling discreetly) . . . O, yes . . . I was . . . at the . . . cha . . . pel . .
> The Young Gentleman - (inaudibly) . . . I . . . (again inaudibly) . . . I . . .
> The Young Lady - (softly) . . . O . . . but you're . ve. . . ry . . . wick . . . ed . . .
> This triviality made him think of collecting many such moments together in a book of epiphanies. 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. […]
> -Yes, said Stephen. I will pass it time after time, allude to it, refer to it, catch a glimpse of it. It is only an item in the catalogue of Dublin's street furniture. Then all at once I see it and I know at once what it is: epiphany. (SH: 216)

The Eccles Street episode is an exemplification of those 'stray images' in which Stephen 'saw [Emma's] soul manifest itself'. He recognises in it a particularly powerful embodiment of the insincerity on which he is brooding: a woman flirting and at the same time shielding from her companion's courtship behind a mention of the chapel and a (feigned?) moral condemnation. The implications of epiphany here have become significantly more complex: not only it unmasked a person's unconscious deceit, as mentioned by Gogarty and Stanislaus, but then also showed in it a general truth, made it possible to recognise that truth in an unrelated, commonplace scene, and, finally, inspired an artistic response. Far from unforeseen and self-contained, Stephen's epiphany is the climax of a long internal process that made him appropriately receptive to the sudden illumination. Having once seen an object for what it really is, the subject becomes hypothetically capable of directing a similarly insightful look at any other thing, even the most familiar, like the Ballast Office clock, and see it with new eyes: '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' (SH: 216-217). The mention of the Ballast Office clock has sometimes been taken to mean that 'an epiphany may also arise […] from the perception of a concrete object' (Beja 1971: 77). This is of course theoretically possible, and fits the lyrical nature of these moments. However, Joyce offers

us no Grecian urn. In this episode, the Ballast Clock is just a hyperbolic example chosen by Stephen to explain his intuition without sharing with Cranly its more intimate origin; the epiphanic objects that actually affect him (and his author) are typically people, much more complex and hard to decipher.

The suggestion that it is the object who achieves its epiphany is the origin of a critical debate on whether the moment must be intended as revealing something about the epiphanic object or rather about the subject himself (Beja 1971: 77-78). Stephen's illumination clearly depends on how he perceives reality: his vision is admittedly biased, and his experience says something about him as much as about Emma. On the other hand, Joyce himself recorded epiphanic moments because he believed they yielded a truth about the object under scrutiny. In principle, therefore, the experience appears significantly object-oriented. Yet the two perspectives do not rule each other out. Stephen's idea of seeking to adjust the mind's focus suggests that objects, or people, 'radiate' part of their being on a wavelength that is normally out of the perceivable spectrum; the perceiver needs to tune in on that same frequency, and as soon as he does, the truth of the object becomes apparent, or achieves its manifestation.

As Azérad suggests, this harmonisation of subject and object in perception recalls the relationship of mutual opening between the self and the world that is advocated by phenomenology (2002: 13). The phenomenological method is based on an *epoché*, or suspension of belief, that tries to bracket our automatic application of the 'certainties of common sense' in order to direct a more insightful look at the reality we normally take for granted. Its best synthetic description, in the words of Merleau-Ponty, is wonder at the world (1976: VIII). This is evidently very close to the process Stephen describes, based on the sudden estrangement of a familiar scene which brings out a side of it that had always been there without us realising. As recent scholarship has started to note, phenomenology proves truly productive in understanding Joyce's epiphany dynamics (Levina 2017). It is helpful, for the moment, in interpreting the subjective or objective nature of what is realised. The fact that we learn so much about Stephen as we witness him adjusting his focus does not outweigh his insight about Emma and Ireland. The truth he captures is

important both for his development as a character *and* in itself. 'Il ne faut pas se demander si nos évidences sont bien des vérités, ou si […] ce qui est évident pour nous ne serait pas illusoire à l'égard de quelque vérité en soi', Merleau-Ponty explains: 'le monde est cela que nous percevons' (1976: XI).[3] The subjectivity of insight does not threaten its value: if the bracketing is successful, our direct encounter with the world does yield an objective truth. Moreover, ambiguity as to the object or the reliability of the revelation does not disturb the creative process: in fact, it remains deeply embedded in Joyce's application of his concept.

These perceptions of truth are interesting for the man of letters chiefly because of their aesthetic value: 'it is just in this epiphany that I find the third, the supreme quality of beauty' (SH: 217). Truth and beauty, for the young Joyce, are inseparable. Combining Wordsworth's view of imagination as the tool to detect beauty with Ibsen's plan to find the origin of beauty in truth, he identified art with the use of imagination to bring into focus 'the truth of the being of the visible world' – such as cowardice dressed as purity (SH: 85). This compromise is also reminiscent of phenomenology, whose suspension of belief creates a void (a 'negative capability', as Kearney (2010: 245) defines it) where imagination is free to sway and prepare the encounter with reality proper. That encounter, for Joyce, is an epiphany, and is also the apex of aesthetic perception and creation, for, if beauty is the splendour of truth, seeking the showing forth of truth generates beauty. Now 'truth' and 'being', like 'spiritual', are overwhelming words, metaphysical and vague enough to suggest great depths of meaning. Joyce applies them to the mundane intuitions of a resentful teenager, but it would be a mistake to believe that their philosophical and religious resonance is irrelevant or merely used to sarcastic effect.

> In his early youth, my brother had been in love, like all romantic poets, with vast conceptions […]. His gods were Blake and Dante. But then the minute life of earth claimed him, and he seemed to regard with a kind of compassion his youth deluded by ideals […]. Yet he had believed in them wholeheartedly - in God, in art, or rather in the duty […] imposed on him by the possession of talent. (MBK: 53-54).

[3] 'We must not wonder whether our self-evident truths are real truths, or whether […] that which is self-evident for us might not be illusory in relation to some truth in itself'; 'the world is what we perceive' (2002: xviii).

What Stanislaus outlines here as an evolution from romantic youth to disillusioned, realist maturity, is really a permanent tension in James' artistic personality. His career developed in a continuous oscillation between these two apparently contrasting views: art as a looking glass, situated and concerned with the physical, or as a transcendent revelation of the artistic mind aspiring to the metaphysical. Life or spirit. Epiphanies, rooted in the observation of the physical and at the same time fuelled by idealistic enthusiasm, are a result of this tension. In *Stephen Hero*, a 'wholeheartedly' idealist aesthetic nourished by Scholasticism and Romanticism backs up the analytical investigation of phenomena, as Stephen inserts the moment of epiphany in a complete aesthetic theory based on Aquinas' categories of *integritas*, *consonantia* and *claritas*:

> You know what Aquinas says: The three things requisite for beauty are, integrity, a wholeness, symmetry and radiance. [...] Consider the performance of your own mind when confronted with any object, hypothetically beautiful. […] To apprehend it you must lift it away from everything else: and then you perceive that it is one integral thing [...]. That is the first quality of beauty: it is declared in a simple sudden synthesis of the faculty which apprehends.
> […] Analysis then. The mind […] contemplates the form of the object, traverses every cranny of the structure. So the mind […] recognises that the object is in the strict sense of the word, a *thing*, a definitely constituted entity. [...]
> Now for the third quality. For a long time I couldn't make out what Aquinas meant. He uses a figurative word (a very unusual thing for him) but I have solved it. *Claritas* is *quidditas*. After the analysis which discovers the second quality the mind makes the only logically possible synthesis and discovers the third quality. This is the moment which I call epiphany. First we recognise that the object is *one* integral thing, then we recognise 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. The soul of the commonest object, the structure of which is so adjusted, seems to us radiant. The object achieves its epiphany. (SH: 216-17)

This explanation concerns again the apprehension of beauty. Coherently with Stephen's proto-phenomenological approach, we are asked to analyse the functioning of our brain as we experience an object. It only hypothetically needs to be beautiful: the premise, also based on Aquinas, is that *pulchra sunt quae visa placent* [those things are beautiful whose apprehension pleases], a statement that upholds both aesthetic relativism

and the primacy of sensory impression. Apprehension, according to Joyce, is an instantaneous sequence of three dialectical stages by which our mind checks if the object has the requisites to be considered beautiful. *Integritas*, which he translates as wholeness, is the result of a synthesis of apprehension, or we could say immediate perception, and ensures that the object is 'one' thing distinct from others. This stage implies that the object has caught our attention, standing out from the indistinct background that usually accompanies daily activities. *Consonantia* is appreciated after an inverse process of analysis, in which the object is contemplated as a 'thing', 'a definitely constituted entity' – that is, something endowed with real existence, which we normally take for granted. Thus seen, the first two stages create precisely the condition of estrangement in which the familiar object is observed with wonder, as if for the first time, fulfilling the *epoché*. This moment is also the prominent first stage of the Pirandellian epiphany, and plays a significant role for all the authors under consideration. It is, however, only a necessary premise: the epiphanic moment proper is the conclusion of the dialectic movement, which brings analysis and synthesis together to discover the uniqueness of the thing. Joyce uses the Scholastic word *quidditas*, glossing it as 'soul' or 'whatness'. But if for Stephen this has 'solved' the question of what Aquinas meant, it certainly has not for his readers.

Joyce's dear friend Svevo commented in an essay 'noi romanzieri usiamo baloccarci con le grandi filosofie e non siamo certo atti a chiarirle. Le falsifichiamo ma le umanizziamo' (2004b: 895).[4] This seems certainly the case for Joyce's relationship with Aquinas' *quidditas*. Most critics have interpreted Stephen's *quidditas* as 'essence', following the explanation Aquinas gives in *De ente et essentia* [*On Being and Essence*]: '"quiddity," […] is called "essence" [*essentia*], because it is that through which and in which a thing has its being [*esse*]' (Kilma et al. 2007: 227-249). Confusingly, however, in *Stephen Hero* the word 'essence' never appears. Stephen, instead, explains 'whatness' as that by which something 'is *that* thing which it is'. Noon noted that he appears to have in mind the 'concrete, individual quidditas of an existent thing', which 'may have been expressed better by the *haecceitas* of

[4] 'We novelists are used to toying with grand philosophies and we are certainly not apt for clarifying them. We falsify them but humanise them'.

Duns Scotus'. *Haecceitas* can be translated as 'thisness', and describes precisely what determines the distinctive singularity of any real being (1957: 51). Given Joyce's syncretic creativity, it is very likely, as suggested by Kearney, that having studied both Aquinas and Scotus, Joyce fused the two concepts for his aesthetic use. From Aquinas he took *quidditas* as essence, 'meaning an experience [...] wherein a particular thing serves to illuminate a universal and transcendental Form'; from Scotus he took epiphany as *haecceitas*, 'namely the revelation of the universal in and through the particular'. Each version has a distinctive emphasis: 'if "whatness" tends to see the particular as the divine in drag, "thisness" sees it as divinity in person, that is, in flesh and blood' (Kearney 2005: 148). Kearney's intuition is extremely useful. Along these lines, it is possible to recognise two different veins in the interpretation of epiphanic moments, among which Joyce himself seems to have freely swayed, and which critics have often failed to distinguish.

2.1.1 Whatness: *quidditas* as transcendence

The 'whatness' strand is based on an idealist view. In Aquinas, humans are composite substances in which an abstract form, the soul, shares the same existence with concrete matter, the body (Klima et al. 2007: 241). Stephen's dialectic apprehension, seen from this perspective, leads the observer from the impression of the matter to the intuition of the abstract principle hosted within it. The underlying assumption is that beyond apparent reality there is an ideal reality where 'the thing in itself' lies, and the epiphanic moment identifies the physical object as a symbol of this hidden transcendent truth: what Taylor describes as a symbolic epiphany or 'epiphany of being' (1989: 419). An initial wave of Joycean scholarship understood his 'moments' in these terms. Levin, one of the very first to apply the idea, takes Gogarty's account as 'a clinical definition of what was to Joyce an essentially mystical concept. [...] Sometimes, amid the most encumbered circumstances, it suddenly happens that the veil is lifted, the burthen of the mystery laid bare, and the ultimate secret of things made manifest' (1944: 25, 27). The emblem of Joyce's symbolic epiphanies is probably the seabird-girl in the *Portrait*, whose description foregrounds

physicality and at the same time strategically uses Catholic iconography to present her as the 'angel of mortal youth and beauty' (P: 145). This escalation to transcendent (non-religious) meaning is connoted through lyrical language and traditional symbolism, and the interpretation of Stephen's vision is clearly articulated. The girl on the strand is more than a girl on the strand: she is a symbol of the sacred beauty of material life, of physical love, of the liberation of the senses. This epiphany is the conclusion of a sequence of manifestations that punctuate Stephen's conversion to the profane religion of art, and points out the extent to which this type of illumination is tied, for Joyce, to a sacramental view of artistic creation.

A copious tradition, merging Romanticism to Symbolism and Aestheticism, backs up this process of elevation from the material world to its transcendent truth, so clearly that Eco (1968) suggested Scholasticism was merely used by Joyce in *A Portrait* as a disguise for *fin-de-siècle* sensibility. Joyce would probably object that whatever *fin-de-siècle* theorists may have professed, Aquinas had thought it before. However, Eco's remark usefully highlights Joyce's eagerness to carve his place in a tradition of mystical lyricism which he admired. He essentially shared the romantic idea that an artist is the sensitive feeler who can receive illuminations of beauty, and wanted the parable of his autobiographical counterpart to reflect this. An influential model for putting this attitude into practice came to him from Gabriele D'Annunzio, notoriously one of his youth idols. As Ellmann reports, 'Joyce was convinced that his *Il Fuoco* [*The Flame*] was the most important achievement in the novel since Flaubert, and an advance upon Flaubert' (JJ: 59). Eco pointed out that the name 'epiphany' has an immediate precedent precisely in *Il fuoco*, whose first chapter presents the aesthetic illuminations of the hero under the title 'Epifania del fuoco' ['Epiphany of fire'] (1968: 30). According to Eco, Pater inspired Joyce with the content of his evanescent moments when aesthetic perfection is suddenly perceived, while D'Annunzio provided expressions to convey them – metaphors, imagery, phrases, including the moment's name. Most importantly, however, Joyce semi-ironically borrowed from D'Annunzio the idea of the poet as a sacred-heroic figure capable of assimilating the life around him and give it back as the beauty and splendour of truth (Eco 1968: 37):

> poiché sola nell'universo la poesia è verità, quegli che sa contemplarla e attrarla a sé con le virtù del pensiero, quegli è presso a conoscere il segreto della vittoria su la vita... […]. Questi uomini profondi ignorano l'immensità delle cose che esprimono. Immersi nella vita con milioni di radici [...] essi assorbono infiniti elementi per trasfonderli e condensarli in specie ideali. (D'Annunzio, 1900: 74, 104-05)[5]

The concept appears strikingly similar to Stephen's aesthetic declarations, but the context differs in substantial ways. D'Annunzio's character is a poet laureate sitting with a famous actress on a gondola, surrounded by Venetian architecture on the glamorous reflection of a sunset on the laguna. The process of absorption and transformation he mentions consists in surrounding oneself with beauty and giving it adequate expression in refined poetic images. Joyce's protagonist, instead, is an unknown adolescent who has taken a fancy to art, and who has to feed his inspiration in provincial Dublin, among pubs and brown brick houses. Yet, Joyce applied to his setting the Dannunzian view of the artist as priest - someone who is able to *transform* the everyday into beauty, with a Eucharistic image of transubstantiation. D'Annunzio vaticinated that 'la parola del poeta […] era dunque un atto, come il gesto dell'eroe. Era un atto che creava […] un'istantanea bellezza […]. La vita manifestavasi per il poeta integra, il verbo facevasi carne' (D'Annunzio 1900: 177-78).[6] The young Joyce promptly asked his brother:

> Don't you think […] there is a certain resemblance between the mystery of the Mass and what I am trying to do? I mean that I am trying in my poems to give people some kind of intellectual enjoyment by converting the bread of everyday life into something that has a permanent artistic life of its own... for their mental, moral, and spiritual uplift. (MBK: 116)

[5] 'Because poetry alone is truth, he who knows how to contemplate it and draw it into himself by the virtue of thought will be near knowing the secret of victory over life. […] Those profound men ignored the immensity of the things which they expressed. Striking a million roots into the soil of life […] they have absorbed infinite elements, which have been transfused and condensed by them into ideal species' (1916: 50-51, 72).

[6] 'The word of the poet […] must, therefore, be an act like the deed of a hero – an act creating instantaneous beauty […]. Life itself would be manifested in its entirety through the medium of the poet, the Word made flesh' (1916: 124-25).

There is more to it than emulation. Joyce had been a fervent believer in youth, and although he later grew cold to the Church as an institution, he always maintained a strong fascination both with the aesthetics of the ritual and with religious sentiment itself. The final *Portrait* presents his conversion to art as a religious conversion, which seems merely appropriate given that Stanislaus explains his brother's detachment from Catholicism (in strikingly Pirandellian terms) with the need to 'save his real spiritual life from being overlaid and crushed by a false one that he had outgrown. He believed that poets […] were the repositories of the genuine spiritual life of their race, and that priests were usurpers' (MBK: 120).

Thus, although it is true that 'Joyce makes his Thomism godless' and that we should be careful to distinguish *claritas* from the divine or the sublime (Beebe: 1957), his aesthetics and his concept of epiphany are significantly influenced by a constant attraction to the religious sphere. Ellmann notes that for a time Joyce was interested in theosophical concepts as 'cycle, reincarnation, the succession of gods, and the eternal mother-faith that underlies all transitory religions' (JJ: 99), a trait he shares with Pirandello and Mansfield. As a result of this transient interest, Stanislaus recalls 'a poem called "Nirvana", which described a state […] of what mystical writers call vastation of spirit' (MBK: 140). It was possibly the continuing search for this feeling of spiritual expansion that, discarding theosophy, led Joyce to explore the Christian mystics – St John of the Cross, St Theresa, St Catherine of Siena - figures of great intellectual interest who fascinated him like they fascinated Tozzi. Indeed, Stanislaus reports that when asked why he was interested in the 'misty mystics', James answered: 'in my opinion, they are writing about a very real spiritual experience you can't appreciate. [...] And they write about it […] with a subtlety that I don't find in many so-called psychological novels' (MBK: 140-41). What catalysed his interest in esotericism and mysticism was precisely the need to give reference to, and find the technical means to express, a spirituality he could not satisfy in its canonical frame, a feeling very similar to the spiritual exaltation that D'Annunzio's holistic lyricism effectively reunited with art.

According to W. James' psychological classification of religious phenomena, the Joycean epiphany could indeed be excellently described as a mystical state of the most profane, aesthetic kind: a feeling of illumination coming from the deepened sense of the significance of words or impressions (James 2012: 293). As W. James explains, mystical states 'add a supersensuous meaning to the ordinary outward data of consciousness. They are excitements […] by means of which facts already objectively before us fall into a new expressiveness' (2012: 326). Their authority is granted by the impression of having reached beyond the limits of conscious knowledge into a deeper region of understanding, and their greatest psychological appeal is 'something like what the Hegelian philosophy means': a monistic insight in which 'the other in its various forms appears absorbed into the One' (2012: 296-97). Here we touch on a solution to the fundamental problem of the *coincidentia oppositorum*, an active stimulus for Joyce's creativity. The idealist side of Joyce's epiphany, or its symbolic version, is therefore tied to the strong late-nineteenth-century tendency to identify art as a substitute for religion, expecting from it some answer to life's overwhelming questions. Yet the reason why mysticism, for Joyce, was also an unsatisfactory solution is crucial to understanding his concept of epiphany in full. According to Stanislaus, mysticism 'had allured him with the promise of intuitions of a reality beyond reality. In such a reality he could have believed. "Life itself is a symbol", he said [...]. But mysticism, instead of enhancing the significance of life, required from the adept a total renunciation of it' (MBK: 141). Life had become, in fact, the one and only focus of Joyce's interest; and although the Romantic idea of a reality beyond reality never left him, the 'call of life' compelled him to revise his Eucharistic vision of art in quite different, earthlier, but no less spiritual terms.

2.1.2 Thisness: *quidditas* as immanence

As he tried to dispense with the concept of epiphany tout court, Scholes (1964) noted that, in the final *Portrait*, Stephen dismisses the idealistic notion of epiphany: 'I thought […] *claritas* was the artistic discovery and representation of the divine purpose in anything or a

force of generalization which would make the esthetic image a universal one, make it outshine its proper conditions. But that is literary talk' (P: 179). From this, Scholes infers that 'the notion of the actual thing being merely a symbol of some ideal thing is specifically rejected by Stephen. […] The thing in itself is now enough for him' (1964: 70). The sensation that some crucial change has happened here, and that the idea of epiphany as the creation of a symbol, which still animated the Dannunzian and Paterian concept, has been pensioned off to the advantage of 'the thing in itself' is indeed justified. Yet, rather than proving that Stephen here is beyond the concept of epiphany, it calls for a different interpretation of *claritas*, and throws light on an aspect of the Joycean epiphany which is harder to pin down, but more fruitful than the canonical symbolic interpretation.

The reasons that pushed Joyce away from the tradition of Romantic epiphanies are probably the same that brought him close to realism as a stylistic choice.

> The poetry of noble sentiments, the romantic music, and the dramatic passions […] which culture offered him as a truer poetic insight into the universal problem of human life, did not fit in with life as he knew it […], and anyway life he did not know did not interest him. He accepted the life he knew [...]. He had no doubt that most artists, even the greatest, belied the life they knew, and offered the world a make-believe. Literature, he said, was a parody of life […]; and he was determined that his own spiritual experience should not be a make-believe. (MBK:105)

Here we could recognise an instance of the debunking fury that propelled the realist evolution of modern aesthetics, whereby reality is not made translucent to a higher meaning, but stripped from its delusionary representations and laid bare for what it really is (Taylor 1989: 430-34). For Joyce, aside from perhaps playing a part in the decision to drop the Dannunzian name 'epiphany', this urge took the form of an opposition to the mythologizing activity of Yeats and the Celtic Revival, which he saw as merely escapist: 'for him literature was not a comforting pastime […]. It offered other satisfactions, grim realizations that dethrone tyrannical secrets in the heart and awaken in it a sense of liberation. And of sympathy, too'. (MBK: 53)

This attitude fits perfectly with the first description of epiphanies as hint-hunting that we found in Gogarty and in Stanislaus. It is a down-to-earth vision of epiphany

whereby the epiphanic object does not embody its full meaning on a plane that is different and superior to ordinary reality, such as the world of art, but in its actual existence here and now. 'L'objet moderniste pourrait bien être un objet angélique, n'annonçant rien d'autre que lui-même, mais dans sa propre plénitude' (Azérad 2002: 77).[7] This epiphany manifests immanence, leading to the acknowledgement that the world is 'that thing which it is', rather than revealing transcendence, where a girl on the beach is actually something else. It offers 'grim realizations', such as cowardice within purity, but Emma remains Emma, we just happen to have understood her more fully. The view is horizontal: beyond appearances lies another layer of reality; not transcendent meaning, but a completely profane truth that had until then remained hidden. Coherently, on the stylistic side this type of epiphany is preferably underplayed and not signposted with a particular register.

Kearney suggests that this realist illumination is not incompatible with the sacred vision of art that appears so strong in Joyce, since it moves from the same Eucharistic image that grounds the symbolic epiphany, but looks at it from upside down. If the symbolic epiphany functioned in analogy with transubstantiation, making reality transparent to a superior meaning, this focuses on the same and opposite mystery of incarnation, *recognising* significance in the everyday per se. As Kearney puts it, 'the divine descends into the world rather than have the world ascend towards it', thus emphasising 'the sacramentality of the singular event in its carnal and quotidian uniqueness' (2005: 148). Although Kearney focuses specifically on a religious aesthetics and explores it mainly in *Ulysses*, his insights can also aid the reading of Joyce's earlier works, given how, in Stanislaus's view, 'his faith in life sustained him with the joyous certainty that in spite of the squalor that surrounded him, life had some not ignoble meaning' (MBK: 121).

The goal of encountering meaning within reality brings out in Joyce's exploration a decidedly phenomenological nuance. Levina is able to reconsider Joyce's epiphany in Husserlian terms as altogether 'a synonym of the phenomenon', thus distancing it from any symbolic interpretation historically proposed (2017: 194). Although Joyce's take on

[7] 'The modernist object could well be an angelic object which announces nothing else than itself, but in its unique fullness'.

transcendence is more nuanced than that, phenomenology illuminates indeed a facet of his epiphany. Summarising the views of his master Husserl, Merleau-Ponty defined phenomenology, very interestingly, as 'the study of essences':

> tous les problèmes, selon elle, reviennent à définir des essences […]. Mais la phénoménologie, c'est aussi une philosophie qui replace les essences dans l'existence et ne pense pas qu'on puisse comprendre l'homme et le monde autrement qu'à partir de leur «facticité». […] Tout l'effort est de retrouver ce contact naïf avec le monde pour lui donner enfin un statut philosophique. (Merleau-Ponty 1976: I)[8]

This offers a fairly accurate description of the Joycean epiphany, which also aims at the essence of an object through a genuine contact with its embodied existence, and definitely endows this contact with philosophical value, at least as far as aesthetics is concerned. Perhaps more than the logical systematisation of Husserl, therefore, Merleau-Ponty's introduction, specifically guided by his interest in perception, can help to shed light on some crucial aspects of Joyce's climax of apprehension.

Reasoning by essences in phenomenology does not imply trying to understand the eternal nature of transcendent concepts, but making careful use of abstraction in order to better grasp outside reality. As Merleau-Ponty explains, 'chercher l'essence du monde, ce n'est pas chercher ce qu'il est en idée, une fois que nous l'avons réduit en thème de discours, c'est chercher ce qu'il est en fait pour nous avant toute thématisation' (1976: X).[9] Given that we inhabit the world as bodies, a large part of our interaction with it happens at a level that escapes reason and the possibilities of rational articulation; abstraction is therefore not the goal of thinking, but a tool to transform a-logical experiences into data that our consciousness can process in order to comprehend what we perceive. If we take the Joycean epiphany as an instance in which our apprehension enables this conscious encounter with

[8] 'According to it, all problems amount to finding definitions of essences […]. But phenomenology is also a philosophy which puts essences back into existence, and does not expect to arrive at an understanding of man and the world from any starting point other than that of their "facticity". […] All its efforts are concentrated upon re-achieving a direct and primitive contact with the world, and endowing that contact with a philosophical status' (2002: vii).

[9] 'Looking for the world's essence is not looking for what it is as an idea once it has been reduced to a theme of discourse; it is looking for what it is as a fact for us, before any thematization' (2002: xvii).

an essence, the transcendent and the immanent value of the manifestation are reconciled. In phenomenology, 'transcendence' refers to the effort of the subject to go beyond the boundaries of its conscious understanding towards the outside world; the start and end point of our interest remains the real world, and any symbolic filter we apply to it is an intermediate stage that should help us confront it with greater awareness. Symbolisation can thus fruitfully take part in the process, as long as we are careful to link it back to reality, since 'le monde phénoménologique n'est pas l'explicitation d'un être préalable, mais la fondation de l'être' (Merleau-Ponty 1976: XV).[10]

This method can be applied to the workings of consciousness itself, as done by Husserl, but also to more quotidian tasks such as the confrontation with an object, an event, or a theory. In this case, most interestingly, Merleau-Ponty pictures it as the search for the Hegelian Idea, a non-objective formula that can help the observer get hold of the uniqueness of the phenomenon: '«comprendre», c'est ressaisir […] non seulement […] les «propriétés» de la chose perçue, la poussière des «faits historiques», les «idées» introduites par la doctrine — mais *l'unique manière d'exister* qui s'exprime dans les propriétés' (1976: XIII, emphasis added).[11] The reference to Hegelian ideas shows the ground where this attitude structurally converges with the mystical experience of monistic insight: this formula should be able to sum up 'la formule d'un unique comportement à l'égard autrui, de la Nature, du temps et de la mort, une certaine manière de mettre en forme le monde' (1976: XIII).[12] Uniqueness, subjective formulas, and the attempt to convey a mode of relation to the world resonate deeply with the intentions Joyce had in writing *Dubliners*: capturing the distinctive way in which his fellow citizens, through their behaviour, shaped their lives, and offering it in a synthetic artistic expression to the world. In search for this distinctive singularity, as Merleau-Ponty goes on, 'il n'y a pas une parole, pas un geste humains, même

[10] 'The phenomenological world is not the bringing to explicit expression of a pre-existing being, but the laying down of being' (2002: xxii).
[11] 'To "understand" is to take in […] not only what these things are for representation (the "properties" […], the mass of "historical facts", the "ideas" introduced by the doctrine)—but the unique mode of existing expressed in the properties' (2002: xx).
[12] 'Some unique manner of behaviour towards others, towards Nature, time and death: a certain way of patterning the world' (2002: xx).

habituels ou distraits, qui n'aient une signification' (1976: XIII).[13] Joyce embraces this principle too, which implies, on closer look, that he also embraces the indissolubility of the romantic symbol. If we ask, with Yeats, 'how can we know the dancer from the dance?' the answer for Joyce is probably that we cannot distinguish them, but surely the act of dancing, which makes us aware both of the dancer and the dance, is meaningful enough in itself.

Within this perspective, whatness and thisness, the idealist revelation of a reality beyond reality and the appreciation of the world as it is, can ultimately come together in the moment in which the object we perceive becomes what it really is. Kearney argues that precisely this phenomenological approach enables Joyce to preserve his sacramental view of art through a mysticism of incarnation divorced from the theistic perspective. He notices that the 'attitude of pure vigilance and attention' that follows the *epoché*, wherein the subject is exposed to 'a "free variation of imagination" (the term is Husserl's)' is structurally akin to the moment that, in some mystical accounts, prepares the vision that will give access to 'the highest wisdom of reality'. So, in a sense, 'by allowing us to attend to the sacramental marvel of the everyday without the constraints of any particular confession, Merleau-Ponty offers fresh insights into a eucharistic character of the sensible' (Kearney 2010: 245-46). This is a crucial point for Joyce, who at this time 'felt very forcibly both the attraction of mysticism and the call of reality' (MBK: 141). His concept of epiphany is indeed better understood as a coin whose two sides are these two antithetical drives: the symbolic epiphany, lyrical and idealistic, and the epiphany of immanence, prosaic and realistic. By taking a stance very close to what Merleau-Ponty would later describe, Joyce synthesised the two in the 'immanent transcendence' (Kearney 2010: 244) that, albeit paradoxical, enables him to reconcile two spiritual necessities: accounting for reality as he knew it and preserving its aura of sacredness. The poetics of epiphany is, in this sense, an early example of Joyce's inclusive logic of *coincidentia oppositorum*, the 'intellectual ability to hold the traditional oppositions of classical reason together in creative confluence' (Kearney 2006: 19) which would appear ever more strongly in his later work.

[13] 'There is not a human word, not a gesture, even one which is the outcome of habit or absent-mindedness, which has not some meaning' (2002: xx).

2.2 *Dubliners*

According to Ellmann, 'just as the lyrical epiphanies had led Joyce towards *A Portrait of the Artist*, so the bald, underplayed epiphanies led him toward the first story in *Dubliners*' (1982: 163). It is tempting to prolong this interpretive line and see in the alternate tendencies to realism in *Dubliners* and *Ulysses* and lyricism in *Portrait* and *Wake* the same propulsive duplicity of imagination that leads to the transcendent-vs-immanent option. Both perspectives are active in the writer's evolution at any given time, and with any new work, courtesy of the ever bolder use of language, their polarity is brought closer to fusion. In this light, *Dubliners* would appear as the first work in the prosaic strand, featuring dramatic epiphanies with realistic treatment.

However, a number of problems make this identification less straightforward than would be desired. Hardly any story is directly based on an Epiphany sketch, so the impression that they are related to the poetics of epiphany is not supported by direct philological proof. In addition, Joyce never seems to have used the word 'epiphany' for the stories. He used a different, cryptic word: 'I am writing a series of epicleti – ten – for a paper. I have written one. I call the series *Dubliners*, to betray the soul of that hemiplegia or paralysis which many consider a city' (To CP Curran, July 1904, SL: 22). 'Epicleti', a *hapax legomenon* in Joyce, has been historically understood as a wrong plural of 'epiclesis': a phase of Eastern Christian liturgy in which the Holy Spirit is invoked to transubstantiate the host into the body of Christ and contribute to the salvation of believers through holy communion. The ten intended stories would thus be invocations to transform simple bread and wine into sacred things: attempts at transubstantiating the squalor of life into a work of art, and propitiating the salvation of the readers, in line with the 'moral and spiritual uplift' Joyce had intended. This idea fits perfectly the Eucharistic aesthetic of epiphanies, providing a plausible argument for a reading in this key: 'the epicleti are the creative processes; the epiphanies, the resulting manifestations' (Walzl 1965: 437). Yet this explanation raises legitimate doubts. Why would 22-year-old Joyce, unread in Greek, use a

concept from Eastern liturgy to convey the idea of transubstantiation for which the Roman ritual, perfectly familiar to him and his recipient, could cater just as well? In response, Wolfhard Steppe advanced the hypothesis that in the original note, sent to Curran on a rainy day and arduously transcribed for the first edition of Joyce's letters, Joyce had originally written 'epiclets', or little epics (Steppe 1995: 603-05).[14] Although disappointingly trivialising compared to many critical theorisations, this is a far clearer way of referring to short stories for someone who had just developed his theory of lyrical, epic, and dramatic art, and was preparing to shift his commitment from the first to the second form. What happens, then, to the view of *Dubliners* as a collection of epiphanies of the city (Tindall 1960: 10) if we abandon another piece of its already scant documentary evidence?

Still, the most sensible problem for an epiphanic reading of *Dubliners* is not philological, but critical. The traditional creed is that epiphanies in *Dubliners* provide the piece that, in each story, completes the puzzle, illuminating and justifying all that has been written before, and occasionally providing the focalised character a life-changing insight. In addition, according to some, the climactic epiphany is preceded by other minor illuminations, which constantly spur the reader to probe the text for its implicit meaning (Gozzi 2002: 34-35). The problem with this view is that, following the rationale behind the 'Epiphanies' sketches, the meaningful events that should clarify the whole narration are unimportant facts or phrases which, if not textually marked, are impossible to recognise. If the stories are meant to provide the narrative context to an epiphany (Beja 1971:93), but the illumination itself is understated and stylistically indistinguishable from the rest of the narrative, how can one perceive its value? What is more, if what looks like an illumination comes through the perspective of a character who appears unreliable (self-aggrandising, for instance, or prone to illusions), should we trust the revelation, reverse its meaning, or deny it altogether? These considerations all point to the real crux, which Dettmar bluntly

[14] Ironically, a scan of the original phrase from the Curran archive (Steppe 1995: 604) confirms that the final letter can be an 's' in Joyce's handwriting (indeed, 'epiclets' is what the librarian of University College Dublin transcribed in the catalogue card), and at the same time displays a topping dot of ink that makes it look like an 'i'. The incident sums up beautifully the conundrum that Joyce's art poses to any good-willed interpreter, to which *Dubliners*, despite its relative simplicity, is no exception. Is 'epicleti' a simple misreading, or is 'epiclets' a *lectio facilior*, the banalisation of a difficult word to which the librarian, and Steppe, resorted in the inability to appreciate its meaning?

exposed: to any reader who approaches the text without the agenda to *find* it, these stories do not offer any illumination at all. Since Joyce categorically refuses to state his moral, in the end 'not only do we remain unenlightened; we cannot even decide who, if anyone, in the story has seen the light' (1996: 81). Dettmar argued, in fact, that the traditional idea of the final epiphany is flawed, and went as far as claiming that the stories are militantly *anti*-epiphanic, in that any illumination they might seem to provide is systematically undercut (1996: 83).

Dettmar's arguments expose a macroscopic weakness in the traditional epiphanic reading. Yet, although the critical vulgate is no absolute authority, a democratic value in majority judgements should at least be taken into account. As soon as *Stephen Hero* became available to the public, Stephen's 'book of epiphanies' was unhesitatingly identified: 'this collection has come down to us as *Dubliners*' (Levin 1944: 28). This was not obvious, and scholars were aware that it might not necessarily be the case ('it may be, too, that the collection of epiphanies Stephen wishes to leave to posterity is not *Dubliners* at all but a collection of just such fragments as the one he acknowledges' (Hendry 1946:453)). Yet even when the 'Epiphanies' notebooks were found, the idea of reading *Dubliners* as epiphanic narratives remained critically sound. This is arguably because the stories' aesthetics substantially adheres to the significance of trivial things that *Stephen Hero* championed. Joyce's well-known declaration to Curran is indeed crucial not so much for the 'epicleti' label, but because it names paralysis as the underlying motif of Dublin's life and identifies the purpose of the stories as an act of unmasking. They aim to 'betray the soul' of the city, just like, according to Stanislaus, the gestures noted as epiphanies would 'betray' people's secrets. In fact, as Scholes and Litz note, even if Joyce did not mention epiphanies apropos of his stories, 'he did, however, try in them to expose that same paralysis which he felt had been revealed in the banal conversation of "The Young Lady" and "The Young Gentleman"' of the Eccles Street epiphany (1969: 255). There is in principle no reason to cling to epiphany at all costs; *Dubliners* can be read without it, which is precisely what readers did for twenty years before *Stephen Hero* brought the concept to critical attention. However, the present study will argue that the epiphanic aesthetics is active in the stories, and contributes to their

inspiration, their form and their readers' reaction, even when they are perfectly unaware of what an 'epiphany' is.

The last point is illustrated in the prefatory story, 'The Sisters'. It is possibly the least 'revealing' and most complacently puzzling *Dubliners* piece, yet – or rather: precisely because – an overuse of ellipses riddling sentences with holes forces the reader into having to read for cues. It is a critical commonplace that the story functions by creating ambiguity and inviting one to read between the lines. The point is that this elliptical style confronts readers with a reality that is blatantly partial: an ellipsis alerts the reader to the fact that there is something behind what is said and done, and urges us to look for it by paying the closest attention to any minute details of the characters' speech or gesture. In other words, without ever mentioning the word 'epiphany' or providing a meta-epiphany as a guideline, Joyce places the reader in the position of an epiphany-hunter.

'The Sisters' was extensively rewritten for the (failed) 1912 edition of *Dubliners*. The final text is therefore significantly more mature not only than its 1904 version for the *Irish Homestead*, but than all the other *Dubliners* stories, including 'The Dead'. Joyce rewrote it to serve as an overture for the book, incorporating in it key motifs of the whole collection – notably the triad *paralysis-gnomon-simony* – at the level of both narration and symbolism. According to Walzl, the first story was akin to *Stephen Hero* and to the early epiphanies, where actions and words are stated, but feelings must be inferred (1973: 378, 381). It also grants the narrating boy an attitude of detached superiority toward other characters (Fischer 1971:86), similar to the spirit in which the young Joyce seems to have collected his notes. The revision made the narrator directly involved in his tale and increased focalisation on him, allowing access to his emotions and dreams (Walzl 1973: 390). Dialogues, instead, remain inserted as uninterrupted exchanges similar to early dramatic epiphanies. The initial scene involving Old Cotter's incomplete allegations – '"I have my own theory about it […]. I think it was one of those… peculiar cases… But it's hard to say…" he began to puff again at his pipe without giving us his theory' (D: 8) – is indeed stylistically very close to Epiphany 13, where a character named Blake stutters some allegedly terrible truth 'between puffs of smoke': 'of course… it looks all right from the outside… to those who don't know…

But if you knew… it's really terrible. […] You've no idea simply…' (Scholes and Kain, 1965: 23). The evolution is thus remarkably close to the transformation of *Stephen Hero* into *A Portrait*, which Joyce was conducting when this rewriting took place: a synthesis of dramatic and dream epiphanies based on how the focalised consciousness encounters and digests the world.

The two types of potentially revealing moments are indeed explicitly connected in the story. Old Cotter's insinuations are scornfully dismissed by the protagonist because of their paternalistic tone, but in fact affect him deeply:

> It was late when I fell asleep. Though I was angry with old Cotter for alluding to me as a child, I puzzled my head to extract meaning from his unfinished sentences. In the dark of my room I imagined that I saw again the heavy grey face of the paralytic. I drew the blankets over my head and tried to think of Christmas. But the grey face still followed me. It murmured, and I understood that it desired to confess something. I felt my soul receding into some pleasant and vicious region; and there again I found it waiting for me. It began to confess to me in a murmuring voice and I wondered why it smiled continually and why the lips were so moist with spittle. But then I remembered that it had died of paralysis and I felt that I too was smiling feebly as if to absolve the simoniac of his sin. (D: 9)

This moment has often been considered a revelation of the priest's sin, be it the declared simony or something darker, including pederasty. Clearly, the dream is closely influenced by waking life: old Cotter's insinuations made the child alert to the suspicion that the priest's company was sinful. Whether, however, this scene brings out some truth or only manifests the boy's fear is open to debate. We have interestingly no clue as to whether the priest's murmuring, in the dream, is intelligible to the boy; either he cannot imagine what the priest would confess, or the narrator does not want to spell it out, or, perhaps, confession is sufficient to obtain absolution, regardless of its content. For sure the dream proves that Cotter's words made the child prone to consider, consciously and unconsciously, whether there was something more to the priest than he had perceived. This leads him to pay a heightened attention to his own reactions: 'I was disturbed to find myself at check' (D: 10), and soon after, 'I found it strange that neither I nor the day seemed in a mourning mood and I felt even annoyed at discovering in myself a sensation of freedom as

if I had been freed from something by his death' (D: 11). The last point can be, again, either a very common reaction (feeling guilty for not mourning as sadly as the adults would expect) or the prompt for a more acute analysis of the priest's effect on him.

In his recollection, their friendship is cast in a contradictory light that evokes Joyce's own feelings toward Catholicism. Walzl notices that Father Flynn's teachings convey 'a view of the priesthood as ruling elite of an ancient, authoritarian church' (1973: 393-94). The allegation of simony would be indeed justified if the priest had tried to condition the boy into taking religious vows with a mirage of power, rather than spiritual dedication. On the other hand, the boy shows an interest in this realm. The priest comes across as well read, his conversation as intellectually challenging; learning 'how complex and mysterious were certain institutions of the Church which I always regarded as the simplest acts' (D: 11) is an awe-inspiring process, that, again, pushes the child in the same direction as his author's epiphany-theory: reconsidering the spiritual significance of acts that are normally taken for granted. The duties he sees as more daunting are precisely the Eucharist and the confessional: transubstantiation, and the necessity to protect hidden truths. In this light, the fact that he feels 'freed from something by his death' (D: 11) might have little to do with the priest's supposed perversion, but imply rather that he is now relieved from the 'great wish' (D: 8) – presumably, that he would also become a priest – and free to apply what he learnt outside the religious domain.

The boy's reverence toward the mystery of religion is probably why his uncle calls him a 'Rosicrucian' – a member of a mystical-theosophical order Joyce had come to know through Yeats (Bond 2011: par. 3-4). His deep involvement finds a contrast, however, in the priest's sisters, two uneducated women who are little match for intellectual profundity. Nannie's mutterings, shockingly distant from the deep questions the boy was taught to consider, distract him from a truly spiritual reflection. Eliza, the other sister, reinforces this impression as she praises Father O'Rourke's care of practicalities: bringing flowers and candlesticks, taking charge of notices and insurances. Her brother made 'a beautiful corpse' (D: 14), there are 'no friends that a body can trust' (D: 15), even the extreme unction becomes a material task: 'Father O'Rourke […] anointed him and prepared him and all' (D: 14). No

wonder she saw her brother as 'too scrupulous always' and thinks that 'the duties of the priesthood was [*sic*] too much for him' (D: 16). No wonder, also, that in this environment the intellectualising priest was 'a disappointed man' (D: 16). The 1904 story explicitly states that the priest despised his ignorant sisters. Here, this superiority is only suggested when the boy, distracted by Nannie's noisy litany, notices 'how clumsily her skirt was hooked at the back and how the heels of her cloth boots were trodden down all to one side. The fancy came to me that the old priest was smiling as he lay there in his coffin' (D: 13). Yet the priest is no longer smiling; the material dimension he despised seems to have won the day. Only for a brief moment, just as Eliza evokes his 'laughing-like softly to himself', there is a hint that it might not be so, as the old woman and the boy are involved together in an instant of suspended listening:

> She stopped suddenly as if to listen. I too listened; but there was no sound in the house: and I knew that the old priest was lying still in his coffin as we had seen him, solemn and truculent in death, an idle chalice on his breast. (D: 17)

The dimension of a material body is all he is now, and the chalice that he loosely holds is empty, like the one he broke: a material vessel without anything sacred inside. There is something at once superstitious and caring in the sisters' placing a chalice in his hands in place of the customary cross – as if it could make amends for the broken one that, in their understanding, initiated the breakdown of his life; but they remain distant from any hypothesis of real spiritual turmoil. Is it possible that in this suspension Eliza understands something of it? Or is it the boy who realises that the spirituality that intrigued and charmed him is only an illusion, with his 'and I knew' marking a moment of insight, rather than a simple data check? Perhaps, the death of the priest awakens the 'Rosicrucian' from the abstractions of an intellectualised faith to the material reality that his friend scorned, and that is instead a repository of earthly mysteries.

This final passage brings together several motifs – the chalice, the coffin/confessional, the disquieting ('truculent') aspect of the priest, his characteristic laughter, and even recalls the 'idleness' of the beginning: 'He had often said to me: "I am

not long for this world", and I had thought his words idle. Now I knew they were true' (D: 7). Eliza's final words also evoke Old Cotter's, in content and ellipsis: 'so then, of course, when they saw that, that made them think that there was something gone wrong with him…' (D: 17), re-opening the initial question of whether the priest was actually good company. The story ends sudden and unsatisfactory in the middle of this umpteenth suspension: it finishes, but, as Pirandello would say, does not conclude. Now, the finale is usually expected to give the story a key, and in this case is given additional relevance by the title that, misleadingly or not, calls attention to the sisters. In the middle of a novel one could likely skim-read this clichéd dialogue; but there is nothing more to know here. We are thus forced to go back to those trite sentences and reanalyse them, with painstaking attention to detail and individual words, now convinced, with no one having told us, that they will give us our desired meaning. Thus, 'Joyce exploited patterns in the endings of his stories to convey implications which the stories nowhere need explicitly to declare' (Wright 2017: par 5). In particular, the text finds the most effective strategy to call attention to the significance of trivial details, as Joyce intended to do.

As soon as we start re-reading, countless interpretive possibilities open up about virtually every character; Norris offered a great summary of the most intriguing (2003: 27-40). The priest could be mentally ill, or enlightened as to the pointlessness of what he does; he could be guilty (of simony or worse), or just an innocuous invalid whose disquieting smile is a realistic symptom. The boy may be an accomplice of the guilty priest, or his victim, or just a bright curious child fascinated by the talk of an educated man. Old Cotter could be talking nonsense, he could be aware of some dark secret, or he could be maliciously spreading gossip. The sisters could be uneducated simpletons or consummated hypocrites. Although the idea of simony or the darkest sexual hints were not in the original version of the story (Walzl 1973), clearly Joyce did not mind including them as further multipliers of ambiguity. The definitive version opens thus a combinatory vortex through a myriad of potentially revealing details whose interpretation changes the whole situation.

We could not have a decisive answer as to the intended meaning of the story, even if we asked Joyce himself. What the ellipses and the cryptic symbolic cues definitely do is

force readers to suspend all certainties and leave imagination free to sway. They create the necessary space in which our mind can encounter the complexities of life, embracing its partiality and mysterious multifaceted nature. This resonates with the phenomenological stance: 'il nous faut reconnaître l'indéterminé comme un phénomène positif. C'est dans cette atmosphère que se présente la qualité. Le sens qu'elle renferme est un sens équivoque, il s'agit d'une valeur expressive plutôt que d'une signification logique' (Merleau-Ponty 1976: 12).[15] The aim of Joyce's story is definitely not to spell out a revelation, but to lay before the readers the stifling, puzzling, disquieting aspects of 'normality' in a provincial context dominated by poverty and oppressive hierarchies, and to induce them through textual devices to open up to this reality in its multi-layered truth. Which leads us to dispel a hard-to-die misconception about epiphanies as life-changing conversions.

Dettmar rightly recalls that in their initial conception, Joycean epiphanies were not 'Eureka!' moments, but precisely a decontextualizing and discomforting technique (1996: 84). However, he presents a banalised version of the critical vulgate, according to which an epiphany is supposed to offer a clear illumination with incontestable effects on the receiver. In this vein, he even proposes to apply a validation method, whereby 'there is no epiphany without efficacy', in order to distinguish 'real' insights from the characters' self-delusions. In the conclusion of 'Araby', for example, he sees the language of religious conversion, but no proof that the revelation has 'worked': we can't therefore believe, he concludes, that the boy's contrition at his vanity is sincere (Dettmar 1996: 89). While it is true that self-delusion is always possible when a realisation is filtered through a character's perspective, the criterion of efficacy in understanding epiphanies is misleading. Even religious conversion, W. James explains, can fail the test of efficacy, because the converted are subject to relapses; yet this does not lessen its value: 'that it should for even a short time show a human being what the high water mark of his spiritual capacity is, this is what constitutes its importance — an importance which backsliding cannot diminish, although persistence might increase it' (2012: 200-201). The language in the conclusion of Araby, so lyrically wrought that it

[15] 'We must recognize the indeterminate as a positive phenomenon. It is in this atmosphere that quality arises. Its meaning is an equivocal meaning; we are concerned with an expressive value rather than with logical signification' (2002: 7).

seems suspicious in a declaration of humility, is arguably the boy's language, whose lyricism seems to him the only means to convey the moment's emotional importance. Perhaps he has not 'learnt his lesson' (Dettmar 1996: 87), but there is no reason to doubt that he perceives the situation as very telling about his life, regardless of its consequences (which the story leaves out anyway). The point of Joycean epiphanies, even those that in *Portrait* and in *Stephen Hero* mark the protagonist's conversion to art, lies in their *intrinsic* value, rather than in their narrative consequences. Stephen does not *become* an artist *after* experiencing epiphanies – he *is* an artist *because* he has the capacity to receive these shocks. The fact that an epiphany can be life-changing must not be confused with the prescription that it must; the moment must be perceived as significant, but that it should have verifiable effects is a critical fantasy creating more problems than it solves.

In fact, the traditional association of epiphany with religious conversion is in itself inaccurate. The Magi were not converted when they saw Jesus, they only recognised in him what they had been looking for: they 'perceived the manifestation' of that to which they were receptive. In fact, Joycean epiphanies are more closely related to mystical states than to the specific experience of conversion, and in mystical states 'we should be liable to error just as we are now […]. They offer us *hypotheses*' (James 2012: 326). Joyce's stories offer us hypotheses, too:

> almost from the beginning, my brother followed his natural bent, which was for the plotless sketch. He came to consider a well-ordered plot […] as a meretricious literary interest [...] an [*sic*] hypothesis, that is a story, is all the more permissible to an artist in order to help him to clarify the speculations on human life that are striving for expression in his brain. (MBK:106)

Again, there is common ground with the phenomenological method, whose aim is to catch the world as it appears in our encounter with it before we fall back on our conscious judgements. The Joycean epiphany, in its affinity with mystical experience, fits this picture in that its main artistic outcome is also descriptive, rather than interpretive. The epiphanies in *Dubliners* are concerned with recreating instances of disclosure, without spelling out their epistemological content. Joyce adheres to the principle that 'aucune hypothèse explicative

n'est plus claire que l'acte même par lequel nous reprenons ce monde inachevé pour essayer de le totaliser et de le penser' (Merleau-Ponty 1976: XV).[16] The most effective way of conveying the illumination is therefore to report the scene unexplained, suggesting as many potential interpretations as the real situation would originally allow. Thus, we do not have the elements required for judging the efficacy or trustworthiness of an epiphany in the life of a character, but we are given plenty to consider what a moment reveals about the characters and their world, even in stories where characters themselves do not seem to understand much.

One such instance is 'Clay', whose climactic scenes are crucially played on non-comprehension. As for most stories in the book, the moment considered epiphanic here varies. One option is the Hallows Eve game when players, blindfolded, have to pick an object that will reveal their destiny during the year ahead, and the protagonist touches the 'soft wet substance' which we understand from the title to be clay. A traditional interpretation of this passage is that the youngsters' trick to add the bowl of clay to the table during Maria's turn is based on a biblical reference. Be this the famous 'God made man from the dust of the earth' (Genesis 2:7) or other more explicit references to clay (Isaiah 64: 8: 'we are the clay, and thou our potter'), its implications are gloomy. Either it is somewhat God's doing that the spinster Maria should be alone, or the evoked admonition 'thou art dust and to dust thou shall return' reminds Maria that the time to change her destiny is nearly up. Norris offers a different, more realistic reading: the children probably collected some 'soft wet substance' from the garden in the attempt 'to make prim, "genteel" Maria recoil in […] disgust at the mistaken sensation of touching "excrement"' (2003: 152). The point, however, is not so much in the rationale behind the trick, but in the fact that it fails: 'Maria understood that it was wrong that time and so she had to do it over again' (D: 117). Maria does not seem to grasp the implications of her gesture (symbolic or otherwise), but she does understand that she has quite literally put her finger on the sore spot. Her ensuing action says something about her life and that of people around her.

[16] 'No explanatory hypothesis is clearer than the act whereby we take up this unfinished world in an effort to complete and conceive it' (2002: xxiii).

To close the displeasing incident, 'Joe made Maria take a glass of wine. Soon they were all quite merry again' (D: 117). This sentence appeared, nearly identical, just a few lines before, when Maria's mention of Alphy risked spoiling the party: 'Joe said that he would not lose his temper […], and asked his wife to open some more stout. […] Soon everything was merry again' (D: 116). These sentences speak of a merriness that is all the more strenuously sought as it is precarious. Joe supports this effort with alcohol; Maria through her grinning laughter, which she repeatedly stretches 'till the tip of her nose nearly met the tip of her chin' (D: 112) whenever marriage is mentioned or implied. The core dynamic of her story is indeed a flawed affective life for which she tries to compensate.

Norris observes that the narrating voice adheres to her desires, trying to picture her as she would like to be seen – as a financially independent single woman who is appreciated in her job and has the affection of a family. At the same time, the voice's silences and slips uncover bleaker possibilities: that she is a poor kitchen maid in a socially ambiguous institution in which she is bullied and mocked; that she was really a slavey for her putative family, who keeps inviting her out of pity; and that she is genuinely disliked by everyone – sometimes for good reasons (2003: 142-44). However, while Norris' reading pinpoints the efficacy of Joyce's free indirect speech, it tends to tip the scales of the perception of the character towards spitefulness, whilst in this case a tinge of sympathy prevails. As attested by Ellmann, the story is inspired by Joyce's own family dynamics, and Maria represents a relative of whom his mother was very fond (JJ: 19-20, 190). We have indeed no decisive indication that Joe's affection for her is feigned, induced by alcohol, or limited to pity. Maria's efforts to 'put in a good word' for Alphy, albeit unsuccessful, can also be considered genuine. This does not mean she is the pleasant company she would wish to be; but whilst the narration does indeed function 'like a bandaged wound' (Norris 2003: 140), its attempt is not so much to cover Maria's flaws, but to give away at once her wound and her attempts to cover it.

As with many characters in *Dubliners*, the figure of Maria has opposing interpretations. Is she, courtesy of her name, social abjection, and submissiveness, a martyr of humility in a society that persecutes the weak (Noon 1955)? Or is she a long-nosed, long-

chinned witch, who takes the night of Halloween to disseminate discord and subtly curse the people around her (Smith 1965)? Arguably, Joyce's symbolisation is more subtle. While Maria may not be quite as 'nice' as the narrative voice would argue, nothing portrays her as willingly offensive, either. Her social awkwardness is in fact easily connected to her efforts to keep her repressed emotions in check. She knows she is too old for love and riches, and she is genuinely trying to be content with her lot: 'Maria had to laugh and say she didn't want any ring or man either' (D: 112); 'she […] thought how much better it was to be independent and to have your own money in your pocket' (D: 113). This, however, is not the pacified acceptance she would wish it to be, but at best only a superficial 'fake it 'til you make it', so to speak.

Joyce's decision to set the story on Hallows Eve, a night associated in folk culture with divination, is very effective in bringing out this point. Maria is indeed confronted with divination games at the end, with the saucers choice, but also at the beginning: the barmbrack she distributes among the laundresses is a Halloween cake that also contains fortunes – 'a ring for early marriage, a button, bachelorhood; a thimble, spinsterhood; a holy medal, the religious life', and similar (Walzl 1983: 136, n 4). In both cases her marital status is in the spotlight. In the initial scene, Maria is teased about wanting the ring, while in the second moment the focalised narration indulges on the girl who picks it: her 'blushing' (D: 116) echoes the 'disappointed shyness' of Maria's reaction at the laundry and at the cake-shop, when the shopkeeper's caustic reference to wedding cake 'made Maria blush and smile' (D: 112, 114). Setting the story on Halloween is thus useful not so much to portray her as a saint or a witch, but because this is the time of the year most likely to confront her with her hopes for the future – and therefore, with her unfulfilled desires.

This is made evident by her meeting with the man on the tram. Immediately after the cake-shop incident, which made Maria sensitive to the thought that 'none of the young men seemed to notice her' (D: 114), an elderly drunk man acting kindly to her can easily become a charming, colonel-looking gentleman coming to the rescue of her feeble self-esteem. In response, she acts half like the shy ceremonious person she is, half as a flirtatious adolescent, favouring him 'with demure nods and hems' and even bowing and exchanging

smiles when taking leave (D: 114). That her acts are not immune from a desperate attempt at romance is suggested by her later frustration at realising she left the plumcake on the tram. Her feelings of 'shame and vexation and disappointment', and the fact that 'she nearly cried outright' (D: 115) seem quite disproportionate to the gravity of the event. They denounce her fragility, her preoccupation to live up to the family's expectations, and, finally, her unsuccessful attempt to suffocate in herself any hope of male attention – a repressed desire that keeps interfering with her conscious plans.

'Clay' is this story of an unsuccessful struggle to change or accept one's life, and therefore of a state of paralysis; but it is also about the strenuous attempt to actively avoid confronting one's wounds. Touching the saucer full of garden dirt, Maria does realise something: she understands that it is wrong and she must try again; she *must not* open her eyes to the unpleasant joke. The epiphany, for the reader, but also somehow for her, is that she must remain blind and keep playing until something bearable comes out. This foregrounds a mechanism of allusion and elision in which everyone takes part. We do not know whether the song at the end is chosen by Maria herself or by Mrs Donnelly; however, when Maria omits the stanzas which begin 'I dreamt that suitors sought my hand', 'no one tried to show her her mistake' (D: 118). An ambiguous, unspoken agreement ensures that emotional pain is alluded to, but never openly addressed. This is no special treatment for Maria. All characters, in effect, from the laundresses to Joe's family, seem to be trying hard to cover up their sorrow with a merriness built on very shaky foundations. All, including Maria, suffer even more while trying to deny their suffering, and their attitude results in the same unruly obliteration that shines through Maria's omission of the song's verse.

The conclusion, in fact, is not entrusted to her, but to Joe, who appears deeply moved by her song for reasons that remain unclear. Is his a mere upsurge of alcohol-driven sentimentalism, as many suggest? Did he recognise Maria's unuttered cry of grief, but quickly defused it in a less painful affectation of nostalgia? Is it genuine nostalgia, possibly tinged by his own affective wounds, such as the rupture with his brother? The few details we are given seem to indicate in him the same return of the repressed that affects Maria. He seems to have drastically excluded his brother from his life, but at the same time he

cannot help taking shelter in 'pleasant talk and reminiscences', asking Maria for 'one of the old songs' (D: 117): in this sense, his final trivial remark that 'there was no time like the long ago' (D: 118) might also belie genuine pain. Like Maria, he keeps hovering around his sore spot while trying to ignore it; hearing her song might have actually made him sensitive to his own plight, rather than hers. The final sentence, showing him blinded by tears and groping for a corkscrew – in search, again, of a way to patch up his sorrow – epiphanically reinstates the main message, exposing a society where everyone tries hard to cover up suffering with merriness and good-feeling, but in the end lives with their wounds and by so doing creates deeper wounds in others.

This is perhaps the least distorting sense in which an epiphanic reading can help understand the *Dubliners* stories, particularly those, like 'The Sisters' or 'Clay', where the characters are not granted a realisation. These stories can be genetically related to the early epiphanies of the dramatic type, where participants are unaware of the greater meaning their actions and words reveal to an observer. There are, however, also stories – 'An Encounter', 'Araby', 'A Little Cloud', 'A Painful Case' – where characters perceive a revealing moment, and provide an interpretation of its meaning from their point of view. In this case, the inspiration draws closer to the dream epiphanies, whose interest lay in what they could reveal about the subject who experienced them, rather than the situation in which they occurred. When similar moments, focalised through the characters and elaborated from their perspective, are presented in *Dubliners*, however, readers are confronted with a twofold dilemma. First, whether to take the character's interpretation at face value: is he really gaining a more accurate insight into his life, or is the realisation part of a general tendency to self-delusion, as Bowen (1981-82) rightly wonders? On a second plane, regardless of whether the characters 'get it', what does that moment reveal about them and the world in which they live?

The dichotomy comes out evidently in the latest stories that Joyce wrote. In 'A Little Cloud', strategically placed at the heart of the book, the moments of (presumed) realisation are triggered by a meeting of the timid and domestic protagonist, Little Chandler, with his old friend Gallaher who, in his eyes, embodies the adventurous literary life he secretly

craves. The disappointment that ensues makes the protagonist particularly sensitive to the unfulfilling aspects of his life, and at the same time gives the reader a broader picture of the cultural limitations within which his realisation takes place. What emerges most clearly from the central meeting between the two friends, in fact, is that the eight years gone have not marked any evolution at all in their personal development: 'Tommy [...] I see you haven't changed an atom' (D: 82) Gallaher immediately states; and by the end, Chandler too is forced to admit that his friend is still the same dissolute guy who 'did mix with a rakish set of fellows […]; drank freely and borrowed money on all sides' (D: 78). Chandler is thus proven wrong in his belief that 'if you wanted to succeed you had to go away. You could do nothing in Dublin' (D: 79). Despite leaving Dublin, Gallaher did not escape his cultural limitations, he just extended their geographical boundaries. As has been noted, his boast 'I mean to marry money' (D: 89) is an exemplary declaration of simony, the commodification of all ideal, moral or emotional value which is, for Joyce, both a cause and an effect of the Irish paralysis (Gozzi 2002: 89). Moreover, as Chandler finally acknowledges, Gallaher interiorised the colonial logic so well that now, working in the London press, he looks down on his homeland and countrymen, 'patronising him by his friendliness just as he was patronising Ireland by his visit' (D: 88).

The inevitable collapse of Chandler's illusions and of the alibis they had provided him generates a moment of lucidity as his self-esteem revolts:

> He felt acutely the contrast between his own life and his friend's and it seemed to him unjust. Gallaher was his inferior in birth and education. He was sure that he could do something better than his friend had ever done, or could ever do, something higher than mere tawdry journalism if he only got the chance. What was it that stood in his way? His unfortunate timidity! (D: 88)

Timidity, which is also a paralysing force in 'Clay', may well be Chandler's justification for not having done 'something better'; however, this angered admission acknowledges, if just for a moment, that the causes of his frustration have to do with a weakness of his own more than external circumstances. It is probably the maximum awareness of self-limitations most characters in *Dubliners* ever reach. At the same time, his

friend's scorn renders him hypersensitive to his sense of unfulfillment, making him see his marriage, and by extension his life, through a more critical lens than before: 'a dull resentment against his life awoke within him. Could he not escape from his little house? Was it too late for him to try to live bravely like Gallaher?' (D: 91-92).

Here the suspicion arises that his dissatisfaction, rather than prompting a serious self-analysis, only exacerbates his escapist fantasies. Before their meeting, he had indeed idealised the restaurant as a prestigious international hub, with polyglot waiters serving cavaliers and mythologised ladies – a fancy that spoke volumes about his tendency to take refuge in romanticised constructions. The charm of Elsewhere is a recurring theme in *Dubliners*, particularly in childhood and adolescence stories, where Buenos Aires, the Wild West, Persia, and Arabia are evoked. For Chandler, who never got farther than the Isle of Man, even the European countries where his friend travels are an exotic land: what interests him most in Gallaher's stories are indeed the 'Oriental eyes' of 'rich Jewesses' (D: 91), precisely the stereotypes of *fin-de-siècle* Orientalism. As he thinks that 'every step brought him nearer to London, farther from his own sober inartistic life' (D: 79), London, art, and reckless life become one in his reverie. After the meeting, little changes. Chandler still dreams of London, convinced that 'the furniture to be paid for' is what holds him back, and still thinks of art as a means to fulfil his escapist desire: 'if he could only write a book and get it published, that might open the way for him' (D: 91).

This scene touches on an important allusion in the story, as it calls to mind a passage in *Stephen Hero* where Stephen and his mother talk about art:

> - Of course life isn't what I used to think it was when I was a young girl. That's why I would like to read some great writer […]. Because sometimes […] I feel that I want to leave this actual life and enter another — for a time.
> - But that is wrong: that is the great mistake everyone makes. Art is not an escape from life! […] It's just the very opposite. Art […] is the very central expression of life. An artist is not a fellow who dangles a mechanical heaven before the public. […] The artist affirms out of the fulness of his own life, he creates . . . Do you understand? (SH: 90-91).

Chandler, clearly, does not understand; his conception of art is quite the opposite. His poetic desires can be considered genuine: where 'the thought that a poetic moment had

touched him took life within him like an infant hope' (D: 79) 'infant' does not just expose the childish fancy of an unlikely poetic career, but also an innocent desire of self-fulfilment. The problem is the cultural horizon of this desire. Far from affirming 'from the fullness of his own life', Chandler deliberately ignores the reality around him: 'a horde of grimy children populated the street. […] Little Chandler gave them no thought. He picked his way deftly through all that minute vermin-like life and under the shadow of the gaunt spectral mansions in which the old nobility of Dublin had roystered' (D: 77). Like a good would-be aesthete, Chandler ignores the vermin-like life, focusing immediately on a gothic picture of decayed nobility. Moreover, he aspires to be recognised by 'a little circle of kindred minds' (D: 80) – members of the Celtic Revival, whose aesthetics included precisely melancholy and the tendency to obliterate the most unpleasant aspects of reality. The fact that he finds in this movement his ideal community is meant as a first hint to the limits that constitute his specific form of paralysis.

If Walzl is right in claiming that characters in *Dubliners* are both individuals and human types (1965: 443), Chandler represents a category of squeamish petty bourgeois with aspirations to dandyism whose entrapment is not caused by material issues, but by the very mindset of a good Irish education. He is privileged compared to most fellow Dubliners in the book: he has a job and a family, he does not drink and can cultivate dreams of elegance (Lazar 2001: par 32). Yet his possibility of self-fulfilment is still curbed by the dominant forces of his homeland: Catholicism, England and obtuse nationalism. The last two powerfully dominate his poetic reverie. His greatest artistic ambition is to participate in a self-centred provincial literary movement; more interesting still, wrapping himself in his stereotyped national identity – even trying to 'sound more Irish' – he seeks recognition from *English* critics. While for Joyce an important part of Irish spiritual liberation depended on the ability to assert an independent culture (Gibson 2006: 45-48), Chandler's dream is only conceivable within the boundaries set by the masters. The influence of the Church emerges, on the other hand, as he and Gallagher embrace the preconception that Dublin is more moral than elsewhere: 'here we are in old jog-along Dublin, where nothing is known of such things' (D: 85). In fact, Dublin appears to have little to envy other capitals: the reader

already encountered a shady priest ('The Sisters'), a sadistic pederast ('An Encounter'), a procurer mother ('The Boarding House'), gamblers ('After the Race') and parasites ('Two Gallants'), all of which makes the exchange quite sarcastic. However, Irish prudery leads one to believe that certain things do not happen in Catholic Dublin, thus, on the one hand, preventing awareness of social degradation, and, on the other, prohibiting any sensual enjoyment.

Thus imbued with a culture whose mainstream art and bigoted morals encourages an escape from reality, when real life, in the shape of his son's cries, bursts out, interrupting his consolatory reading, Little Chandler feels trapped rather than endowed with a moment of intimacy:

> 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. His arms trembled with anger and suddenly bending to the child's face he shouted:
> 'Stop!'
> The child stopped for an instant, had a spasm of fright and began to scream.
> (D: 91)

Beja reads this moment as an epiphany and interprets it as the character does: 'the wailing of his son interrupts Little Chandler's Wordsworthian attempt to recapture an earlier "poetic" sensation and reveals to him that he is "a prisoner for life"' (Beja 1971: 94). The moment, however, can also be read in the opposite sense, as a very unenlightened wave of self-commiseration vented out in a useless egotistic act against his child. It is the same mechanism at work in the following story, 'Counterparts', in which the protagonist also discharges his frustration onto his son (Lazar 2001: 9; Gozzi 2002: 89). A third reading is also plausible. The illumination caused by reading a book is a well-established literary motif since St Augustine's conversion. Comparing significant occurrences, Ziolkowski (2014) found that recipients are typically young men at the threshold of maturity, whose personal transformation reflects the evolution of their age. Although he does not figure in Ziolkowski's repertoire, Little Chandler fits this paradigm: he is the same age as St Augustine at the time of his conversion and feels a similar desperation and contempt for

his life. However, his reading does not grant him a new outlook on life. This non-epiphany of the book manifests therefore the opposite of a cultural revolution: the impossibility of change, both in the protagonist and in the society around him. Art, even the great art of poets like Byron, which for Joyce had been the mean to assert his intellectual independence at school (as attested by the autobiographical bullying episode in *A Portrait* where he refuses to admit that 'Byron is no good') cannot save Chandler, because he conceives it in terms that remain strictly within his cultural prison.

Like other characters in the collection, Chandler is, in many respects, a double of Joyce, a young man with artistic aspirations who feels suffocated in Dublin (Weir 1976: 84). It is significant that when this story was composed Joyce had just become a father, and had gone through some relational trouble with Nora (Lazar 2001: par 25-28). In a 1904 letter to his aunt he wrote 'I am not a very domestic person – after all, I suppose I am an artist – and sometimes when I think of the free and happy life which I have (or had) every talent to live I am in a fit of despair' (SL: 80-81). Chandler experiences a similar 'fit of despair' at the thought of being tied down by family duties; however, Ellmann notes that overall Joyce lived paternity enthusiastically, and had endowed the concept with a rather profound meaning. His Paris Notebook reads: 'the most natural act for living beings […] is to produce other beings like themselves and thereby to participate as far as they may in the eternal and divine' (JJ: 204). It is then a further sign of Chandler's immaturity that he sees his child as an obstacle to his entertainment, rather than appreciating the creative gesture of caring for him. Perhaps, like his author himself, 'he needed time […] to accept the fact that freedom and love might take the less exhilarating form of home and family' (JJ: 215).

Something of the sacred nature of paternity is indeed evoked in the last scene, when Annie bursts in to rescue her terrified infant. She instinctively reacts as a lioness who feels her cub is in danger, confronting the father with rage: far from 'unconscious and ladylike', her actions are extremely passionate – her eyes go as far as showing hatred. It becomes clear for Chandler that Annie is truly capable of passion, just not for him: she is entirely devoted to her 'little mannie' rather than to the 'little man' she has married. At this point Chandler lives what, according to most critics, is the crucial epiphany in the story:

> 'My little man! My little mannie! Was 'ou frightened, love? . . . There now, love! There now! . . . Lambabaun! Mamma's little lamb of the world! . . . There now!' Little Chandler felt his cheeks suffused with shame and he stood back out of the lamplight. He listened while the paroxysm of the child's sobbing grew less and less; and tears of remorse started to his eyes. (D: 94)

Two connected emotions emerge in this moment: shame, which makes Chandler blush, as it often happens to him out of embarrassment, and remorse, which fills his eyes with tears just as his son's are drying. These are the symptoms of the epiphany: but what causes shame and remorse? And, since we saw Chandler posturing before, are these feelings sincere? Some readers see Chandler as trapped in a circle of self-delusion that blocks out any epiphany: in this perspective, his backing out of the lamplight in tears appears 'staged' like much else in the plot (Head 1992: 62). Others have seen in his picture, still quite ironic overall, more pity than reprobation, and leave open the option of a real awareness, with Chandler's son playing the part of the saviour in turning Chandler away from his fake idols 'to the true religion of hearth and home' (Lazar 2001: par 52-53). Other hypotheses are also possible. If Chandler is ashamed of having caused the sobbing, he might feel remorse for venting his frustration on his innocent child (the 'lamb of the world') who was not responsible for it. Or, he could be ashamed of having failed in his paternal role, and feel remorse at having acted 'unmanly'; further still, he could regret despising his life in comparison with the lifestyle boasted by Gallaher. A very similar moment, interestingly, affects the protagonist of 'The Dead' when confronted with his wife:

> A shameful consciousness of his own person assailed him. He saw himself as a ludicrous figure […] a nervous, well-meaning sentimentalist, orating to vulgarians and idealising his own clownish lusts, the pitiable fatuous fellow he had caught a glimpse of in the mirror. Instinctively he turned his back more to the light lest she might see the shame that burned upon his forehead. (D: 251)

Is it possible that Chandler, another would-be writer in a story composed just before, has a similar intuition of himself as a sentimental, well-intentioned but ridiculous figure, anticipating aspects that Joyce would develop further in 'The Dead'? His backing out from

the light is the same, and by the end of the story Gabriel's eyes, too, fill with 'generous tears'. Is this a sign of genuine awakening of the character to his limitations? The curtain falls on Chandler before any additional data can clarify the picture. Thus, 'A Little Cloud' confronts us once again with the divergence between the epiphany *for* the character and the epiphany *of* the character. What Chandler understood in his moment of shame and remorse remains a mystery for readers, but readers are led to wonder what the moment reveals about him.

The problem arises again in 'The Dead': we cannot be completely sure that the 'generous tears' Gabriel sheds are more genuinely 'generous' than his superficial lending of a coin to Freddy Malins. This ambiguity might well be part of Joyce's moral intention. As Johnson puts it, 'how much we believe Gabriel capable finally in the story of abruptly abnegating the habits of a lifetime [...] may well depend on how much we believe anyone (including ourselves) capable of such a cessation' (2008: xxxix). If Joyce's narration is meant to help readers 'having a look at themselves' (SL: 90), the character's epiphany challenges them each time to take a position as to his possibility of redemption. The 'indifferent public' (SL: 84) to whom Joyce polemically addresses his book is thus hopefully shaken from the passivity which is at once their fault and their punishment. Epiphanies are in this sense a means to affect the real world through his writing, upholding Joyce's conviction that 'in composing my chapter of moral history in exactly the way I have composed it I have taken the first step towards the spiritual liberation of my country' (SL: 88).

In the case of 'The Dead', however, the character's evolution is more complex and followed in greater detail than anywhere else. Several motifs from 'A Little Cloud' return: the protagonist is a writer desirous of social recognition; he also desires passionate love, but discovers that his wife's passion is rather devoted to a young third wheel, and is forced to face this humiliation. Moreover, Gabriel inherits the xenophilia and patronising superiority toward Ireland that was embodied by Gallaher; when preparing his speech, for instance, 'he was undecided about the lines from Robert Browning, for he feared they would be above the head of his hearers. […] Their grade of culture differed from his' (D: 203). These points acquire greater relevance because Gabriel is the most evidently

autobiographical character in the collection, inspired by Joyce's father, by his friend C.P. Curran, and above all by the author himself (JJ: 246-47). In Ireland, Joyce had been the aspiring intellectual who prized cosmopolitanism and looked down on Irish provinciality. 'The Dead', however, was conceived in 1907 in response to his emerging homesickness, when, deeply disappointed by his life in Rome, he started to believe he had been unjustly harsh toward his country. According to Ellmann, Gabriel's speech at the party is 'Joyce's oblique way, in language that mocked his own, of beginning the task of making amends' (JJ: 245); perhaps the nostalgic feeling goes even deeper than that, and in that same self-mocking spirit helps to shape a narrative thread of reconciliation.

A high degree of autobiography is of course no guarantee that the narrator will be reliable, and certainly leaves suspicious readers the option to take the lyrical and apparently revealing moments with a grain of salt, interpreting the finale itself as the exposure of a new degree of mystification on the part of the character. However, the biographical details about Joyce's own jealousy make it plausible that he was endowing the story with emotional drama he himself had experienced. Indeed, the story's epiphanic moments are not pacifying and potentially mystifying, but rather mark out a process of opening to the essence of things that encounters resistance from the protagonist himself. The first such moment is the unconscious tableau vivant that Gretta offers him at the end of the party:

> A woman was standing near the top of the first flight, in the shadow also. He could not see her face but he could see the terra-cotta and salmon-pink panels of her skirt which the shadow made appear black and white. It was his wife. She was leaning on the banisters, listening to something. Gabriel was surprised at her stillness and strained his ear to listen also. (D: 239-40)

This scene is sudden and unanticipated, interrupting the jolly 'chorus of laughter and adieus' coming from the front door with an atmosphere of intimacy and suspension. Taken by surprise, Gabriel does not, at first, recognise her: she appears to him as an unknown woman mostly concealed by the shadow. Only her skirt, further altered by darkness, later makes her recognisable as his wife. The sudden estrangement for a brief moment disrupts one of the closest habits imaginable, the familiarity of a lifelong partner.

As proof that immediate perception yields a truth, it already makes Gretta manifest as what she will appear to be at the end of the story: a foreign human being of whom he has only a very partial and distorted perception, and whose emotional life has, until then, remained largely obscure to him. Gabriel reacts to the beauty of the moment:

> There was grace and mystery in her attitude as if she were a symbol of something. He asked himself what is a woman standing on the stairs in the shadow, listening to distant music, a symbol of. If he were a painter he would paint her in that attitude. Her blue felt hat would show off the bronze of her hair against the darkness and the dark panels of her skirt would show off the light ones. *Distant Music* he would call the picture if he were a painter. (D: 240)

This is a precise enactment of Joyce's early theory of aesthetics. Gabriel, suddenly fascinated by the perception of a woman's harmonious physical presence in the shadow, felt there was an essential importance to the moment. In effect, as is later said, in that moment a deep and dormant region of her soul had been reawakened. This soul was literally 'leaping from the vestments of her appearance', granting her grace and mystery. She appears beautiful, because something of her essence has been touched; the rest of the story is indeed about showing just how much depth of emotion was behind her graceful attitude on the stairs. Gabriel proves receptive to the sense of meaning: he perceives this 'woman standing on the stairs in the shadow, listening to distant music' as a symbol, with all the constitutive undecipherability that the symbol originally entails, and instinctively thinks of recording the instance in a work of art. However, something in this aestheticisation goes wrong. It seems to be what, according to Azérad, happens to the young Marcel in Proust's *Recherche* with the bell towers of Martinville:

> La vision […] ne lui révèle que la possibilité d'une participation révélatrice, l'existence d'un secret, et c'est ce mystère à résoudre qui excite Marcel […]. Mais […] n'aboutit à rien d'autre qu'à l'aveuglement volontaire et inconscient de Marcel qui veut au fond s'en protéger en la mettant par écrit, en contrôlant sa vision. (2002: 387-88)[17]

[17] 'Marcel's vision only reveals to him the possibility of a revelatory participation, the existence of a secret, and it is this mystery that excites him. But it results in nothing except the voluntary and unconscious blindness of Marcel, who, deep down, wants to protect himself by writing his vision, by controlling it'.

Gabriel's vision, too, is driven by an imperialistic desire to objectify the scene, rather than to embrace the encounter with this new unknown dimension of his wife. In fact, the effect it has on him is ambiguous. On the one hand, it unleashes in him, too, a recapture of the past: 'moments of their life together, that no one knew or would ever know of, broke upon and illumined his memory' (D: 244). The words he had once written for her come to him 'like distant music' (D: 245), mirroring precisely the way those of Michael Furey come back to Gretta. On the other hand, he is so absorbed in his carnal desire - the 'kinetic' emotion arisen by an improper reaction to aesthetic perception, as *A Portrait* explains – that he takes these memories as tools to control her: he wants 'to make her forget the years of their dull existence together and remember only their moments of ecstasy' (D: 244). On their way to bed, many details in Gretta's attitude could alert him that her inner life is independent of his control, and at the moment very far from his, but he does not heed any of them until 'her face looked so serious and weary that the words would not pass Gabriel's lips', blocking out his plans (D: 247). Until this point he is not distracted, but completely uninterested in her other than as an appendix to his life and pleasure; indeed, in an animalistic impulse that blurs the boundaries between body and psyche, 'he longed to cry to her from his soul, to crush her body against his, to overmaster her' (D: 248).

Caught in a desire of union based on overbearing rather than mutual opening, he ends up asking the right questions for the wrong reason, just as, later, he answers Gretta's 'veiled and sad' voice (D: 251) 'also sadly', not because he empathises, but because he has to give up his attempt to 'lead her wither he had purposed' (D: 252). These unwilling openings seem to result from an inner conflict between an impulse to empathise and a counter-impulse to resist connection for fear of undermining his shaky self-esteem: first 'a kinder note than he had intended went into his voice' (D: 250); then, 'he tried to keep up his tone of cold interrogation, but his voice when he spoke was humble and indifferent' (D: 251); finally, 'he did not question her again, for he felt that she would tell him of herself' (D: 252). Even so, these instances of dissociation allow Gretta to voice the truth of her feelings;

and such is his shock when instead of yielding to his mood she retains her own and breaks away from him, that it results in self-estrangement:

> Gabriel stood stockstill for a moment in astonishment and then followed her. As he passed in the way of the cheval-glass he caught sight of himself in full length, his broad, well-filled shirt-front, the face whose expression always puzzled him when he saw it in a mirror, and his glimmering gilt-rimmed eyeglasses. (D: 249)

Casually catching sight of oneself in a mirror, as Pirandello later elaborates, is one of the best means to look at oneself from the outside, to see the self as other. This Copernican revolution subtly indicates how Gretta's resistance to being treated as an object of pleasure confronts Gabriel with the reality of her independent existence: just as his self, seen from an outsider's perspective, is an objectified 'other', so Gretta has a subject position outside his knowledge and control. There is much of Joyce's own struggle in this characterisation if, as Ellmann notices, one of the hardest things for him to accept in his 1904 conjugal crisis was precisely that 'instead of being man's faithful, passionate slave' a woman was a 'perfectly sane full […] indifferent' being, with the 'indifferent' part being the most hurtful for his pride (JJ: 215).

The effects of Gabriel's escalation of awareness are indeed drastically humbling. His change in attitude is reflected at textual level: as soon as Gretta starts explaining, the attention of the narrator, who until then chronicled Gabriel's every reaction, shifts entirely to her. When Gabriel intervenes, his utterances present him as an increasingly involved listener by remaining subordinate to the progression of the plot: he quickly 'asks', and we are not told why, in which tone, or with what intention. In this brief space Gretta does not become the focalised character – she is only ever seen from the outside – and as soon as she interrupts her confession Gabriel's feelings re-emerge. It seems, therefore, that we never really leave his perspective; if for a few lines we lose sight of him it is because he finally managed to lose sight of himself and commune with his wife's emotional turmoil. This experience overturns his attitude. No longer desirous 'to be master of her strange mood' (D: 248), he is now 'shy of intruding on her grief' (D: 253). Embracing her existence as an independent being, he is now able to watch Gretta again 'as though he and she had never

lived together as man and wife', without the desire to subdue her, but rather with 'curious' eyes and 'a strange, friendly pity' (D: 254). As Azérad puts it, 'c'est au moment […] où le sujet s'est suffisamment ouvert à l'objet, en supprimant en lui toute précipitation, tout geste coercitif, que l'objet lui apparaît vraiment […]. Spirituel veut dire ici que le langage des corps est abandonné, et que tout a lieu dans la sphère de la vision intuitive' (2002: 372-73).[18] His imagination freed from possessive drives, Gabriel now sees Gretta as three-dimensional, a person with a past and an emotional baggage, and this new, sincerely open perception discloses for him the reality of time itself.

Coherently with Joyce's poetry of the significance of trivial things, the thoughts that follow – death approaching, the courage and importance of living in full – are at once commonplace trivialities and the greatest questions of life. Their status depends on the emotion with which they are invested. Gabriel appears to take them seriously, as the forced marginalisation of his ego makes space for a part of his identity he until then escaped. 'The time had come for him to set out on his journey westward' (D: 255), in this sense, evokes not only a metaphorical journey toward death, but also, presumably, the trip to the 'uncivilised' but sincere west of Ireland he had hitherto avoided. Unlike the boy's and Eliza's listening in 'The Sisters', Gretta's listening to distant music coincides with a true awakening of the dead and of the part of identity they guard. This is also significant of Joyce's reconciliation with the Irish roots he had tried to cut since 1904, which he was now ready to embrace with a better-rounded consciousness of their strengths and limitations.

This acceptance of the other and of himself opens the way for Gabriel to a real spiritual experience. The conclusion of the story is one of the lyrical peaks of *Dubliners* and of Joyce's prose at large. Its elevation of language is accompanied by the features of a proper mystical experience where, in the words of W. James, 'intellect and senses both swoon away in […] ecstasy' (2012: 314-15). Gabriel's waking thought is side-lined, first taken over by an emotional upsurge, then progressively dimmed as he sinks into sleep. In this altered mental

[18] 'It is at the moment when the subject has opened himself enough to the object, by suppressing in himself any rush, any coercive gesture, that the object really appears to him. "Spiritual" here means that the language of the body is abandoned, and that everything takes place in the sphere of intuitive vision'.

state, he becomes 'conscious of, but could not apprehend' the ineffable, otherworldly presence of the dead, with the typical union of awareness and ineffability that accompanies mystical visions. Finally, as language becomes more suggestive and enchanting through rhythm, repetition and alliteration, the boundaries of the self and the world collapse in a moment of union of opposites, of the living and the dead, while Gabriel's soul actually 'swoons' (D: 256). Here is one of the highest examples of Joyce's lyrical-mystical epiphanies, where the bark of life is momentarily opened to a higher state of indefinite, universal communion.

This prose poem concludes not only the story, but the whole book. It replaced in this function the end of 'Grace', which answered the suggestion of 'The Sisters' 'that there was something gone wrong' (D: 17) with a challenge to the readers to 'set right [their] accounts' (D: 198) (Wright 2017). Thanks, perhaps, to Joyce's nostalgia, this ambiguous provocation is now followed by a more meditative and reconciling conclusion. However, the final epiphany does not provide a clearer moral to the story or to the book; at best, it reinstates the methodological suggestion to go beyond the familiar surface and embrace the complexity of the real. 'The Dead' enacts how the essence appears as an authentic experience in the interaction between the subject and object, and at the same time remains enigmatic, because 'sa totalité échappe à la méthode' (Azérad 2002: 27),[19] as phenomenology recognises. For this encounter between subject and object to succeed, it is thus necessary that the subject gives up mastery of himself and of the other in a connection that is not an appropriation, but a fusion that preserves reciprocal independence.

It is thus possible to see how the Joycean epiphany straddles phenomenology and mystical experience, in that its significance lies in a horizontal transcendence of the self that enables a communion with the world in all its ineffable complexity. To the disappointment of symbol-decipherers, neither of these converging attitudes leads anywhere near an articulate message. In actual fact, they strengthen each other in the opposite direction: mystical experience by definition challenges articulation, while, as Merleau-Ponty

[19] 'its totality escapes method'.

explained, 'l'inachèvement de la phénoménologie et son allure inchoative […] étaient inévitables parce que la phénoménologie a pour tâche de révéler le mystère du monde et le mystère de la raison' (1976: XVI).[20] At the end of 'The Dead' we are again left with questions: what do Gabriel's thoughts mean? Is there a real revelation, or just the delirium of a self-aggrandising man on the cusp of sleep? And what does the snow falling all over Ireland symbolise? The answer to these questions is to be sought, not found. All the contrasting readings that emerge, in all the stories, when an explanation to the mystery of their epiphanies is sought, are supposed to be there; each new interpretation joins a constellation of hypotheses that, all together, approximate 'le sens qui transparaît à l'intersection de mes expériences et à l'intersection de mes expériences et de celles d'autrui, par l'engrenage des unes sur les autres' (Merleau-Ponty 1976: XV).[21] Thus, with every new questioning fulfilling afresh the operation of 'betraying the truth', and through the increasingly multifaceted perception of the characters and of their inner world that ensues, *Dubliners* manages to come ever closer to life.

2.3 Conclusion

Upon first impression, it is tempting to claim that Joyce, the author who endowed the phenomenon with its most recognisable name, does not actually feature epiphanies in his short stories. Indeed, when looking for examples of such moments, *A Portrait* or the 'Epiphanies' sketches are usually preferred. Despite many brilliant interpretations, the *Dubliners* stories never lend unequivocal answers to the question 'is this an epiphany?'. The problem lies in the very nature of Joyce's aim to capture manifestations of meaning in details of everyday life that others would not notice. Since they spring from and resemble mere banalities, Joycean epiphanies are in principle unrecognisable. Moreover, the stories

[20] 'The unfinished nature of phenomenology and [its] inchoative atmosphere […] were inevitable because phenomenology's task was to reveal the mystery of the world and of reason (2002: xxiii-xxiv).
[21] 'The sense which is revealed where the paths of my various experiences intersect, and also where my own and other people's intersect and engage each other' (2002: xxii).

negate an explanatory finale. Their conclusions do not justify what comes before, nor do they prove a point, and they invariably leave readers somewhat puzzled. Yet, this prompts them to go back and reconsider the function of each and every scene, description or phrase. Even without a notion of what epiphany is supposed to be, therefore, the feeling arises that the stories must be implying much more than they say. Their atmosphere of ever-unfulfilled quest for meaning is Joyce's success in giving his readers the 'sense of the significance of trivial things'. This ever-present epiphanic mood gives leeway to anyone scanning a story for its key, and at the same time dilutes the intensity of any single narrative pointe. However, besides this diffuse feeling, some scenes, due to structural position or textual signs, are more likely to come across as revealing moments than others. There is no way of knowing whether Joyce actually singled *those* out as the meaning-carriers of the story: every detail is potentially crucial or utterly meaningless, and it remains unclear why, or what exactly – if anything – it is supposed to reveal.

Joyce's response to the sense of transcendence that intrigued him as much as other authors was to incarnate his sense of sacredness. He once believed that the child in the manger was God, and the fascination with this idea never left him. However, coherent with his choice to answer the call of mortal life, he displaced his sense of sacredness onto the child *qua* child, rather than as a transcendent being. In so doing, he conceived a manifestation that hovers dangerously on the brink of tautology, eliciting opposite reactions of over-symbolisation or denial. A comparison with the phenomenological method helps to reconcile these tendencies, showing how the outcome of his illumination, as has been said of Merleau-Ponty, is not a new form of monism but 'un pensiero dell'ambiguità e della differenza capace di assumere quelle opposizioni come pieghe della struttura relazionale della manifestazione, che è l'essere stesso' (Finetti and Summa, 2010).[22]

Dubliners springs from the desire to show things as they really are – to convey the significance of trivial things and allow people to gaze into a polished looking glass. The events and people captured there are interesting in themselves first, and only secondarily

[22] 'A thought that embraces ambiguity and difference, capable of assuming those oppositions as facets of the relational structure of the manifestation that is being in itself'.

for what they potentially signify. Or rather, what they reveal – paralysis, unfulfillment, simony – is so embedded in their being that they must convey it together with a thousand other nuances of their existence. It is not Joyce's aim to make it absolutely clear. Since its archetype, the Eccles Street episode caught through Stephen's biased view, the Joycean epiphany carries both an intuition and the awareness that it might only be partial, or false. Its value is to show that beyond the surface of reality are other layers of complex, contradictory reality to be aesthetically appreciated. This is coherent with Joyce's existential and artistic choices. If art deals with truth, and there is no otherworldly truth for someone who has renounced religion, there is still the possibility to give reality a more insightful look and see it more clearly; not seeing it in the holistic canvas of all living things, just seeing it, with all its contrasts and contradictions. Joyce's epiphanies show the presence of unexplored truths beyond plain reality, but these truths belong to this world; his search for a hidden meaning is obstinately horizontal, and the meaning of his epiphanies is immanent. Characters make sense just because they are, and any revelation shows another aspect of who they are in order to appreciate their concrete existence from a better-rounded perspective. This is why his stories, like Mansfield's, can support as many interpretations as there are readers. Joyce fulfils his intent to celebrate life by looking at it and taking it for what it is, which is always more complex than we would have thought.

3. 'Behind a thick veil': Federigo Tozzi

> Quantunque dietro un fitto velame, la mia nuova vita mi accompagna. Io sento che l'anima ne subisce l'influenza, e cerca di ottenerne la comunicazione.
> È come una lanterna che sia sbattuta troppo dal vento; ma la fiamma non si spenge. Quanto tempo sono stato ad attendere? Forse, quel che cercavo era già in me; ma non fu possibile che fino ad ora io potessi assaporarlo.
> Infatti ci vuole una rivelazione improvvisa.
> ('La fiamma', *Barche capovolte*, O: 717)[1]

Tozzi explained his poetics much less than his contemporaries. He generally did not mention that he intended to use specific techniques, he just used them (Petroni 1984: 17-18). This relative lack of authorial self-commentary affects epiphanic moments too. Pirandello, Joyce, Woolf, Proust all reflected, in essays, novels or private writing, on the type of experiences we called epiphanies. Tozzi, on the other hand, did not provide any specific authorial description of his privileged moments, nor does he seem to have given them a name. What is more, his modernity has been identified in an aesthetic of mystery based on observing reality without trying to explain, or even to understand it at all. Debenedetti condensed this reading in the formula 'Tozzi narra in quanto non può spiegare' (1970: 95)[2] and many others have confirmed it. For Baldacci, Tozzi's main subject 'consiste nell'impossibilità di capire, di prendere contatto col mondo esterno' (1993: 34).[3] Petroni (1984) even saw in Tozzi an 'ideology of mystery', whereby an explanation of reality is perceived as sacrilegious. Is it then legitimate to explore Tozzi's epiphanies, if his aesthetic seems to deny illumination?

The aphorism 'La fiamma', which opens his 1911 collection *Barche capovolte*, suggests how an epiphanic clarity of understanding and Tozzi's obstinate darkness of incomprehension can go hand in hand in their own way. In it, the soul tries to communicate

[1] 'Although behind a thick veil, my new life goes with me. I feel my soul is affected by its influence and tries to receive its communication. It is like a lantern that is too strongly whipped by the wind; but the flame is not extinguished. How long have I been waiting? Perhaps, what I was looking for was already in me; but it wasn't possible for me to taste it before. Indeed there must be a sudden revelation'.
[2] 'Tozzi narrates insofar as he cannot explain'.
[3] 'Consists in the inability to understand, to make contact with the outer world'.

with a new life that is covered by a thick veil; like a perennial flame under a strong wind, this life is constantly present but can only be seen in brief instances; it may be located within the self, yet it is only accessible through sudden revelations. These elements support an epiphanic reading. The thick veil, a close relative in terms of imagery to Pirandello's paper sky, in Tozzi is a recurrent metaphor for the barrier to understanding that keeps humans blind to any truth. The word 'soul' condenses for him a psychical and a spiritual meaning, and its 'new life' can accordingly be meant both in a secular and in a religious sense. It is thus understandable that the route to penetrating through the veil is internal, conjugating St Augustine's principle of self-auscultation with modern psychological research inspired by Tozzi's favourite readings of William James. The present exploration will move from the hypothesis that the intersection between psychology and religion is at the root of Tozzi's epiphanies, and that their uninterpreted presentation, rather than denying their value, is a mark of their modernism.

After an early season of poetry and aphorisms, and alongside his better-known novels, Tozzi kept writing short stories throughout his life, and according to some achieved in this genre his best results (Tortora 2014). *Giovani* is the only short-story collection fully compiled by the author himself, just before his early death in 1920. The stories, written mostly between 1917 and 1919, thus represent a *summa* of the author's mature production, and a good ground for investigating the presence and nature of his epiphanies beyond the early phase of his aestheticism. The poetics he followed in his maturity, however, can pose a further problem to epiphany-hunting. Similarly to Joyce, in the first period of his activity Tozzi poses as an aesthete, taking D'Annunzio as his literary guide: he uses language to transfigure ordinary reality into a mythical realm and takes a melancholic pride in his superior sensitivity. However, a desire to avoid any overlay of inauthentic meaning and make contact with real things prompts him to progressively reject D'Annunzio's self-absorbedness in favour of 'un'arte scabra e disamena, non allettante […], anzi squallida e quotidiana' (Tellini 1972: 37).[4] His mature fiction thus embeds the visionary charge of his

[4] 'A terse and disagreeable art, not enticing […], but rather bleak and concerned with the ordinary'. For Tozzi's rejection of D'Annunzio see his review 'La Beffa di Buccari' (O: 1289-1293).

earlier works in an accurate style of 'scrupulous meanness', raising a similar issue to Joyce's. His epiphanies are stylistically blended with the rest of the narration to a point where it is hard to tell whether they are even there. This happens in the early phase, because lyrical language is omnipresent, but also in his mature production, when his meticulous attention to details seems to suggest that meaning is in everything or in absolutely nothing. As a result, we could reasonably be tempted to argue either that Tozzi only noted down what was epiphanic to him, or that he did not conceive of epiphanies at all.

An initial suggestion against this radical conclusion comes from Tozzi's last and most explicit aesthetic declaration:

> Ai più interessa un omicidio o un suicidio; ma è egualmente interessante, se non di più, anche l'intuizione e quindi il racconto di un qualsiasi misterioso atto nostro; come potrebbe esser quello, per esempio, di un uomo che a un certo punto della sua strada si sofferma per raccogliere un sasso che vede e poi prosegue la sua passeggiata. ('Come leggo io', O: 1325)[5]

Debenedetti was the first to note: 'vi si potrebbe vedere un'altra stupefacente vicinanza: stavolta con la poetica delle epifanie, elaborata da Joyce. Ma più proficuo è leggervi il riconoscimento che narrare, per Tozzi, è catturare quei misteriosi atti, il mistero inarticolabile di quegli atti' (1970: 94-95).[6] An affinity with the poetics of epiphany is here clearly introduced, but set aside to reinstate the aesthetics of incomprehension. Following the initial suggestion, however, we find another interesting term of comparison. Tozzi's passing description of the man picking up the pebble calls to mind a very precise instance in Pirandello's short story 'Da sé': 'Un sasso della via. E perché no? Matteo Sinagra si china, lo raccatta, lo pesa nella mano' (TN II: 886).[7] In Pirandello's story, focused through the character himself, the action is a consequence of that specific perspective where all things seem new: 'un sasso…Erano così i sassi? Erano questi? Sì, eccolo: un piccolo frantume di

[5] 'The majority takes interest in a murder or a suicide; but equally interesting, if not more, is also the intuition and then the narration of any mysterious act of ours; as could be, for example, that of a man who at some point on his way stops to pick up a stone he sees, and then continues his walk'.
[6] 'One could see in it another surprising kinship: this time with the poetics of epiphanies, elaborated by Joyce. But it is more fruitful to read in it the recognition that to narrate, for Tozzi, is to capture those mysterious acts, the inarticulable mystery of those acts'.
[7] 'A stone. A stone from the road. Why not? Matteo Sinagra bends down, picks it up, weighs it in his hand' (TS: 141). The connection has also been noted by Castellana 2009: 115-16.

roccia, un pezzo di terra viva, di tutta questa terra viva, un frantume dell'universo…' (TN II: 886).[8] However, to a hypothetical external observer, this act of the protagonist would seem at once banal and utterly mysterious, fitting Tozzi's description. The mysterious act that Tozzi cites is thus the result of Pirandello's process of pre-epiphanic estrangement, which leads to a rediscovery of the existence of ordinary things. Yet, it is observed from the outside and strictly unexplained, because, very unlike Pirandello, 'one feels that for Tozzi "interpretare" is pejorative' (De Lucca 1995: 248).

Interestingly, the aesthetic divergence between Pirandello and Tozzi has been emphasised by attributing to Tozzi a greater epiphanic quality: 'Pirandello è preoccupato dalla relatività del reale; Tozzi dalla sua manifestazione epifanica, quando le cose si caricano di una condensazione eccessiva di significati oscuri e impliciti e si risolvono in un lampo' (Baldacci 1993: 28-29).[9] Here Baldacci pins down the distance between the interpretive effort in which Pirandello embeds his moments and the inexplicit style of Tozzi's manifestations. In other respects, however, their proximity is illuminating. In Debenedetti's view, Pirandello aimed at 'la rivelazione dell'oltre che è nel personaggio',[10] revealing his repressed unconscious forces (1992: 347). While, however, as seen before, for Pirandello this is true in a metaphysical sense rather than in connection to the subconscious, this psychological key is extremely appropriate for Tozzi's 'mysterious' occurrences. 'La presenza nell'uomo di qualcosa che gli sfugge e che tuttavia determina certi aspetti, altrimenti inspiegabili, del suo contegno', [11] which Debenedetti identifies in Pirandello (1992: 413), is precisely the root of the mysterious acts that Tozzi intends to capture. This means, however, that he is concerned with 'una realtà occulta percepibile […] con gli occhi chiusi, laddove la realtà emersa era accecata, resa impercepibile dalla stessa luce diurna che l'inondava (Baldacci 1985: 6).[12] The mysterious side of life can be found by being immersed

[8] 'A stone... Were stones like this? These were the very ones? Yes, look! A small fragment of rock, a piece of living earth, of all this living earth, a fragment of the universe...' (TS: 141).
[9] 'Pirandello is concerned with the relativity of reality; Tozzi with its epiphanic manifestation, when things become excessively charged with obscure and implicit meaning and resolve in a flash'.
[10] 'The revelation of the beyond that is in the character'.
[11] 'The presence in man of something that escapes him and that nonetheless determines certain otherwise inexplicable aspects of his countenance'.
[12] 'An occult reality which could be perceived […] by closing one's eyes, whereas external reality was blinded, was made non-perceivable by the very daylight flooding it'.

in its obscurity rather than trying to shed light on its meaning. It would seem that Tozzi casts aside the symbolism of light, presenting obscurity (the 'closed eyes') as an advantage in terms of understanding. As a result, in order to understand his conception of epiphanies it is necessary to overcome the lack of what other authors were willing to give and Tozzi stubbornly denies: *claritas*. Can we really talk about epiphanies without this quite substantial aspect of their occurrence?

Some doubts have been raised. 'L'incontro – con bestie o uomini – non è […] una epifania. Non rivela nulla',[13] Luperini affirms in his study *L'incontro e il caso*, where he also, conversely, analyses at length epiphanic encounters in Joyce and Pirandello (2007: 279). His statement here refers to the prose collection *Bestie* (1917), where the unmotivated appearance of animals is interpreted not as epiphany but as an example of 'empty allegory': a suggestion of significance that breaks with ordinary perception, but does not open onto any truth. However, it seems reductive to argue on this ground that encounters in Tozzi's works 'don't reveal anything'. This is better understood by taking into account Luperini's interpretation of epiphanies in Joyce, where he effectively identifies, next to the lyrical seabird-girl episode, a second kind of special moment, exemplified by Stephen's encounter with a prostitute. Here, he says, the reader 'avverte una lievitazione del senso […]. Non gli viene spiattellato alcun Significato. L'effetto 'radiant' permane, ma disgiunto dalla trasparenza di un ipersignificato che inglobi e trascenda il dettaglio realistico. Siamo in presenza qui di un modello epifanico a bassa intensità' (2007: 242).[14] This second epiphanic model, Luperini adds, is prevalent in *Dubliners*, where aesthetic lyricism has no place. It addresses the reader 'a un ordine non facilmente comunicabile', which is not some transcendent truth, but simply 'il mistero grigio e opaco della vita quale si declina nelle pieghe private dell'io' (2007: 248).[15] These situations abound in Tozzi as well. As in the

[13] 'The encounter – with beasts or people – is not […] an epiphany. It does not reveal anything'.
[14] 'Perceives a leavening of sense […]. No Meaning is blurted out to him. The 'radiant' effect remains, but disconnected from the transparency of a hyper-meaning that encloses and transcends the realistic detail. We are here in the presence of a low-intensity epiphanic model'.
[15] 'to a hardly communicable order'; 'the grey and opaque mystery of life as it is modulated in the private pleats of the self'.

stories of *Dubliners*, there are indeed moments in *Giovani* when something significant seems to have happened even though the story has not progressed at all.

'Pigionali' ['The Boardinghouse'] (1917), the first in the collection, presents the reader with a situation of barely narratable provincial meanness in a style reminiscent of *Dubliners*. The contrast between the title of the book, *Giovani*, and the protagonists, two aged neighbours, immediately defines the core theme of the collection: 'youth' as a psychological condition of instability and emotional turmoil which can last for a lifetime. The two ladies are living monotonous, uneventful parallel lives, united by an intimately conflicted relationship. Their affection causes a strong curiosity to know the other completely and find her to be her equal. The fear that this might not be true, however, arouses a barely contained hostility. Although they are very much each other's double, Gertrude has a slight advantage, which becomes paradoxical when she falls severely ill but somehow keeps considering her condition a privilege: 'ella voleva morire. […] Quando si ricordava di Marta, pensava: – Lei vivrà ancora. Sono contenta che resti a vivere' (G: 214).[16] Marta is deeply troubled by this illness but, at the same time, the unconscious perception of death as Gertrude's ultimate privilege arouses her enmity: 'sognò che Gertrude era guarita; e la vedeva passare lesta lesta, senza muovere le gambe. […] Questo sogno le lasciò una grande invidia. Non ebbe oramai né meno un sentimento buono' (G: 214-15).[17]

At this point, interrupting the dialogue and descriptive summaries of the neighbours' life and feelings, a long digression occurs as Marta looks out of the window, momentarily distracted from her obsessive thoughts:

> La sua finestra di cucina la distraeva un poco, ma non gliela faceva dimenticare. Battevano le ore dalla Torre del Mangia in quel silenzio di tutta Siena; e un'eco, proprio come un altro orologio, le ripeteva fino alla campagna, con una chiarezza placida. Gli alberi dietro l'Ospedale coprivano i finestroni dei malati; e le fonti tonde degli orti sotto le mura luccicavano come specchi sbiaditi. Le colline avevano una dolcezza immobile nell'aria limpida; e la cattedrale era così candida che quando c'era troppo sole faceva male agli occhi.

[16] 'She wanted to die. […] When she thought of Marta, she would say, "She's going to live so much longer than me. How happy I am that she will live on!"' (LIV: 60).
[17] 'One night she dreamed that Gertrude had gotten better and was rushing swiftly over her bed without moving her legs. […] This dream had made her insanely jealous. Good thoughts didn't come to her anymore' (LIV: 61).

> Stormi di rondini empivano il cielo di strida, continuamente; giravano dietro la casa di Marta; e poi più vicine, quasi rasenti, in modo che si sentiva il loro volo; altri stormi venivano dalla Torre del Mangia, piegavano da una parte, tornavano indietro; una rondine sola, da un'altra torre, passava rapidamente, a scatti; uno stormo, più piccolo e più rado, restava per ore ed ore sempre nello stesso punto. Qualche campana suonava; ed ella riconosceva la chiesa.
> Vedeva tanti tetti che, di là su, da sopra, parevano sospesi per aria. Le rondini andavano anche sotto le sue grondaie a fare i nidi; salendo dagli orti verdi, con qualche pesco fiorito e i cipressi sempre uguali. (G: 215)[18]

The use of the imperfect tense blends this scene with the rest, presenting it as a prolonged mood rather than a determined event. However, the lyrical quality of the description, in contrast with the dull tone that prevails in the surrounding paragraphs, makes it stand out as potentially significant, alerting us to the fact that 'in Tozzi la descrizione non ha mai una funzione puramente decorativa' (Petroni 2003: 79).[19] 'Stormi di rondini empivano il cielo di strida', as an example, while still being a plausible sentence in Tuscan, has an imagery, lexicon, and rhythm that evoke the poetry of Pascoli. In this context, the value of the imperfect tense, whose semantic nuance is temporal indeterminacy, transitions almost imperceptibly – simultaneously with the protagonist's own awareness – from slumbering repetition to timeless suspension. Significantly, the entire description hinges on images of stasis and circularity that neutralise time. Hills are 'still and sweet'; the swarm of swallows flies in circles, 'for hours and hours in the same spot'; roofs appear 'suspended in midair', and cypress trees 'always the same'. Most interestingly, the striking bells lose their time-scanning function in undifferentiated echoes, becoming pure familiar sounds: 'a bell would ring, and Marta could tell which church it

[18] 'The kitchen window provided a small distraction, but she never entirely forgot Gertrude. The bells of Torre del Mangia rang every hour, cutting through the silence that pervaded Siena; and the echo, like another clock, repeated itself with peaceful clarity far into the countryside. The trees behind the hospital shaded the windows of the sick people; and the circular fountains in the garden at the foot of the wall glimmered like faded mirrors. The hills were still and sweet in the limpid air, and the cathedral was so white it hurt to look at it when the sun was shining. Flocks of swallows endlessly filled the sky with their calls; they circled behind Marta's house, then flew so close she could almost hear the beating of their wings and almost reach out and touch them. Another flock burst from behind the Torre del Mangia; it veered to one side, then turned back. One lone swallow scrawnier and less fluffy than the others, sat for hours and hours in the same spot. A bell would ring, and Marta could tell which church it was coming from. She could see so many roofs from where she sat high above them; they all seemed suspended in midair. The swallows hid under the drainpipes and built nests there. A peach tree in full bloom rose above the carefully cultivated green cypress gardens' (LIV: 62).

[19] 'In Tozzi description has never a purely decorative function'.

was coming from'. These images, apparently casual, serve thus as objective correlatives of Marta's emotional condition, now wavering between a disturbing awareness of time passing and an unwillingness to let go of the repetitive life she loved ('erano contente che le stesse cose tornassero e di fare sempre gli stessi discorsi' (G: 213-14)).[20]

These realistic details selected according to the character's mood offer 'una rappresentazione modernamente allegorica, in cui ogni particolare non è simbolo ma segno',[21] as Castellana argued about Tozzi's novels (2003: 74). Gertrude's imminent death has indeed overpowered the monotony of Marta's life and set her in a state of new sensitivity, where nature seems to her to hold some mysterious significance:

> Ora capiva, però, senza saperne la ragione, perché bisogna vivere; apriva la finestra e zuppava il pane nel latte bollente, tenendo la tazza senza il manico sopra il davanzale; per avere dinanzi agli occhi tutta quella serenità. Masticava piano piano, per non fare troppo presto; pensando con gioia che anche il marito era morto. E questa era una cosa inspiegabile, perché gli aveva voluto sempre bene.
> Ma sentirsi a quel modo era una felicità. Pensava: posso mangiare con comodo, perché non devono venire a prendermi con la bara. (G: 216)[22]

Putting this epiphany in relation with Tozzi's intention to document the human condition, Codebò states that the story has now achieved its aim, bearing witness to 'quella base di egocentrismo, auto-conservazione e ostilità verso l'altro che giace nel profondo di Marta e ne costituisce la cifra riposta dell'essere' (1999: 164).[23] However, Tozzi would have hardly needed an epiphany to bring this point in further evidence. Marta's grim relationship with Gertrude and the final killing of her cat in her place conveyed this

[20] 'The fact that the same things happened over and over again and always led to the same discussions pleased them' (LIV: 60).
[21] 'A modern allegorical representation, where every detail is not a symbol but a sign'.
[22] 'Marta understood now, without understanding why, that she needed to live. She would open her window and lean out over the sill, she'd hold a bowl of scalding milk in her hands and dunk bread into it, while watching all that serenity spread out before her. She chewed slowly so she wouldn't finish her breakfast too quickly. She even went so far as to think how nice it was that her husband was dead. The feeling was inexplicable, because Marta had always loved him. Whatever the feeling was, it made her happy. She thought, I can eat in peace, because no one is coming to take me away on a stretcher' (LIV: 62-63).
[23] 'That baseline of self-centeredness, self-conservation and hostility to the other which lies deep within Marta and constitutes the hidden cipher of her being'.

message effectively enough. This moment, with its insistence on time, points instead to something less easily articulated.

In some interesting respects, this scene resembles another which would be printed six years later toward the end of an English novel. In the middle of her party, Clarissa Dalloway, shocked to hear about the suicide of a young ex-soldier, similarly gazes out of a window at the evening sky, in a moment of intimate suspension:

> Nothing could be slow enough; nothing last too long. No pleasure could equal […] this having done with the triumphs of youth, lost herself in the process of living, to find it, with a shock of delight, as the sun rose, as the day sank. […] The clock began striking. The young man had killed himself; but she did not pity him; with the clock striking the hour, one, two, three, she did not pity him, with all this going on. There! the old lady had put out her light! the whole house was dark now with this going on, she repeated, and the words came to her, *Fear no more the heat of the sun*. […] What an extraordinary night! She felt somehow very like him – the young man who had killed himself. She felt glad that he had done it; thrown it away while they went on living. The clock was striking. The leaden circles dissolved in the air. (Woolf 2000: 157-58)

Apart from this scene, the two stories have little in common: one is a novel about an upper-middle-class English lady who comes to terms with her past. The other is a brief sketch of working-class provincials paralyzed in an eternal present in which 'gli anni erano sempre eguali; e tanto l'una che l'altra vivevano soltanto di quel che avveniva durante una giornata' (G: 213).[24] The two moments cited above, however, have a very similar script: a focused female character looks out of a window, thinking about an old neighbour (who is sooner or later about to die) and a man who has died already; only, their relevance is reversed: Marta's attention is on Gertrude, her husband just a passing thought, while in *Mrs Dalloway* the old lady appears briefly and the young suicide holds centre stage. In both cases, the focalised character experiences a sense of identification and comparison with these figures. Mrs Dalloway 'felt somehow very like him — the young man who had killed himself', and yet 'she felt glad that he had done it; thrown it away while they went on living', which appears ultimately similar to Marta's feelings about her neighbour/double's

[24] 'The passing years were indistinguishable, and in the meantime, both women lived only for the events of each single day' (LIV: 60).

death. A significant detail strengthens the analogy: the mention of clocks, occurring twice in both scenes. Clocks strike throughout Woolf's novel, haunting the protagonist, who, we are told, 'feared time itself' (Woolf 2000: 26). They also punctuate Tozzi's stories, with special evidence in 'Gli orologi', in which the whole life of the protagonist is centred around winding his clocks. In all these occurrences, they mark the relentlessness of time in relation to human life. Here the mention of the clocks framing Marta's and Clarissa's moment of cogitation works in conjunction with the other haunting images of death and ageing to a paradoxically relaxing effect, of which both protagonists are surprised. 'She had escaped. But that young man had killed himself. […] Odd, incredible; she had never been so happy' Clarissa realises (Woolf 2000: 157), just as Marta cannot explain her thinking with joy about her husband's death: 'e questa era una cosa inspiegabile, perché gli aveva voluto sempre bene' (G: 775).[25]

Although Marta is very distant from Clarissa in terms of culture, complexity of thought and awareness, for this one privileged moment they are afforded a comparable insight. For the English lady, that moment marks an evolution between a fear of passing time and a serene acceptance of it, expressed through the quotation from *Cymbeline*, 'Fear no more the heat of the sun'. For Marta, the statement is both bolder and more vague: 'Ora capiva, però, senza saperne la ragione, perché bisognava vivere'.[26] The existential truth that is claimed here is exceptional in Tozzi's work, which is overabundant with modal verbs 'parere', 'sembrare', 'sentire', and usually denies characters a real understanding of the least important events, let alone the reason or purpose of life. Here as well, Marta's intuition is blurred by the subsequent statement of incomprehension 'without quite knowing why'; but still Tozzi decided to use 'capiva', not 'sentiva' or 'le pareva di capire'. We can therefore assume that, for once, as Federica Tozzi puts it, 'ha sentito pulsare dentro di sé un fremito di vita vera' (2015: 75);[27] or, that she has 'lost herself in the process of living, to find it, with a shock of delight', in the words of her Woolfian counterpart. What they both find is the 'creatural obedience to life' that Castellana identifies as one of the motifs in the twentieth-

[25] 'The feeling was inexplicable, because Marta had always loved him' (LIV: 63).
[26] 'Marta understood now, without understanding why, that she needed to live' (LIV: 62).
[27] 'She felt in herself a flutter of real life'.

century worldview: the melancholic euphoria of the living creature who discovers herself alive in a cosmos governed by greater laws she can never hope to control (2014: 65).

In effect, as it is typical in Tozzi, Marta's euphoric mood is tinged with its opposite:

> Tuttavia aveva anche lei una tristezza insolita, che le ricordava altri tempi; e rivedeva le cose lontane con una chiarezza che le parevano pitture: in certi momenti, anche i fiori finti si credono veri.
> Marta sentiva una vecchia anima, che parlava invece di lei; e non glielo poteva impedire. Perché i suoi ricordi avevano una vita artificiale indipendente. (G: 216)[28]

The passage seems to suggest that this exceptional perception brings out a buried part of Marta's past, eliciting a coming-to-terms with life that is reminiscent, again, of *Mrs Dalloway*. If we recall, from earlier on, that 'il loro tempo passato s'era staccato tutto da loro […]. Invano avrebbero tentato di riavvicinarcisi' (G: 213),[29] it would appear as one of the 'profane miracles' that epiphanies can bring about. It is a declared suspension of the all-the-same, a momentary breach in the everlasting present in which the protagonist is stuck. However, thanks to Tozzi's syntax, the gnomic statement 'in certi momenti anche i fiori finti si credono veri' endows this moment with puzzling ambiguity. The colon links it to the preceding sentence as an explanation, but its meaning depends entirely on the grammatical value the reader attributes to the particle 'si'. It can be read as impersonal, meaning 'in certain moments even fake flowers are thought to be real'. In this case, fake flowers would be a metaphor for the vivid pictures of Marta's past, implying that her suddenly clear vision is merely an illusion. This undermines any reading of this moment as a positive instance of self-repossession. Yet, 'si' can also be read as reflexive, as the translator does: 'in certain moments even silk flowers think they're real'. This would give the phrase a different nuance, precisely in relation to the words used earlier to describe

[28] 'Despite all of this, an uncommon sadness traced back from another time clung to her, and she could see faraway things with a clarity that was almost like a painting. In certain moments, even silk flowers think they're real. There was an ancient soul speaking through Marta, and she had no power to resist it. Her memories had artificial and independent lives' (LIV: 63).

[29] 'Their past had become almost entirely dissociated from their present […]. Any attempts at intimacy between the two women would have been in vain' (LIV: 60). The last sentence seems to come from a misreading of 'riavvicinarcisi' (object: the past) as 'riavvicinarsi', and should read: 'Any attempts at coming close to it again would have been in vain'.

Marta's and Gertrude's separation from their past: 's'erano *avvizzite* come se non avessero più potuto riceverne le *linfe*' (G: 213, emphases added).[30] The image of the fake flowers would here continue the metaphor of the two ladies as withered and unable to receive vital energy from their past. In this case, Marta's vivid memories, alongside the 'old soul' talking in her place, could be considered real, bearers of a genuine vital impulse which could lead, perhaps, to overcoming the grief for her bosom enemy with memories. However, she is by now as irreversibly parched as a fake flower, who is not able to absorb this sap, even if for a moment she thinks she could.

As a matter of fact, this epiphanic feeling does not lead to any effective progress, definitively truncated as it is by Marta's brusque return to the blocked present of her conflictual relationship: 'Ma ella si metteva a guardare la parete, di là dalla quale c'era Gertrude, con un'aria di sfida un poco paurosa' (G: 216).[31] The moment leaves seemingly no trace in the main character, who goes on after Gertrude's death transferring her affective repulsion on her cat. Yet, if it is evident that this moment is not a turning point and does not change the protagonist's destiny, it nevertheless stands at the core of the scant plot. Commenting on this finale in comparison to *Dubliners*, Luperini concedes that there is a similar tendency to perceive revealing atmospheres under the surface of insignificant facts; 'ma il Joyce dei *Dubliners* […] punta su risonanze e epifanie che rivelano un destino, mentre Tozzi […] sottolinea sempre un'insignificanza, un'assenza di destino' (1994: 412).[32] 'Destiny' is thus taken here as a meaningful force, in contrast with Tozzi's 'insignificance'. Epiphanies in *Dubliners*, however, do not lend themselves to a similar reading, as their significance is constitutively equivocal, if expressed at all. The major point of contact between Tozzi's epiphanies in *Giovani* and those in *Dubliners* can be found precisely in this ambiguity, which always leaves the reader caught between an inexplicable meaning and utter insignificance.

[30] 'They, too, had become faded as if there were no longer any strength to be drawn from the past' (LIV: 60). The word 'linfe', here translated as 'strength', literally means 'sap'.
[31] 'She sat watching the wall where Gertrude still lay on the other side. She stared with an air of defiance that was almost frightening' (LIV: 63).
[32] 'But Joyce in *Dubliners* […] relies on echoes and epiphanies which reveal a destiny, while Tozzi […] always emphasizes an insignificance, an absence of destiny'.

Luperini's own distinction between high- and low-intensity epiphanies, although he did not apply it to Tozzi, is an excellent key to these occurrences. In these anti-lyrical moments, he explains in reference to Joyce, 'il senso resta incerto non perché s'innalza ad altezze insondabili, ma perché sprofonda nel caos dell'inconscio' (2007: 248).[33] Tozzi's area of interest, even more than the Joyce of *Dubliners*, goes into the depths of the individual psyche. To see how this is a condition conducive to epiphanies, it is useful to consider the first instance of Tozzi's fascination with the mental world: his contact with psychology. There is indeed precisely a sense in which, as Castellana suggests in passing, in Tozzi 'il "momento privilegiato" […] diventa il segnale, mai pienamente comprensibile, dell'emergere dell'inconscio' (2008: 23).[34]

3.1 Psyche as Mind

Criticism has by now established the breadth of Tozzi's psychological culture. Between 1900 and 1910 he extensively read both William James and Bergson, in addition to related research he found in the periodical press, and reworked their ideas in *Barche capovolte* (1911) which he tellingly called 'a book of psychology'[35]. This research was meant to help him achieve a sincere representation of psychological events, increasingly in contrast with D'Annunzio's 'schiettezza artificiale' ('La Beffa di Buccari', O: 1290).[36] He explained as early as 1902 what he meant by sincerity by referring to a book he was reading those days, *Gli ideali della vita* (an Italian edition of William James' *Talk to Students on Some of Life's Ideals*):

[33] 'The sense remains undefined not because it rises to unfathomable heights, but because it sinks in the chaos of the unconscious'.
[34] 'The "privileged moment" […] becomes the never completely understandable mark of a surfacing of the unconscious'.
[35] 'Un libro di psicologia non può avere alcuna conclusione, perché deve essere l'analisi minuziosa e ininterrotta di quel che avviene in noi' ['A book of psychology cannot have any conclusion, because it must be the thorough uninterrupted analysis of what happens within us'] ('Conclusione', *Barche capovolte*, 1999: 765). For Tozzi and W. James see Martini 1999 and 2000; for a preliminary investigation of Tozzi and Bergson see Mugnai 2000. Tozzi's psychological culture is explored in Marchi 2000, 2002, 2010.
[36] 'Artificial candour'.

> non sono io che comando, ma le mie passioni che lascio passare come un pastore assopito guarda l'acqua che corre. […] In fondo, si capisce, sono sempre il medesimo: soltanto il campo marginale della mia coscienza è quello che si muta, perché esposto direttamente alle impressioni esteriori; ma, naturalmente il mio *io* non oscilla. [...] Potrei riportare a mio comodo una infinità di documenti psicologici, ché io ho la buona abitudine di fermare, ogni giorno, su la carta, quello che è passato nella mia anima. E tutti questi documenti proverebbero come non solo da un anno ad un altro si cambia interiormente, ma come di giorno in giorno le nostre associazioni intellettive si trasformino evolvendosi in poco tempo; e che quindi il nostro carattere, pur rimanendo fermo sostanzialmente l'*io*, assuma tante forme quante sono le circostanze esteriori e cause interiori che entrano in giuoco a modificarlo.
> (13 dicembre 1902, Nov: 26-30)[37]

Three extremely significant aspects of Tozzi's lifelong ideas on psychology are already apparent here: the primacy of emotions over willpower, the presence within the self of a mysterious and unattainable depth, and an empirical method of phenomenal observation as the only way to it.

As it appears, at the early age of nineteen Tozzi assimilated the metaphor of consciousness as a unique river where thought, sensation, and emotion flow together, greatly complicating ideas on self-control. In the incipit of the passage, repurposing a quote from de Musset's poem *Rolla*,[38] the driving force of personality is seen to reside in one's emotions, which the thinking self simply observes as they pass. This implies that voluntary action does not follow directly from rational thought, but is the result of impulses and inhibitions coming from deeper down (Martini 1999: 23-25). A distinction thus becomes apparent between a superficial layer of consciousness, constantly changed by external and internal stimuli, and a profound area ('il mio *io*') characterised by a strong and inexplicable unity, but not directly accessible: it can only be perceived from its manifold manifestations.

[37] 'It's not me who's in control, but my passions, which I let pass by as a sleepy shepherd watches the water flowing. At the bottom, it is understood, I am always the same: only the marginal field of my consciousness changes, because it is directly exposed to external impressions; but, of course, my self doesn't waver. If this is not called sincerity I don't know what I shall say. Countless psychological documents would prove how day by day our intellective associations are transformed, evolving in a short time; and that therefore our character, even if the self stays substantially still, takes on as many forms as the external circumstances and inner causes which concur to modify it'.

[38] 'Ce n'était pas Rolla qui gouvernait sa vie, / C'étaient ses passions; — il les laissait aller / Comme un pâtre assoupi regarde l'eau couler' ['It wasn't Rolla who steered his life / it was his passions; -- he let them go / like a sleepy shepherd watches the water flow'] (de Musset 1857: 4).

This idea, that found confirmation in Bergson's 'continuité d'écoulement',[39] has important corollaries for literary practice. Tozzi claims to be collecting 'psychological documents' through self-auscultation, reporting the mutation of the surface mental states, because they are the only accessible psychological truth. Any different attitude based on analysis or interpretation, although seemingly more coherent, would be an arbitrary construction. This documentary care explains his behavioural approach to psychology, based on the observation of actions and physical reactions, and also his tendency to amass impressions on the page until their accumulation reveals the underlying emotion that guided their selection.

Creating the notion that people's actions are usually caused by deep motives that can become manifest on close observation, these ideas ground Tozzi's poetics of mysterious acts in the same conditions that had initially led Joyce to look for 'the gesture that gave people away'. There is, however, a crucial difference: while Joyce's investigation proceeded on the assumption that those motives were purposefully hidden, in Tozzi's view they are a mystery for the self in the first place. 'Ciascuno ha in sé un mondo che è indeterminabile. Ciò che ne mostrano i raccoglimenti o le improvvise rivelazioni è una piccola cosa, rispetto alla parte destinata a rimanere sepolta per sviluppare quello che soltanto diviene superficie visibile' ('Intorno all'anima', O: 764).[40] This iceberg-structure is indebted to W. James' concept of the subconscious as a great transmarginal region which shapes the individual consciousness while always remaining impenetrable. Unknown content can occasionally emerge, manifesting the presence of the subliminal portion, but exceptional intuitions can only ever reveal a minute fragment. Knowledge of the submerged part is precluded to consciousness itself and, a fortiori, to the author who investigates it from the outside.

[39] 'Si […] je cherche au fond de moi ce qui est le plus uniformément, le plus constamment, le plus durablement moi-même, je trouve […] une succession d'états […] si profondément animés d'une vie commune, que je n'aurais su dire où l'un quelconque d'entre eux finit, où l'autre commence' (Bergson 1903: 4-5) ['If I seek deep down within me what is the most uniformly, the most constantly and durably myself, I find […] a continuity of flow […]. It is a succession of states each one of which announces what follows and contains what precedes' (2007: 175)]. Interestingly, the same lines from *Rolla* are also quoted by Bergson in *Introduction à la métaphysique* (1903: 22, 2007: 198), which was translated in Italian by Tozzi's friend Papini much later, in 1909.

[40] 'Everyone has in himself a world, which is undeterminable. What meditations and sudden revelations show of it is a small thing, compared to the share destined to remain hidden in order to develop what alone becomes visible surface'.

'Marito e moglie' ['Man and Wife'], written in 1919, narrates precisely a sudden emotional collapse, which problematises the expectations connected to the marriage vow: 'to love you and honour you all the days of my life'. The discrepancy between the characters' conscious intentions and the powerful forces of their subconscious confers a tragic tone to this story, presenting their marriage crisis as an unwanted event that makes both protagonists suffer and cannot be remedied.

> Ad un tratto, senza nessuna ragione, egli si sente impazzire: la testa gli gira, è stordito, ha paura di cadere. Non è un mese che aspetta il ritorno della moglie? Forse le è avvenuta qualche disgrazia […]. Egli cerca di raccapezzarsi, si sfrega la faccia. Ma la sua apprensione gli scava nell'anima una specie di vuoto che va sempre più in dentro; vertiginosamente. Egli non ha né meno voce per chiamare. Si mette a piangere.
> Quando, dopo dieci minuti, Enrica torna ed entra in camera egli non la riconosce più: è come se la vedesse per la prima volta. […] si ricompone e il malessere passa; come se non avesse avuto niente. Però non gli è più possibile di amare la moglie come credeva di amarla mezz'ora prima quando è uscita. (G: 355-56)[41]

An emotional storm for no apparent reason subverts Vittorino's feelings for his wife. Bertoncini defines this moment as 'a kind of epiphany' and, taking heed from the 'sort of emptiness digging further and further inside; vertiginously', proposes to read it in a Pirandellian key, where 'l'illuminazione negativa opera come svelando l'essenza che si è celata dietro l'apparenza, o la verità che si nascondeva dietro la maschera delle abitudini e delle convenienze' (2008: 90).[42] The identification of this event as an epiphany is not indisputable. On the one hand, Vittorino has a sudden 'spiritual' experience which quickly passes, leaving him to see his world differently. It can also be argued that he gains some knowledge from it, finding he no longer loves his wife. On the other hand, the event

[41] 'Suddenly, without any reason at all, he feels he's going crazy: his head is spinning, he is stunned, he is afraid of falling. Hasn't he been waiting for his wife for a month? Maybe some misfortune has befallen her: she has broken a leg, she has died. She can no longer come home. He tries to pull himself together, he rubs his face. But trepidation digs in his soul a sort of emptiness that goes deeper and deeper; vertiginously. He doesn't even have a voice to call out. He starts weeping. When, ten minutes later, Enrica is back and comes in the room, he doesn't recognise her: it is as if he is seeing her for the first time. […] He regains his composure and his sickness passes; as if nothing had ever happened. But he's no longer able to love his wife as he believed he loved her half an hour before, when she went out'.

[42] 'The negative illumination operates as if by revealing the essence of what was hidden behind appearances, or the truth that was hiding behind the mask of habit and convenience'.

happens without a trigger (perceptual or mental) and the supposed new knowledge does not seem to go beyond a verification of present facts. Discovering he is now unable to love his wife implies much less self-awareness than understanding that he only ever pretended to love her out of convenience, or that his feelings were delusive, as Bertoncini's hypothesis would imply. But what makes this event less like an epiphany is perhaps its categorical nature. We are clueless about its cause to a point where speculation would be arbitrary, but absolutely certain of its effect: there is no perception of a mystery that opens interpretive possibilities, but the click of a mechanism that remains unknown and unquestioned. Provided that epiphanic moments are always a matter of interpretation, in this case it is difficult to decide whether this is an epiphany or more simply a panic attack causing a permanent shock.

Quite epiphanic, in the sense of an almost miraculous understanding, is instead the way Enrica realises exactly what happened in just a glance:

> La moglie piange, perché vede tutto nei suoi occhi. […] Com'egli all'improvviso si è attaccato a lei, così ora s'è staccato; e pare che soltanto pochi minuti siano bastati a cambiare i loro anni di matrimonio; perché essi non sanno che tutto quello che è passato nel loro animo, giorno per giorno, di buono e di cattivo, doveva avere una volta i suoi effetti. Nessuno dei due ne ha colpa; e siccome essi son buoni e leali cercheranno di sopportarsi a vicenda, aspettando che torni il tempo forse di volersi bene come prima. Tutte queste cose, nell'animo di ambedue, passano rapidamente come quando si sogna. (G: 356)[43]

Here a sort of 'shared revelation' seems to occur. The notation that these thoughts pass through their mind 'as if in a dream' suggests it must be going on, for both characters, in an altered state of consciousness. It would be difficult to make sense of how something they do not know ('essi non sanno…') could be 'passing quickly through their mind', other than in the trance-like state of a dream. This adds to the further paradox that the awareness

[43] 'His wife cries, because she can see everything in his eyes. Her hat is tilted on one side, and she doesn't even think of taking it off. Her hat-veil is all wet and crumpled: she too has no breath left to say a word. Just as he once had suddenly stuck to her, so now he has come unstuck; and it seems that only a few minutes have been enough to change long years of marriage; because they don't know that everything good or bad that, day after day, ever passed through their soul, had to have its effect one day. It's no one's fault; and since they are good and loyal people they will try to put up with each other, waiting until the time may come perhaps to love each other as before. All these things cross the minds of both, quickly, as in a dream'.

of how their sentimental attachment to one another is gone and the ensuing decision to make an effort to remain together are reached by the couple at the same time. Their damnation to loneliness is realised in unison.

From here on, their attitudes diverge. Enrica faces her pain directly, and apparently weeps it away in violent sobs until she 'diventa gaia e gioconda. Ha sofferto tanto quel giorno che è ormai un'altra' (G: 358).[44] Vittorino plunges in a melancholic depression, to which the city where he wanders provides specific correlatives: a semi-deserted landscape of yellow fog, dirty light, sticky mud and human squalor, where even works of art show their disintegrated side ('le statue, sotto i cipressi, macchiate di nero, fanno vedere di quanti pezzi sono fatte', G: 357).[45] This impression of dissolution is possibly related to his refusal to face the present, being stuck in 'un rammarico melanconico di quel suo passato che non vive più senza dimenticarlo' (G: 358).[46] This condition is insistently indicated in Tozzi's aphorisms as detrimental: 'l'anima non deve occuparsi dei ricordi. Che cosa ci facciamo sotto l'ombra malefica di un ricordo? Non viviamo veramente; ma è come se il nostro io tornasse ai suoi passi' ('Le rimembranze', O: 726).[47] Enrica's apparent balance seems indeed to come from an application of this opposite law: 'noi dobbiamo parlare della nostra vita passata come se fosse di due persone che abbiamo conosciute molto tempo fa' (G: 359).[48]

Despite this discrepancy, we are reassured, 'ora sono tutti e due tranquilli' (G: 358).[49] How superficial this tranquillity really is becomes evident in the conclusion, where spring definitely proves to be the cruellest season, as it brings out of the ground what had been more or less deeply buried. The scenario is a complete reversal of the rainy day of their separation: the two are walking together, the countryside is green, the air is warm from sunlight, the statues, stained and disjointed before, here appear as enormous white flowers; the muddy street is now a dusty square, and the human fauna that populates it is jolly, riding to the music on merry-go-rounds. But uncanny details undermine the sense of peace:

[44] 'Becomes merry and light-hearted. That day she suffered so much that she is now another'.
[45] 'The statues, under cypress trees, stained in black, show how many pieces they are made of'.
[46] 'A sorrowful regret, for that past he no longer lives but cannot forget'.
[47] 'The soul must not care for memories. What are we even doing under the maleficent shadow of a memory? We don't really live; but it is as if our self returned on its own steps'.
[48] 'We must speak of our past life as if it belonged to two people we knew long ago'.
[49] 'Now they are both calm'.

the merry-go-round, here as in other works, has a flipside that alludes to life's repetitiveness and monotony (Castellana 2003: 75), but also 'la campagna è piatta e solitaria, quantunque ci sia tanta gente e tanti carretti con le sonagliere' and above all 'una nuvola enorme, rotta nel mezzo e infilata ai raggi del sole, non si può più muovere' (G: 359).[50] We are thus alerted to a sense of loneliness and entrapment that endures beyond these canonical images of lightness and movement. The cloud, in particular, appears as an exact correlative of the condition of the couple, stuck in their broken marriage.

The ubiquitous sunlight, which impedes vision instead of helping it, evokes the Tozzian motif of the inability to see. Enrica 'sorride: i suoi occhi luccicano sbattendo le ciglia; perché il sole, tramontando, l'abbarbaglia' (G: 359).[51] The metaphor of blindness in Tozzi, as Cavalli Pasini recalls, is twofold. It can indicate an unwillingness to look at reality, taking refuge in regressive fantasies, or a sort of 'second sight' that, by avoiding the distraction of appearances, is able to glimpse beyond the human spectrum (1984: 17). It is uncertain, here, whether the fact that Enrica's eyes are constantly dazzled by sunlight ('non c'è raggio di sole in Piazza della Pilotta che non entri anche dentro i suoi occhi' (G: 358))[52] means that she wants to be blind to her situation or that she is wiser than her husband. The impression is that, with her rule of leaving the past aside, she knows better; but hers is not at all a pacified condition: 'sente, attorno a sé, da per tutto, la grande primavera […]. Ma il suo animo si chiude sempre di più, si rifiuta, è freddo. Anche la primavera la rasenta come una cosa, che non sarà mai sua' (G: 360).[53] She feels cut out from the primordial unison of youth, spring, and love, and therefore from the thrust of life itself. This proves fundamental to understanding the finale:

> Gli eucalipti si spengono, le campane di San Giovanni suonano; e il giorno sparisce come quel suono. Essi sono tristi e dispersi; si sentono morire. Ma una

[50] 'The countryside is flat and lonely, although there are many people and many carts with bells'; 'And an enormous cloud, broken in the middle and transfixed by sunbeams, can no longer move'.
[51] 'She smiles: her eyes shimmer as she blinks; because the sun, setting, dazzles her'.
[52] 'there is no sunbeam in Piazza della Pilotta that doesn't also enter her eyes'.
[53] 'She feels everywhere, all around her, the glorious spring […]. But her soul closes itself in, it refuses; it is cold'.

> donna che allatta il suo bambino si affaccia da un uscio; placida e dolce; e allora sentono il raccapriccio di se stessi. (G: 360)[54]

As the bells strike at dusk, calling to mind the perspective of ageing next to each other but alone, a sudden appearance materialises before their eyes what they have lost. This serene maternity appears for once not an enigmatic allegory, but a symbol of the force of life itself, as a passage from Bergson clearly illustrates:

> les vivantes […] contrefont même si bien l'immobilité que nous les traitons comme des *choses* plutôt que comme des *progrès*, oubliant que la permanence même de leur forme n'est que le dessin d'un mouvement. Parfois cependant se matérialise à nos yeux, dans une fugitive apparition, le souffle invisible qui les porte. Nous avons cette illumination soudaine devant certaines formes de l'amour maternel [...]. Cet amour, où quelques-uns ont vu le grand mystère de la vie, nous en livrerait peut-être le secret. [...] Il nous laisse entrevoir que l'être vivant est surtout un lieu de passage, et que l'essentiel de la vie tient dans le mouvement qui la transmet. (Bergson 1907: 139)[55]

Recalling that this story was initially titled 'Il tempo passa' ['Time Passes'] (Salatto 2018: 355), it would be tempting to propose that this very paragraph could have inspired the story's conclusion. What readers are clearly told from the beginning, and the couple only vaguely understood, is precisely that their current condition is the result of a long process that had unfolded every day without them realising. In this key, Vittorino's initial panic attack could really be read as a Pirandellian overflowing of life that destroys the (well-intentioned) shapes built around it – except that Vittorino does not lucidly realise it as a Pirandellian character would. Scared by this evolution, Vittorino and Enrica cling to habit in the hope of arresting the flow, with the consequence of distancing themselves from it. In this, Enrica's attempt to forget the past as if it was that of someone else is as much of a

[54] 'The eucalyptus trees die out, the bells of San Giovanni sound; and the day fades like that sound. They are sad and lost; they feel like dying. But a mother breastfeeding her child leans out of a door; placid and sweet; and they feel horrified at themselves'.
[55] 'The living […] counterfeit immobility so well that we treat each of them as a *thing* rather than as a *progress*, forgetting that the very permanence of their form is only the outline of a movement. At times, however, in a fleeting vision, the invisible breath that bears them is materialized before our eyes. We have this sudden illumination before certain forms of maternal love [...]. This love, in which some have seen the great mystery of life, may possibly deliver us life's secret. […] It allows us a glimpse of the fact that the living being is above all a thoroughfare, and that the essence of life is in the movement by which life is transmitted' (2001: 124).

mistake as Vittorino's nostalgia, and leads to the same sense of lonely distance from the source of warmth and life. The couple is thus in a double bind. It is painful to accept that life and love are fading away with time, but it is even more painful to try to artificially freeze this flow, because, as Tozzi wrote elsewhere, 'l'immobilità è la cosa più dolorosa dell'anima' ('Le esitazioni', O: 725).[56] If we accept Bergson's reading of the maternity image as a materialisation of the mysterious movement of life, it is understandable why its sight causes the couple 'raccapriccio', a mix of horror and revulsion. It brings before them both the harmony with life that they have repressed, and its inescapable law of transiency that must be accepted if they ever want to recover it.

Balducci reads this final epiphany 'come emblema di un percorso diverso che in una simile circostanza, pur provocando un effetto traumatico […], non basta a determinare un effettivo riscatto' (1994: 89).[57] Whether or not it can lead the protagonists to some sort of 'redemption' is, however, impossible to say. The tragic tone of the story makes it unlikely, but in principle the possibility cannot be discarded, precisely because it arouses in them a full awareness, and violent shame, of their condition. The effect in this is very similar to the end of Joyce's story 'A Little Cloud', where a family crisis also ends with an unexplained image of the Maternity from whose circle of love the protagonist is excluded. In both stories, the ultimate interpretive leap is left to the reader. Whether the protagonists can react to this or slumber back in their emotional numbness depends on how much the reader trusts acknowledgement as a means to self-redemption.

The conjecture that an epiphany can happen when consciousness and profound emotions combine is ventured by Federica Tozzi (2015), who effectively refers the phenomenon to Ignacio Matte Blanco's psychology of the unconscious.[58] Given how Tozzi's observations had got him to infer the presence of the unconscious, and his belief that sudden revelations could bring out portions of it, it is worth pursuing further the path that Federica Tozzi's preliminary investigation recently opened. According to Matte Blanco, the

[56] 'Immobility is the most painful thing for the soul'.
[57] 'As the emblem of a different way, which, in the given circumstances, despite having a traumatic effect […] is not enough to determine an actual redemption'.
[58] Federica Tozzi's observations were largely reproposed, almost by the letter, by Luperini (2017).

unconscious is not illogical, but responds to a logic of its own which is incompatible with daylight reason. If the 'asymmetric' logic of conscious thought represents the world by making distinctions, the 'symmetric' logic of the unconscious works on similarity, and tends, conversely, to identify elements with one another. That is why, in the unconscious, individual identity is lost, statements can be reversed into their opposite, single parts coincide with the whole, space-time coordinates make no sense, and our imagination is confronted with more than three dimensions (Carvalho 2010: 327). This means that the conditions of conscious thought and awareness are impossible, and this mode of knowledge inevitably fails to be articulated in the terms of waking logic. Its 'mind-blowing complexity and multidimensionality can only be *unfolded* (to use Matte Blanco's term) into sequential thought, word by word, along a single dimension; or can be projected as it were onto the flat screen of dream imagery' (Carvalho 2010: 328). Timelessness, ineffability, coincidence of opposites, the sense of infinity we get when part equals whole, self-forgetfulness, and an impression that the mind has been carried beyond its ordinary powers of representation are precisely the aspects that recur in epiphanic experiences. An epiphany can therefore be explained, as Federica Tozzi briefly suggests, in terms of Matte Blanco's *bi-logic*, as a moment when unconscious symmetry comes to sit alongside waking asymmetry, and the representation we have of the world is shaped by both.

This can apply to all the authors encountered so far, but is particularly productive in the case of Tozzi, for whom delving into the obscure laws of the psyche (what he knew as W. James' subconscious) was a primary aesthetic choice. The idea that this area has a logic of its own was not unfamiliar to him ('l'anima è molto più proclive all'ordine di quanto possa sembrare' ('Le esitazioni', O: 725)),[59] and evidence from his observations and his fiction resonates deeply with Matte Blanco's theory. This is apparent when considering Tozzi's portrayal of emotions as threatening forces. As Carvalho explains, according to Matte Blanco in all mental activity asymmetry and symmetry are present to varying degrees. These proportions can be grouped into different 'strata' of psychic depth ranging

[59] 'The soul is much more inclined to order than what it could seem'.

from an initial stratum, the realm of maths and computational logic, down through a progressive increase of emotional intensity, vagueness of thought, and phenomena of identification, until the fifth stratum of absolute symmetry: the deep unconscious, characterised by a state of timeless and spaceless stasis and loss of self-awareness. This stratum of absolute unconsciousness is virtually indistinguishable from death, and that is why, Carvalho argues, in individuals who have trouble mentalising their affects, emotions, which come from that area, seem to threaten the self with lethal connotations (2010: 329). This not only sounds like a plausible issue for Tozzi's hyper-inhibited characters, but also helps to explain why his epiphanies have often been taken to reveal precisely death and violence as the ultimate laws of reality. Palumbo repeatedly comes to this conclusion: 'la morte è naturalmente e immediatamente il senso trascendente di questo universo' (1982: 65); 'l'epifania per Tozzi corrisponde, perciò, alla rivelazione del senso feroce, cattivo, amaro che sta dentro le cose' (2017: 36).[60] Arguably, this is often the case not because violence is, for Tozzi, the ultimate law of the universe, but because the characters through whom the manifestation is focalised experience their epiphanic emotions as deathly forces. Not unlike Pirandello and Joyce, indeed, what is most often manifested in Tozzi's fiction is the fundamental fragility and insecurity of all characters involved, who are prey to their emotions because they are unable to acknowledge them, and as a result cannot help hurting each other.

'Una recita cinematografica' ['A Cinematic Performance'] (1918) is an excellent example of this. The story is in explicit dialogue with Pirandello, which is already evident, according to Baldacci, at the level of style, more 'theatrical' than elsewhere (1993: 108). The clearest echo concerns, however, narrative situations: the failed suicide and the cinema industry are at the centre of two of Pirandello's best known novels (*Il fu Mattia Pascal*, 1904, and *Si gira!*, 1915), while the theme of the double and the lyrical contemplation of the stars are recurrent motifs in his *novelle*. In this key we can also read some attempts at humour, in the Pirandellian sense of sympathetic irony, but the impression is that Tozzi here plays

[60] 'Death is naturally and immediately the transcendent sense of this universe'; 'the epiphany for Tozzi coincides, therefore, with the revelation of the fierce, cruel, bitter significance inside things'.

Pirandello's technique in a minor key, shifting the attention away from the logical absurdity of human incomprehension and focusing it entirely on its painful emotional consequences.

The aptonym of the protagonist, shoemaker Calepodio (from ancient Greek *kalos* = beautiful, and *poys*, *podos* = foot) is unusual in Tozzi, whose preference usually tends towards non-specific names, and confers on this character an understated air of Medieval allegorical figure. What he is supposed to represent, however, is not straightforward. He is evidently one of Tozzi's 'victims' against whom society exerts its violence (Luperini 1994: 430). However, this role, rather conventional among Tozzi's protagonists, acquires specific nuances precisely through this fixation on feet. He is a humble being who shields himself from the harshness of life by living confined to his niche, and who feels happier when not forced to interact: 'preferisce prendere due soldi di meno piuttosto che seguitare a discorrere. E prende i soldi, senza guardare in faccia; ritornando tranquillo quando lo lasciano stare' (G: 275).[61] His job seems the only ground on which human contact is possible: 'nessuno gli ha mai domandato chi è […]. Vanno da lui soltanto quando ne hanno bisogno per le scarpe' (G: 276),[62] and he internalised this condition to the point of finding in it a refuge from the stress of human complexity: 'per lui, gli uomini sono le loro scarpe: non gl'importa d'altro' (G: 275).[63] So much, however, does the story insist on shoes and feet as the centre of his thoughts, that one starts to suspect their importance goes beyond factual reference. The language used denounces indeed an increasing level of emotional boundary-blurring. At first they are characterised, referentially, as the only thing he knows of men: 'degli altri uomini egli conosce soltanto le scarpe, quando son rotte' (G: 275).[64] After only a few lines, however, shoes and men are equated: 'per lui, gli uomini sono le loro scarpe'. The metaphoric charge then takes over, revealing deeper emotional implications:

> Per lui le scarpe non sono soltanto cuoio tagliato e cucito insieme: egli, dalla forma che prendono, quando è un pezzo che sono portate capisce bene come è fatto il piede. E il piede è tutto. Quando, perciò, conosce il piede di una persona,

[61] 'He would rather have a little less money to spend, than waste time in conversation. He takes their money without looking them in the eye, at ease only when they leave him alone' (2017: 430).
[62] 'No one has ever asked who he is: they go to him only when they need him for their shoes' (2017: 430).
[63] 'For him, men are their shoes: he's doesn't care about the rest' (2017: 430).
[64] 'Other men he knows only by their shoes, when they're in need of repair' (2017: 429).

> allora si sente suo amico; altrimenti, no. […] Vuol perfino bene ai suoi clienti; perché ha cominciato a voler bene ai loro piedi. (GG: 276)[65]

Symmetrical reasoning in this progression is apparent: the interest in people is displaced onto a part of them, which is, however, considered to be 'everything', and thus catalyses the desire for affection and attachment that Calepodio can neither express nor accept to experience directly. A link between his availability to fix shoes and the openness to confidence is also obscurely sensed by the community of residents: 'quando qualcuno, chiunque sia, ha dentro di sé una cosa che non confiderebbe agli altri, allora senza volere, se si trova alla porta, cerca il pretesto di dire una parola a Calepodio; che non capisce, ma picchia più forte su le suola delle scarpe' (G: 272).[66]

This is especially interesting in the case of Signora Pia, the lady who cannot stand him because his obstruction in the hall confronts her with her obesity. Apparently, her usual annoyance turns to hate only after she, too, felt the impulse to talk to him: 'la stizza mancò poco che non le facesse venire un colpo. Ella pensò sopra a questa debolezza, che aveva avuta; e siccome le pareva quasi un'onta, odiò Calepodio' (G: 273).[67] Her action upon it is deeply ambiguous. On the one hand, she persecutes Calepodio by having conversations about his loneliness; on the other, however, this cruelty is the vestment under which her original desire to talk to him can be fulfilled. The effects are equally ambiguous: nastiness achieves its target, causing Calepodio embarrassment and confusion, but the opening of a dialogue also arouses shocking feelings within him. Their disconcerting effect is rendered disruptive by the fact that they sit outside the usual shoe channel: 'egli non può essere amico della signora Pia, che non gli ha mai fatto risolare né meno una ciabatta. Egli ne ha

[65] 'For him, shoes aren't just leather, cut and stitched together: from the shape they assume when they've been worn for a while, he can tell how the foot is put together. And the foot is everything. Only when he knows a person by their feet does he then count them as his friend; otherwise, not at all. […] He even loves his clients in some way, because he's come to love their feet' (2017: 430).
[66] 'Whenever anyone—whoever they are—is concealing something they'd rather not confide to others, without wanting to they'll find some excuse, should they happen to be at the door, to say a word to Calepodio; who doesn't understand, but hammers harder at the soles of the shoes he's working on' (2017: 428).
[67] 'She was so angry she was within an inch of giving herself a lash. She considered this weakness that she had felt; and because it seemed to her almost sinful, she hated Calepodio for it' (2017: 428).

una curiosità, che non può vincere; e non riesce a rassegnarsi' (G: 276).[68] Without this anchorage into his usual way of processing feelings, the contrast between the personal questions of Signora Pia, allegedly the first he has ever been asked, and her mocking tone cause an emotional earthquake. 'Un giorno pensa: "È innamorata di me. Bisogna che io mi nasconda quando passa. Non voglio che una donna s'innamori di me". E si convince che sia vero' (G: 276),[69] where it is purposefully ambiguous whether he must convince himself that she is in love with him or that he does not want it to happen.

Both readings are possible in the light of what follows. The Dantean 'vita nuova' (Bertoncini 2008: 65) which now begins for him is indeed characterised by a desperate struggle against emotions that become all the more indefinite as they are strong and deep. As the contemplation of the stars, typical epiphanic moment in Pirandello, is rewritten in this psychological key, the darkness of the night becomes the place in which the eyes of the character are virtually closed ('come se egli doventasse cieco') and subconscious drives emerge:

> Fuori, almeno, se alza gli occhi, vede un'altra strada di stelle su nel cielo, dove forse camminerebbe meglio che in Via dei Greci. Una strada che egli vorrebbe conoscere, come se un giorno ci dovesse passare; per non tornare mai più. Che silenzio ci deve essere! Gli pare di starci; e, se non lo distrae qualcuno che passa, urtandolo, egli non ricorda più né meno dove si trova. Se bastasse risolare le scarpe per salire lassù! Ci vogliono gambe e piedi buoni! (G: 277)[70]

The road of stars has, again, ambivalent connotations. It is perceived as an area of peace and silence, whose contemplation makes Calepodio lose the sense of distance and of his surroundings. It is also considered within reach of good feet and well-soled shoes, suggesting an association of this peace with his feeling-processing scheme, and with an

[68] 'He can't be Signora Pia's friend, because she hasn't had him resole so much as a slipper. He feels an intense curiosity about her, which he can't overcome, and he can't resign himself to not knowing' (Tozzi 2017: 430).
[69] 'One day he thinks: 'She's in love with me. I need to hide when she goes out. I don't want any woman to fall in love with me.' He convinces himself that this is true.' (Tozzi 2017: 430).
[70] 'Outside, at least, if he looks up, he can see a road through the stars up in the sky, where perhaps he would walk more comfortably than on Via dei Greci. A road that he would like to know, if one day he should end up there, never to return. How quiet it must be up there! He can almost make himself believe he's there, and if he doesn't get distracted by someone going by, bumping him, he can forget where he is. If only resoling shoes were enough to get up there! You need good legs and feet!' (Tozzi 2017: 431).

actual possibility to get there. At the same time, the idea that he should walk there one day 'never to return' characterises his longing for the stars as a desire for death. This very ambiguity indicates that his emotions here are at their most intense, invested with the unconscious duality that makes their complete liberation indistinguishable from self-annihilation. Unable to process this intensity, Calepodio is scared and receives this instance of emotional reconciliation precisely as a threat: 'egli ha paura di non poter continuare a vivere in quel modo: sente una insidia indefinibile, nascosta, che non si fa vedere abbastanza da capire di quel che si tratta' (G: 277).[71]

When Signora Pia actually dies, cutting short any development of their friendship ('egli non vedrà mai quei piedi!' (G: 278))[72] the feeling of affective identification tips the scale, and the attraction to the stars takes the shape of a desire for collective communion, defining itself starkly as a death drive:

> Anche questo malessere lo spaventa; perché non sa di quel che si tratti. Ed è così triste che anch'egli vuol morire. Andrà a buttarsi nel Tevere. Gli pare che la signora Pia non debba morire sola: egli non l'ama; ma pensa che, quando muore una persona, muoiano tutti gli altri; che dovranno sparire lo stesso. O prima o dopo, non significa niente. La morte non è individuale, ma di tutti. Forse, morendo, egli troverà quella strada delle stelle; perché ci vuole coraggio a passare quel punto! Poi, il resto viene da sé. Egli ha fatto una magnifica trovata! È una trovata che lo esalta e lo innalza; dove non sa, ma si sente più buono e più dolce; si sente già vivere in un altro modo, e non vuol tornare a dietro. Bisogna obbedire. (G: 278)[73]

As the decision to commit suicide is processed by the protagonist in his mind, the Pirandellian echo becomes perceptible again, intensifying the contrasts. Calepodio's indefinite death drive takes shape in a decision to jump in the Tiber, as often happens in

[71] 'He's worried that he won't be able to earn living in this way: he senses some indef inable trap, hidden somewhere, that isn't letting itself be seen enough for him to understand what it consists of' (Tozzi 2017: 431).
[72] 'He won't look at those feet, never' (Tozzi 2017: 431).
[73] 'This unease also frightens him, because he doesn't know what it is. And he's so upset that he too wants to die. He'll go throw himself in the Tiber. He feels that Signora Pia shouldn't die alone: he doesn't love her, but he thinks that when a person dies, everyone else should die too; or that they should disappear, in any case. Sooner or later, it doesn't make a difference. Death isn't individual, but belongs to everyone. Maybe, in death, he'll find the way to that star road, because you need courage to pass that point! Then, the rest comes from within. He's made a marvellous discovery! It's a discovery which both excites and lifts him up; where he doesn't know, but he even feels kinder and gentler than before; he already feels like he's living in a new world, and he doesn't want to go back. He must obey' (Tozzi 2017: 432).

Pirandello - even from the same bridge, with Monte Mario in the background. Whilst, however, Pirandello's usual suicides are 'philosophical', their necessity being deducted through apparently stringent reasoning, here the only logic governing Calepodio's meditations is the law of symmetry. Death is no longer individual, but a common destiny that binds all beings in a community where the time of individual life has no meaning ('o prima o dopo, non significa niente'). It is also a way to peace, in that he recognises in it the desired way for the stars, and his decision to embrace it already makes him feel better and reconciled. The decision is termed a rather Pirandellian 'trovata', and its origin is not unlike the creative impulse that in 'Il coppo' inspires Bernardo the creative act of jumping in the fishnet. Its irresistibility, and its having been lurking in the background for a long time ('la volontà della morte non cessa; perché troppo, tutti i giorni, egli l'ha avuta' (G: 278))[74] are similar symptoms of this unconscious origin. Here however, Calepodio does not perceive this act as a way to put an end to a wasted life, but, conversely, as the chance for a primordial reconciliation between himself and 'all the others'. It is thus all the more interesting that this suicide, too, is doomed to fail, but that the epiphanic shock associated to it has the opposite value.

> C'è la campagna arsiccia, con Monte Mario boscoso; ci sono le villette, con i loro giardini. A lui non importa niente; ma, contro quella sua volontà, vede, poco lontano, un mucchio di gente vestita come sessant'anni a dietro. […] Sono attori cinematografici; e uno mette un fantoccio sul parapetto del fiume, perché dovrà fingere l'uomo che si annega […]. Si tratta, per ora, di una prova; e, quando è finita così, essi ridacchiano. […] Ma un signore grida, e si rimettono tutti al posto: il fantoccio è pronto, un'altra volta, sul parapetto; e pare proprio uno che vi si è arrampicato disperatamente.
> Un carrettiere […] chiama un suo compagno:
> – Vieni a vedere questi scherzi!
> Allora, Calepodio sente una scossa in tutta la persona; gli occhi gli si gonfiano di pianto; e torna a dietro, con l'angoscia di non potersi uccidere mai più. (G: 279-280)[75]

[74] 'His death wish doesn't disappear, because he's had it for too long, every day' (Tozzi 2017: 432).
[75] 'There's the arid countryside, with the tree-lined Monte Mario; there's the little villas, with their gardens. It's of no consequence to him; but, counter to his desire, he sees, not far from where he's standing, a bunch of people dressed in fashion from 60 years back. […] They're film actors. One puts a puppet on the parapet, because it will have to feign a man drowning himself […]. For the moment, it's just a rehearsal: and when it's done, they laugh. […] But then a man shouts, and everyone goes back to their places: the puppet is ready, once again, on the parapet; and it really looks like someone who's climbed up there in desperation. A cart driver […] calls to his friend: 'Take a look at this nonsense!' At that moment, Calepodio feels a shock run through his entire person: his eyes fill with

The appearance of the cinema troupe which forces him to face his double accumulates Pirandellian ingredients. According to Castellana, this is done 'in senso umoristico e, per così dire, autocritico',[76] and constitutes one of the rarest occurrences in which a Tozzian character acquires consciousness of himself, escaping the blind force that drives him (2009: 113-114). This reading implies that seeing his death enacted by the puppet as 'a joke' allows reason to prevail over Calepodio's death drive. A reverse reading is offered, however, by Luperini, for whom the puppet shows that even suicide has been turned into fiction and inauthenticity; Calepodio would therefore be returned to his hopelessly repetitive and passive life, dispossessed even of this ultimate spurt of will (1994: 431). The final manifestation lends some support to both these readings, and surely others, whilst still making them appear somewhat limited. On the one hand, the tone at the end is anything but life-affirming. The protagonist does not feel repossessed and 'saved', as was the case for Bernardo Morasco, but is driven away with an anguish of permanent disempowerment. He fears that he will not be able to kill himself 'ever again', as if the fictional enactment had violated the sacredness of his gesture once and for all. On the other, the association between a puppet and philosophical 'inauthenticity' seems out of focus for this character, whose concerns did not seem to be so abstract, and who never appeared preoccupied with asserting his willpower.

In the context of the story as it has unfolded here, one could hazard yet another hypothesis. The puppet appears as Calepodio's double not just for its suicidal role, but also due to its passivity and the repetition of his act, which evokes the shoemaker's own habit-ruled, reified existence. Now that the only individual who, albeit nastily, had engaged with him as a person is gone, this is what he will be again for everyone. The fake suicide shocks him with a preview of the way his act will be seen by others: as a 'joke' to react to, but soon to laugh at. The spirit of human community he wanted to assert through death will thus be unheard or completely misunderstood. In a way, the loss of Signora Pia rendered death itself an impracticable way of expressing the new feeling of attachment Calepodio had

tears, and he heads back the way he came, with the anguish of knowing he will never try to kill himself again' (Tozzi 2017: 432-33).

[76] 'In a humorous and, so to say, self-critical sense'.

confusedly perceived. The dispossession of death stands thus also for the definitive impossibility of airing those profound feelings that resemble death, and to tap into the affective interpersonal bond that they promise. It is as if the unreceptiveness of others to the solemnity of a suicide confronted Calepodio with the impossibility of ever loving or being loved.

There was no need for Tozzi to have read Matte Blanco in order to grasp the baseline of his key concepts, as the psychological studies he knew already pointed in that direction. The theories of W. James account for the presence, in a field of consciousness, of a centre of focus and a progressively less defined 'margin', where phenomena of contiguity and similarity can sometimes cause mysterious parts of inner life to resurface (Martini 1999: 101-107). On the other hand, a significant contribution must have come from Bergson, whose idea that the innermost vital force structurally defies rational description harmonises both with the mystery of W. James' transmarginal region and with Matte Blanco's symmetrical logic. Since 1903 Bergson had defined intuition as 'cette espèce de sympathie intellectuelle par laquelle on se transporte à l'intérieur d'un objet pour coïncider avec ce qu'il a d'unique et par conséquent d'inexprimable' (Bergson 1903: 3)[77]: a tool that, through an emotional (sympathetic) collapse of barriers, should enable the investigator to deal with the ineffable, bypassing the limitations of linguistic logic. The inexpressible object of intuition is, for Bergson, the mysterious psychological unity over time that establishes the sense of self across the flowing of its internal evolution: a principle of identity within difference that pertains to the realm of symmetry. By asserting its power 'd'affirmer l'existence d'objets inférieurs et supérieurs à nous, quoique cependant, en un certain sens, intérieurs à nous, de les faire coexister ensemble sans difficulté' (Bergson 1903: 22)[78] Bergson presents intuition de facto as the achievement of a bi-logical structure which alone can restore contact with the life force dwelling in the subconscious.

[77] 'The sympathy by which one is transported into the interior of an object in order to coincide with what there is unique and consequently inexpressible in it' (2007: 173).
[78] 'To affirm the existence of objects both inferior and superior to us, though nevertheless in a certain sense inferior to us, to make them co-existent without difficulty' (2007: 198).

When, in his maturity, Tozzi claimed that what really interested him was 'the intuition of any mysterious act of ours', 'intuition' was most probably intended in specific terms. His interest in capturing the moments in which the action of this obscure force on the individual became manifest thus met one of the conditions that determine the modernist evolution of epiphany: the 'awareness of living on a duality or plurality of levels, not totally compatible, but which can't be reduced to unity' (Taylor 1989: 480). This recognition, Taylor explains, allows one to discover within the self something that goes beyond it, such as the transpersonal structures of myths or archetypes (1989: 481). In his self-immersion notes Tozzi indeed confirms the Bergsonian idea that soul and things are connected ('l'anima è continuata nelle cose'), while adding words of caution as to the potentially disruptive effect of directing consciousness toward its margins:

> Non adoperate troppo in fretta la vostra coscienza, la quale è come una spada che taglia dovunque la volgiate. Onde non fate che le aperture troppo grandi siano prodotte in voi. Bisogna che l'anima cammini sopra il suo infinito con molta avvedutezza. Poi che l'anima è come se fosse attaccata a qualche cosa. Non fate che si rompa questo legame. ('Contentezza di sé', O: 722)[79]

The mention of an 'infinite' area of the soul where a precious connection to 'something' can be found suggests that the inner depth could be, for Tozzi, also a path to self-transcendence. To understand the terms in which this is possible, it is necessary to bring out another ingredient of Tozzi's psychological awareness: the concept of soul.

3.2 Psyche as Soul

In the 1902 letter on emotions, Tozzi did not indicate the mystery of the soul as divine. Other letters, however, display references to a 'mysticism that pervaded him entirely' (8 dicembre 1902, Nov: 24), revealing his early interest in 'spirituality' in broad terms. This appears complementary to the perceived incomprehensibility of things: both in

[79] 'The soul is continued in things'; 'Do not employ your consciousness too quickly; it is like a sword, which cuts wherever you turn it. Therefore do not let too large openings to be made in yourselves. The soul must walk on its infinite with much care. Since it is as if the soul were attached to something. Do not let this bond be broken'.

the outer world and in the inner self, everything seems strange and hostile, but also surrounded, in its otherness, by a fascination that arouses a desire for fusion or clash (Cavalli Pasini 1984: 12-13). This was initially channelled in aesthetic symbolism. Much like Joyce and Mansfield, Tozzi's early writings are characterised by a late-romantic poetics of mystery, which recognises a spirit diffused in all creation and connects details to the universal whole through enigmatic analogies (Castellana 2009: 54-56). His conversion to Catholicism in 1904 gave this inclination an institutional frame of reference, but Tozzi continued to live his religion as a visceral feeling, which fostered and was, in turn, fostered by his interest in the human psyche. Mind and soul are now the same thing, to the point where the immortality of the soul appears proven by the evidence that the mind's duration exceeds consciousness: 'credo che l'anima sia immortale, perché scopro sempre che ha vissuto più di me. Non è possibile che io determini da quale epoca viene' ('L'immortalità', O: 736).[80] Divorcing psychology from religion appears thus a scientific error, since 'la nostra religione, così trascurata e sbassata da tutti i trattati di psicologia, è il motivo spontaneo della nostra anima' ('Quel che manca all'intelligenza', 1913, O: 1282).[81] Whilst his season of Catholic fundamentalism was short lived, this view of the religious sentiment as the primary foundation of the human psyche remained. That is why, many years later, St Bernardine still appeared as a stylistic model to capture emotional clues that 'appartengono, con profondità indicibile e con significato enorme, agli elementi meno equivoci che si rivelano alla nostra coscienza' ('San Bernardino da Siena', 1918, O: 1301).[82] Religion appeared as the most effective doorway to the subconscious realm.

This idea came probably from William James' *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, which Tozzi read before 1904 in the Italian translation *Le varie forme della coscienza religiosa* (Martini 1999: 155). There, W. James presents religious phenomena as touching the limit of scientific understanding. 'Psychology and religion […] both admit that there are forces,

[80] 'I believe the soul is immortal, because I always discover its has lived longer than myself. It is impossible for me to determine which age it comes from'.
[81] 'Our religion, so overlooked and underplayed in every psychology treatise, is the spontaneous motive of our soul'.
[82] 'Belong, with unspeakable depth and enormous significance, to the least ambiguous elements revealed to our consciousness'.

seemingly outside of the conscious individual, that bring redemption to his life',[83] and the mental area in which these forces act is thus common ground between science and faith: 'if there be higher spiritual agencies that can directly touch us, the psychological condition of their doing so might be our possession of a subconscious region which alone should yield access to them' (James 2012: 166, 189-90).[84] As Martini observes, this exploration led precisely to the unconscious, providing Tozzi with powerful stimuli to focus his investigation on that area (1999: 3-4, 177). In particular, this reading fuelled his continuing interest in mysticism, which W. James presents as the very origin of the religious feeling (2012: 323). W. James is clear that 'rational consciousness […] is but one special type of consciousness, while all about it, parted from it by the filmiest of screens, there lie potential forms of consciousness entirely different' (James 2012: 296).[85] 'Mystical experiences' are precisely alternative states of feeling, characterised by ineffability, noetic quality, transiency and passivity: temporary phenomena that the intellect cannot decipher, but which nonetheless (or precisely because of this) carry with them a feeling of deepest knowledge, and the impression to be acted on by a superior power. Bringing an awareness of 'something there', unseen but absolutely real, they are the foundation of religion. However, they are also involved in phenomena that have no specific divine mark, including something as simple as a suddenly clearer understanding of familiar words. Certainly, they have a part in our aesthetic response: 'we are alive or dead to the eternal inner message of the arts according as [*sic*] we have kept or lost this mystical susceptibility' (James 2012: 292-93).[86]

Thus described, W. James's mystical experiences are so extraordinarily similar to epiphanies that one might be tempted to collapse the boundary altogether and read Tozzi's

[83] 'Psicologia e religione […] l'una e l'altra ammettono l'esistenza di forze apparentemente esterne all'individuo cosciente, e che ne redimono la vita' (1945: 185).
[84] '*Se vi sono* agenti spirituali superiori che possano toccarci direttamente, la condizione psicologica di questo loro intervento *potrebbe essere* il possedere noi una regione subcosciente la quale sola potrebbe permettere loro l'accesso fino a noi' (1945: 212).
[85] 'La nostra coscienza normale […] è soltanto un tipo speciale di coscienza, mentre tutto attorno ad essa, da esso divisa mediante il più trasparente degli schemi, giacciono forme potenziali di coscienza del tutto differenti' (1945: 337).
[86] 'Noi siamo vivi o morti all'eterno messaggio intimo delle arti, a seconda che conserviamo o abbiamo perduto questa mistica suscettività' (1945: 333).

exceptional moments as direct elaborations of Jamesian mysticism. Having encountered Matte Blanco, the suspicion arises that this is because W. James' mystical fields of consciousness bring out precisely the logic of affect that Tozzi was so interested in exploring. Not only, indeed, in their happening are they felt to challenge the conscious mind with the lack of time-space-self coordinates that characterise the unconscious system, but the reconciliation that they promise is the same: 'it is as if the opposites of the world, whose contradictoriness and conflict make all our difficulties and troubles, were melted into unity. […] a monistic insight, in which the *other* in its various forms appears absorbed into the One' (James 2012: 297).[87] In Christian theology, the one Being in which all opposites are reconciled is God himself. Bomford observes, in this regard, that the notion itself of Being, as the one quality that all existing things have in common, requires a great deal of symmetric logic to be conceived. This suggests that, from a religious point of view, 'Being, God, Total Symmetry and thus the fifth stratum of the mind are intimately linked', and therefore 'the believer […] may be seen as seeking a conscious awareness of what is present to the fifth stratum of the mind' (Bomford 2010: 362). This appears extremely coherent with the way Tozzi conceived his own belief: 'perché *cercare Dio* significa spingere l'anima fin dove le è concesso di arrivare; e più in là non è possibile' ('Quel che manca all'intelligenza', O: 1280).[88]

The location of the way to God in the unconscious explains the concept of an 'inner infinity' as seen above. However, it also implies that the transcendent dimension will never be accessible in conscious terms, emphasising in the self a feeling of segregation:

> è destino che io debba camminare sempre nella parte inferiore dell'anima, onde si odono i canti delle rondini troppo alti. E come se camminassi lungo una strada, sapendo che a pochi chilometri c'è il mare; ed io non potessi mai vederlo, udendo i canti delle sue sirene.
> Bisogna appagarsi di quel che cade dalla mensa degli dei.
> Noi siamo come i mendichi che non vedranno mai i loro benefattori. Tutto ciò che è luce o ombra proviene da misteriose disposizioni. [...]

[87] 'È come se gli opposti del mondo, la cui contraddizione e i cui conflitti dànno luogo a tutte le nostre difficoltà e preoccupazioni, si fondessero in un'unità. […] una visione monistica in cui l'*altro* nelle sue varie forme appare assorbito nell'Uno' (1945: 337-38).
[88] 'Because looking for God means pushing the soul as far as it is allowed to go; and going further is impossible'.

Quante cose non si possono comprendere nella vita!' ('L'immortalità', O: 737)[89]

This image evokes W. James' principle of religion as a perception of 'the presence of things unseen', and stresses both the reality of this presence and the fact that, because of the decree of human 'destiny', it is constantly out of reach: too high up, too far away. It can be perceived, but never known. Tozzi's humans are indeed confined in a lower region of their soul, where the presence of a superior good, or a reconciled existence, can be felt only indirectly and by occasional hints. The bits of food that fall from time to time are in this sense a metaphor for the random details that can epiphanically point to the beyond. Interestingly, the correlatives Tozzi uses to evoke this transcendence – the songs of swallows and sirens – rely on hearing, not seeing, as a channel for its perception. W. James's suggestion that 'not conceptual speech, but music rather, is the element through which we are best spoken to by mystical truth' (James 2012: 321)[90] must not have passed unnoticed. Music, being able to arouse emotions regardless of intellectual elaboration, enables the perception of the unquestionable presence of a superior order while still preserving its unfathomability. Seeing and clarity, on the other hand, with their stronger link to rational comprehension, appear incompatible with this knowledge. It seems thus coherent that the limit of human understanding, even self-understanding, is evoked through the image of the veil, which blocks sight but not sound: 'molte volte la vita è come un velo immenso che copra a metà la nostra anima. Cosa avviene sopra a quel velo?' ('Il velo diminuito', O: 761).[91]

Unsurprisingly, among the forms of mysticism that W. James inventoried, Tozzi's favourite seems to be the 'dreamy state', in which a feeling comes over the subject that everything around him has a meaning, but this meaning is inaccessible (James 2012: 294). It is evident in the 1910 story 'La madre', written at a time when W. James' works were

[89] 'It is my destiny to always walk in the lower part of my soul, where the songs of the swallows are heard too high up. And as if I was walking along a road, knowing the sea is only a few kilometres away; and I could never see it, despite hearing the songs of its sirens. We must be satisfied with what falls from the banquet of the gods. We are like panhandlers who will never see their benefactors. All light or darkness comes from mysterious dispositions. […] How many things in life cannot be understood!

[90] 'Non il linguaggio concettuale, ma piuttosto la musica è l'elemento per cui la verità mistica ci parla' (1945: 363).

[91] 'Oftentimes life is like an immense veil covering half of our soul. What happens above that veil?'.

sitting on Tozzi's desk alongside his fiction: 'egli alzò la testa, e stette così pensando dove fosse andata la mamma. Ed egli allora capì che intorno a lui c'era una vita immensa, dove ancora non era entrato; una vita quasi misteriosa' (Tozzi 1994: 338).[92] Later fiction is usually less explicit, but the same feeling is apparent again, ten years later, in *Tre croci* ('sentiva che quella donnàcchera poteva significare una cosa, che cercò invano. E la sua disperazione crebbe'[93]) and *Gli egoisti*: 'gli pareva d'essere sul punto di scoprire un gran segreto, che con una rapidità violenta passava rasentando la sua anima; qualche volta, muovendola un poco con sé' (O: 236, 460).[94] This persistent attitude harmonises with Tozzi's *sui generis* religious sensitivity, which appears closer to an Old-Testament view of human indignity before God than to Evangelical hope (Campigli 2000). Indeed, it resonates with W. James' reading of the book of Job, where the omnipotence of God is paired with the fact that his plans are unknowable: 'in Job […] God reminds us that man is not the measure of his creation. The world is immense, constructed on no plan or theory which the intellect of man can grasp. It is *transcendent* everywhere' (2012: 65).[95]

Dreamy states are indicated as particularly common in adolescence, whose symptoms of psychosis – 'sense of incompleteness and imperfection; brooding, depression, morbid introspection, and sense of sin; anxiety about the hereafter; distress over doubts, and the like' – are seen by W. James as a state of predisposition to religious experience: 'if there were such a thing as inspiration from a higher realm, it might well be that the neurotic temperament would furnish the chief condition of the requisite receptivity' (2012: 157, 28).[96] Tozzi's peculiar concept of youth as a state of mind, rather than a stage of life, although most often resulting in social ineptitude, has another side that reveals this influence:

[92] 'He raised his head and stood there wondering where his mother had gone. And he understood that an immense life was around him, a life he had not entered yet; an almost mysterious life'.
[93] 'He felt that this miserable little woman might signify one thing for which he searched in vain. His desperation increased' (Tozzi 1921: 141).
[94] 'He felt he was about to uncover a great secret, which passed quickly and violently skimming his soul; sometimes, carrying it a little along with its movement'.
[95] 'In Giobbe […] Dio ci rammenta che l'uomo non è la misura di ogni cosa da lui creata. Il mondo è immenso, ed è costrutto[*sic*] secondo un piano od una teoria che l'uomo non può afferrare. In ogni sua parte esso è *trascendente*' (1945: 66).
[96] 'Senso di incompletezza e di imperfezione; meditazioni senza fine, depressione, introspezione morbosa, e senso del peccato; ansietà circa l'al di là; disperazione pei dubbi e simili'; 'Se poi esiste qualche cosa di simile ad una ispirazione superiore, potrebbe ben darsi che il temperamento neuropatico costituisse la condizione principale della recettività necessaria a ciò' (1945: 145, 22).

> L'adolescenza dovrebbe essere come l'elemento divino che s'innesta alla nostra natura; ogni uomo dovrebbe ritrovarla come una forza di purità, come una tazza che disseti permanentemente.
> Io credo che alcuno riesca ad essere sempre adolescente. Egli può aver fatto della sua anima come un'eco per la tranquillità, può aver fatto in modo che il silenzio gli risponda. ('La adolescenza', O: 743)[97]

Prolonged adolescence is presented here as something different from a handicap. It is a state of purity and a source of nourishment precisely because it makes the psyche receptive to a source of peace: the voice of silence is, after all, one of the frequent oxymora of mystical experience (James 2012: 321). Tozzi chooses the eternal 'Giovani' as his characters precisely to observe the consequences of their higher receptivity to what comes from the margins of their consciousness. This aphorism suggests a potentially healthy reading of adolescent sensitivity as a state of open communication with the part of the self (the sphere of affect and divine inspiration) that the conditioning of adulthood can repress. 'Noi abbiamo bisogno di questa eternità, come di approdare a qualche cosa. […] Tutto ciò che vediamo deve essere come il simbolo di lei, come il velame percettibile della realtà' ('Il mio egoismo', O: 742).[98]

There is, however, another option in W. James' mystical range that resonates deeply with Tozzi's humans. Alongside classic religious mysticism, which is 'on the whole pantheistic and optimistic' (James 2012: 322), there is a type of non-religious mysticism that appears most frequently in treaties about insanity:

> a diabolical mysticism, a sort of religious mysticism turned upside down. The same sense of ineffable importance in the smallest events, the same texts and words coming with new meanings, the same voices and visions and leadings and missions, the same controlling by extraneous powers; only this time the emotion is pessimistic: instead of consolations we have desolations; the meanings are dreadful; and the powers are enemies to life. (James 2012: 325)[99]

[97] 'Adolescence should be like the divine element grafting itself onto our nature; every man should rediscover it as a strength of purity, as a cup continuously quenching his thirst. I think anyone can be always adolescent. He can turn his soul into an echo for tranquillity, he can arrange for silence to answer him'.
[98] 'We need this eternity, we need as if to land somewhere. […] All we see must be like a symbol of it, like the perceptible veil of reality'.
[99] 'Un misticismo diabolico, una specie di misticismo religioso capovolto. Lo stesso senso di importanza ineffabile per gli avvenimenti più minuti, gli stessi testi e le stesse parole a cui vengono attribuiti significati nuovi, le stesse voci, e visioni, e direzioni, e missioni, la stessa dominazione per

Considering Tozzi's bleak portrayal of the way humans relate to themselves and others, and his undoubted interest in pathological states of mind, it is very hard to tell whether his hypersensitive characters are subject to 'dreamy states' or to this diabolical mysticism that W. James only briefly mentions. This is entirely coherent with the double interpretation that waking thought can give of feelings coming from the unconscious: 'to the mystic […] the same experience might be rather one of the Being of all things. To the borderline patient, however, any emotion, including love, seems lethal' (Carvalho 2010: 329). This ambiguity is deliberate on the part of Tozzi. He had found in W. James that the two types of mysticism 'spring from the same mental level, from that great subliminal or transmarginal region […] of which so little is really known. That region contains every kind of matter: "seraph and snake" abide there side by side. To come from thence is no infallible credential' (James 2012: 325).[100] The idea impressed him deeply:

> Io non so quel che porto dentro di me. Di quassù non posso scorgere i riflessi che avvengono dentro il profondissimo pozzo dell'anima. Non so se abbia dentro di me una buca di scorpioni o un nido di usignoli. E la mano ignota del destino ora mi avvicina ai bisbigli e un'altra volta alle code paurose.
> Soltanto l'acqua di tale pozzo ne potrebbe parlare. [...] E allora mi sento senza alcuna risorsa. [...] Mi sento così circoscritto soltanto a quello che ho compiuto, di cui dubito. [...]
> Allora mi vien voglia di comprendere quel che non ho mai compreso. Vi potrebbero essere in torno a me tante vie quante sono le possibilità delle anime. […] potrò trovare la regola per l'assestamento definitivo di questo spirito, che ha patito così tanti danni? [...] Bisognerebbe che avessi una sapienza, che m'è stata negata. Bisognerebbe che io possedessi quello che, per mia natura, non potrò mai. È possibile che soltanto ora mi si rivelino questi abissi? […] Essi mi sono apparsi come una deficienza. Io credevo che la mia anima si potesse estendere di più. ('Io non so quel che porto', O: 735-736)[101]

parte di potenze estranee; soltanto che questa volta l'emozione è pessimista; invece di consolazioni abbiamo delle desolazioni; e i significati sono spaventosi; le potenze sono nemiche della vita' (1945: 368).

[100] 'Muovono dallo stesso livello mentale, da quella grande regione subliminale o transmarginale di cui […] si conosce così poco. Quella regione contiene ogni sorta di cose: "serafini e serpi" si trovano là fianco a fianco. Il derivarne non è una credenziale infallibile' (1945: 368).

[101] 'I don't know what I carry within me. From up here I cannot glimpse the reflections that happen in the deepest well of the soul. I don't know if I have in me a pit of scorpions or a nest of nightingales. And the unknown hand of destiny brings me close now to the murmur, now to the frightening tails. Only the water from that well could talk about it. […] And now I feel I have no resource. […] I feel thus limited only to what I have done, of which I doubt. […] Then I am seized by the desire to understand what I never understood. There could be as many ways around me as the possibilities of the soul. […] Will I be able to find the rule for the definitive settlement of my spirit, which has suffered so much damage? […] I would need a wisdom I have been denied. I would need to possess

Tozzi's crux here is to feel driven by the mysterious forces coming from 'the well of the soul' without ever understanding them or their value. All one knows of oneself are one's actions, which however must be doubted, because their deep reasons are obscure. In order to find psychological stability, it would be necessary to know oneself deeply by hearing directly what the subconscious holds, and thus identify possibilities for evolving. This type of knowledge is by nature out of reach for humans. All there can be is a revelation that the abyss is there, without the possibility of seeing inside. Tozzi thus appears stuck at an impasse. On the one hand, it is necessary to open the way to manifestations of the psyche in order to access their transcendent knowledge. On the other, there is no real way of knowing what will come out of it: genuine religious mysticism and manifestations of psychosis come from the same area and look very similar to one another.

The story in which this religious view appears more clearly, 'Il crocifisso' ['The crucifix'] (1919), starts with a hallucinated meditation on an incomplete world: 'Ho pensato esista un mondo che Dio non ha finito di creare' (G: 251). This uncreated landscape is an infernal realm of viscous indifferentiation dominated by mud, lit by an eternal crepuscule where 'non c'è sole né luna', and populated by shapeless matter which 'non è morta e non è viva' (G: 251).[102] The half-hewed Adam who inhabits it is without a soul, deprived of the gift of consciousness that marks human completion. A reminiscence of the Bible lurks in the background: 'until you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken. For you are dust, and to dust you shall return' (*Gen* 3:19). With these words, in the book of Genesis, God decrees the condemnation of man. Thus a bridge is established between the yet unfinished Adam who inhabits that world 'nella parte più solitaria dell'infinito; […] quasi in gastigo' (G: 251),[103] and humankind after the Fall, equally deprived of perfection and excluded from the spiritual dimension where the soul belongs.

---

what, by my very nature, I never will possess. Can it be possible that only now these abysses are revealed to me? […] They appeared to me like a deficiency. I thought my soul could extend further'.

[102] 'I thought: a world of God's creation is left unfinished'; 'there is neither a sun nor a moon'; 'its matter is not alive, not dead' (LIV: 85).

[103] 'In the loneliest corner of infinity […], as if in exile' (LIV: 85).

However, it is said, 'vi sono paesaggi di una bellezza profonda, che sembrano avere in sé tutta quella bellezza che nel mondo nostro è nella nostra anima e negli esseri più delicati' (G: 251).[104] The mention of a *profound* beauty which on our plane is *the beauty of the soul* pinpoints a connection between this hallucination and the human condition in the real world, locating this dimension into the psyche. Thus there is a sense in which the most remote part of the universe can be intended as the margin of consciousness, where the blind, primordial half-life of irrational impulses and fears ('non può parlare né vedere, ma sente che attorno a lui il fango si move; e ne ha paura' (G: 251))[105] resides. Indeed, the metamorphic primeval clay is endowed with the characters of undifferentiation ('vegetazioni quasi tutte eguali tra sé'; 'sarebbe difficile distinguere i fiumi dal mare' (G: 251, 252)), coexistence of opposites ('non è morta e non è viva' (G: 251)), lack of distinction between inner and outer reality ('crede che le sue tenebre siano la luce; e quando il vento dei temporali passa sopra la sua pelle egli crede di camminare' (G: 252))[106] whose predominance characterises the deeper strata of the mind. It is as if Tozzi had drawn a picture of the 'basic matrix', 'the level at which symmetrization is so profound that all objects are interchangeable' (Carvalho 2010: 330). It is the deepest reachable stratum before the complete unconscious, whose presence is evoked by the black river 'così nero che anche la notte i nostri occhi lo vedrebbero di lontano' screened by an impassable barrier, 'un fogliame greve e fitto che sarebbe impossibile attraversarlo' (G: 252).[107]

This opening of the story could be read as an epiphany told in reverse, for, it is soon explained, this uncommon allegorical phantasy was aroused in the narrator's mind by a casual encounter with a girl from the street. As with Stephen Dedalus with his angel on the beach, the analogical link joining this abject creature to the 'soulless Adam' is not difficult to see. The wreck, ruin and dirt of that area of Rome continue seamlessly in her deformed

[104] 'These are, nonetheless, landscapes of profound beauty; landscapes that harbor what beauty there is in our souls and in the souls of each delicate creature of our world' (LIV: 85).
[105] 'He cannot talk or see, but he feels the mire around him moving, and it frightens him' (LIV: 85).
[106] 'The vegetation is all identical in this world'; 'it would be difficult to distinguish a river from a sea'; 'matter is not alive, not dead'; 'Adam […] thinks the opaqueness that surrounds him is light; and when the storm winds blow over his skin, he believes he is walking' (LIV: 85, 86).
[107] 'So black it can be seen from far away, even at night'; 'a foliage so thick and dense it is impossible to penetrate' (LIV: 86).

features, physically merging her with the surrounding desolation, while her eyes 'd'un colore lì per lì indefinibile; ma addirittura privi di ogni carattere umano o bestiale' pair the outer bleakness with an inner blindness: 'sembrava che dentro dovessero avere qualche cosa che non lasciava passare niente' (G: 253).[108] Her living below the dimension of consciousness is confirmed by the observation that 'passa le giornate dormendo, perché non si leva mai il sonno' (G: 254),[109] and the narrator's fear of talking to her seems caused precisely by the attraction that empathy implies toward deeper and less controllable mental areas: 'sentivo che per parlare a quella giovane dovevo assolutamente dimenticare non solo la mia coscienza, ma anche ogni cosa della mia memoria. Altrimenti sarebbe stato impossibile; anch'io mi sentivo abolire ogni vita; e dentro di me doventavo somigliantissimo a quel che avevo dinanzi agli occhi' (G: 253).[110] Communicating with her means, to some extent, also opening a channel with one's own unconscious and its troublesome content, with the risk of finding there her same desolation and recognising it as universally human. Another unexplained insight develops the implications of this feeling with regard to transcendence:

> Ma pure, durante quel silenzio, il sole mi dava una lucidità quasi inverosimile e rapida. Non importava più che ci fosse la cupola di San Pietro! Anch'essa pareva informe e senza nessuna possibilità che io potessi rivederla in altro modo: tetra anch'essa come le fette delle case aperte dinanzi a me. (G: 253)[111]

The shapeless fragility that the presence of the girl has made apparent in everything also invests the place devoted to a communication with the divine. The impression lays

[108] 'Their color, at that moment, was undeniable— though they were completely lacking any character, human or animal. There seemed to be something behind her eyes blocking anything from getting through' (LIV: 87). 'Undeniable' should rather be 'undefinable'.
[109] 'She spends her days sleeping because she is always tired' (LIV: 88).
[110] 'I felt that in order to speak to that young girl I would have to completely forget not only my conscience, but everything else in my memory too. Otherwise, it would be impossible. I, too, could sense myself, abolishing life and my inner self, and so becoming identical to the creature standing before me' (LIV: 87).
[111] 'Yet, in the silence, I drew an odd and sudden lucidity from the sun. I could see the dome of San Pietro, and it meant nothing to me! All of it seemed unformed. And there was no possibility of imagining it in some other way; the cathedral was gloomy, like the houses cleaved open before me' (LIV: 87).

bare its nature of entirely human construction, confined on this side of transcendence and affected by frailty and decay like human beings themselves.

The poor girl, in her very real physical abjectness and psychological desolation, becomes thus an embodied figure of Tozzi's creatural anthropology: a vision of humanity made equal in its physiological weakness and in its distance from the divine (Castellana 2014: 52). If, as Castellana proposes, creatural realism consists in the representation of human life in its elementary traits common to all beings, it is interesting to note that for Tozzi this area is not limited to the physiological, but includes the emotional dimension. The portrait of the girl moves from a naturalistic context of social underprivilege to bring to the foreground the craving of warmth that has become her sole focus: 'desidera, adesso, che l'avvicinino solo per essere sicura che può far piacere; e quando qualche giornata nessuno la chiama, è triste e livida' (G: 254).[112] The fact that the desire for contact appears so powerful in this creature stripped down to the most basic survival instincts brings into evidence its belonging to the baseline of human needs. It would be hard to imagine a less spiritual creature to drive the onlooker's mind to the divine, yet it is precisely this desperate humility of the girl, who condenses in herself the greatest abjection and the greatest creatural innocence, that makes the finale as suggestive as, on the whole, profoundly enigmatic.

The narrator encounters her again in a different area of Rome and in a completely opposite atmosphere. She is asleep on a heap of rubbish and debris, her continuity with inert matter and sub-human life reinstated by the similarity between the reflections in her hair and the wings of the flies on it. The impression aroused by the surrounding landscape, however, is very different. Where in the opening vision all was dark and half-kneaded with the same soggy clay, here everything is shining, sharp, defined. Wood and iron gates have points, clay is shaped into bricks, 'i marmi splendono; e dove sono spezzati la loro grana è fatta di punte come il vetro', even a lizard and the sky above the Coliseum seem to be carved in shiny stone. Rain did not dissolve vegetation into a muddied indistinction, but

[112] 'By now, she craves their attention, if only to be sure that someone can like her. And she is sad, her feelings hurt, on the days no one comes by for her' (LIV: 89).

conversely purified it and enhanced its qualities: 'le rose da cui l'acqua riesce sgocciolando odorano come quando si sdrusciano fra le mani' (G: 255).[113] In this opposite context, which suggests greater control over the symmetrical domain, the narrator resolves to reach out to her if she wakes up. He is, however, inhibited by a different type of resistance, a concern with social judgement; whether or not that feeling is the cause, he ends up escaping again, this time into his thoughts.

> E siccome vi sono momenti che […] i nostri pensieri ci sembrano di una bellezza miracolosa, a me non è più possibile pensare alla ragazza; e i miei occhi si ritraggono subito da lei; come per istinto. Così a poco a poco, pure restando dove sono, me ne dimentico completamente.
> La luce soffoca; e la polvere si alza attorno al Colosseo, per quasi tutta la sua altezza; e pare che resti sollevata. Una collina con un convento in cima, si rinchiude dentro i suoi alberi e i suoi cipressi. […] La terra si finisce d'asciugare; tutta lavata, pulita, doventata pura come l'aria.
> Io l'amo, allora, la terra: e mi pare che, se io parlassi, la mia voce avrebbe la sua dolcezza. Io sento perché il sole ci illumina e perché gli alberi sono così belli con le loro foglie. […]
> Ma al muro della chiesa, il caldo fa schiantare il legno di un crocefisso, come se volesse schiodargli le gambe e le braccia. E la giovine si desta, come da dentro il mucchio della spazzatura. (G: 256)[114]

The epiphanic potential of the crucifix cracking has been widely recognised. Enough narrative elements – its position as the story's conclusion, its sudden shock of surprise, the religious symbol involved – concur in conferring on it a suggestion of significance. Unfolding it in a linear interpretation, however, is a wholly different matter. It can be read as an enactment of resurrection: the rain has a baptismal value, after which the crack of the crucifix (evoking the sacrifice of Christ) awakens the girl from her soulless slumber (Paghi 1988; Luperini 1995: 215). However, this positive reading is called into question by the

[113] 'The marble is resplendent and sharp as glass at the broken edges'; the roses dripping with water smell like they do when you take them in your hands and crush them' (LIV: 89).
[114] 'And because there are moments in which […] all your thoughts seem to have miraculous beauty, I cannot think about the girl any longer. I avert my eyes quickly, almost instinctively, from her image. Standing where I am, I forget about her gradually, completely. The light dies, and dust rises around the Coliseum, almost to the top, and seems to hover there, uplifted. A hill with a convent at top hides behind the trees—it has its own cypresses. […] The earth finishes drying out, washed, all clean now, become as pure as the air. I love her, then, the earth. And it seems that if I were to speak, my voice would possess her sweetness. I understand why the sun illuminates her and why the trees are so beautiful with their leaves. […] Yet, by the church wall, the heat burns over the wooden crucifix, as if wanting to pull the nails from His feet and wrists. And the young girl awakens, as if rising from that pile of waste' (LIV: 90).

adversative preposition, which introduces the event in opposition to the narrator's impression of natural harmony. Dispelling his illusion of reconciliation and meaning, which is possible only as he forgets the girl, the cracking crucifix is a reminder that Christ the man suffered too, and therefore that the girl's forlornness is consubstantial to being human (Castellana 2014: 69-70).[115] In sum, is the girl's awakening a positive event, coherent with the feeling of purification after the rain, or is it a reminder that, escapist fantasies aside, the heap of rubbish is still there? The text supports both readings. In this enigmatic quality Baldacci recognises a familiar scheme: 'lo schianto di legno della croce viene ad assumere la stessa funzione di clausola poetica che nelle prose d'arte di *Bestie* era affidata all'apparizione dell'animale' (1993: 133).[116] This is intriguing, considering that conclusions in *Bestie* have been read as empty allegories rather than epiphanies. Is thus the ending of 'Il crocifisso' epiphanic or allegorical? If Luperini's presentation of epiphany and allegory as alternative options be taken at face value (2017: 20-21), this dilemma implies reading the story as establishing a meaning or its absence. However, there is also a ground on which epiphany and allegory are not alternative to each other.

It is useful to recall here the reflection that Walter Benjamin noted in *The Origin of German Baroque Drama*, where ambiguity and enigma are presented as foundational aspects of allegory, which 'significantly gives rise […] to the enigmatic question of the nature of human existence as such' (Benjamin 1977: 166). This is because allegorical images, unlike symbols, are not thought to be continuous with the essence they express, but to highlight, conversely, the gap between the signifier and a meaning which will always be at once removed from it: 'in the context of allegory the image is only a signature, only the monogram of essence, not the essence itself in a mask' (Benjamin 1977: 214). As the figure was elaborated in an age of faith, the distance between the signifier and the signified is time itself, which is the condition that makes any image taken from the mortal world substantially different from its eternal divine referent. It is indeed precisely sufferance and death, the character of earthly life as opposed to the afterlife, that render the meaning of life

[115] These and other ambiguities are also summed up in Luperini 2003: 119-20.
[116] 'The wooden crack of the crucifix comes to fulfil the same function of poetic close that in the prose poems of *Bestie* was entrusted to the appearance of the animal'.

irreparably mysterious. Thus, 'whereas in the symbol […] the transfigured face of nature is fleetingly revealed in the light of redemption, in allegory the observer is confronted with […] everything about history that, from the very beginning, has been untimely, sorrowful, unsuccessful' (Benjamin 1977: 166). This form of signification is obviously congenial to a creatural conception of life, which dominated in Benjamin's Baroque age as much as in the late-medieval sources that inspired Tozzi. What links the two is the unbridgeable distance between the creature and the Creator, sealed by the Fall: 'the allegorical significant is prevented by guilt from finding fulfilment of its meaning in itself. […] This view, rooted in the doctrine of the fall of the creature, which brought down nature with it, is responsible for the ferment which distinguishes the profundity of western allegory' (Benjamin 1977: 224). The fact that reality is unable to fulfil its promise of meaning renders allegories not just enigmatic, but profoundly ambiguous. Observing that anything in the mortal world can be taken to mean anything else, Benjamin observes, devalues the mortal world as a realm where individual details are not important. Yet precisely through their continuous allusion to something beyond them, those details can be elevated to a higher plane of the divine. 'In allegorical terms, then, the profane world is both elevated and devalued' (Benjamin 1977: 175).

Here we come full circle to 'Il crocifisso' and the ambivalence of the poor girl's signification. Since her analogical overlap with the 'half-created Adam', her miserable condition has pointed beyond its realistic value, making her an emblem of creatural humanity. Accordingly, she is also the ground on which complete abasement and sacred value coincide. Perhaps it is precisely Benjamin's complex reversal of his argument towards the end of his book that can enable us to understand Tozzi's idea of salvation. After insisting, throughout his study, on how allegories constantly allude to death and decay as their ultimate meaning, Benjamin, so to speak, turns allegory against itself: 'for it is precisely visions of the frenzy of destruction […] which reveal the limit set upon allegorical contemplation […]. In it transitoriness is not signified or allegorically represented, so much as, in its own significance, displayed as allegory. As the allegory of resurrection' (Benjamin 1977: 232). According to this conception, it is possible to claim that the girl's awakening

interrupts the narrator's perception of the meaning of everything ('sento perché il sole ci illumina e perché gli alberi sono così belli' (G: 256))[117] with a reminder of the reality she embodies, suggesting that the only true ground of communion with creation is the one that she experiences: the communion of mortality and decay. At the same time, this is the profoundest confirmation of the narrator's sense of rebirth, because, in a Christian allegorical conception, redemption must come through abasement, which points beyond itself to its reconciled divine opposite. Thus, the impression that the value of this cracking crucifix seems to be rooted in a primitive mystical phantasy (Luperini 1995: 215) can be confirmed. The symmetrical logic of mysticism is indeed the ground on which contradictions are composed and theological truth is apprehended. It is on this ground that humans' utter dejection and certainty of salvation can be understood as one and the same, and the conclusion of 'Il crocifisso' can unfold all its epiphanic power.

Clearly, this reading of allegory as significant is only possible by leap of faith. It requires restoring a certainty in the divine that in Tozzi's time is no longer obvious. Tozzi's religious inspiration thus endows his epiphanies with a positive nuance that remains always only potential and open to doubt. This, however, does not diminish their importance, which is linked precisely to a disclosure of potentiality. The girl's awakening can be a sign of redemption or an absolutely meaningless event. Certitude is not a requirement for mystical consciousness to bear its fruit: as we saw, 'it must always remain an open question whether mystical states may not possibly be such superior points of view […]. They offer us *hypotheses*', stated W. James (2012: 326).[118] From Tozzi's undogmatic perspective, these hypotheses hold a greater interest than suspicious asserted truths.

[117] 'I understand why the sun illuminates [us] and why the trees are so beautiful with their leaves' (LIV: 90).
[118] 'Deve sempre rimanere una questione aperta quella di sapere se gli stati mistici siano forze di tali punti di vista superiori […]. Essi ci forniscono delle *ipotesi*' (1945: 369-70).

3.3 Conclusion

The aphorism 'La adolescenza' ends by linking that state of mind with a continuous effort to transcend oneself:

> Bisogna buttar giù dentro di noi i veli successivi, che si producono quasi istantaneamente sopra ogni nuova estensione di orizzonte. Bisogna sentirsi quasi affaticati, sforzarsi come un gallo che voglia volare più in alto di quanto si alzano le sue ali. […] È vero che alcune profondità vi si rivelano all'improvviso; e voi dovete sorpassarle. Ma non bisogna esserne indifferenti. (O: 743-744)[119]

The veil here is not a fixed barrier between the self and its beyond, but a limit that shifts as the self manages to conquer new areas of understanding. What makes the effort, pain and frustration of this attempt worthwhile is not, however, a pacifying experience of communion with the divine, but a differently rewarding achievement: the realm of possibility, where alternatives to the present state of things are evoked. As already seen in 'Marito e Moglie' with the maternity scene, the perception of the divine breaks escapist illusions and puts characters at a crossroad, imposing a choice on them. This is also true in 'Il crocifisso' with regard to the narrator. The crack interrupts his self-absorbed illumination, and by waking the girl, forces him to face his intentions: will he speak to her this time?

In his astute article on Pirandello, Tozzi had observed that his friend's implacable logic pictured a world 'senza quegli sfondi di concezione mistica che potrebbe consolare; o senza quelle coincidenze di realtà che potrebbe cambiare le loro condizioni'; and he would have considered this a defect if it hadn't served to intensify the emotional quality of Pirandello's prose ('Luigi Pirandello', 1919, O: 1319).[120] This is interesting considering that, more radically than Pirandello, Tozzi portrays his human beings with animalistic qualities,

[119] 'We must pull down in ourselves the subsequent veils that are produced almost immediately over every new expanse of horizon. We must feel almost tired, make an effort like a rooster who wants to fly higher than his wings allow. […] It is true that some depths are revealed suddenly; and you must surpass them. But we must not remain indifferent to them'.
[120] 'Without those backgrounds of a mystical conception that could bring consolation; or without those coincidences in reality which could change their conditions'.

as suffering creatures governed by instinct and habit. He intended habit as described in his 'bible', W. James' *Principles of Psychology*: an inhibiting mechanism causing a stereotypical interiority and a tendency to repeat one's past self, which provides stability at the price of obstructing the spontaneity of feelings (Martini 1999: 146-149). Where willpower is weak and feelings hurt – which appears to be the norm for Tozzi's humans – habit becomes the rule, establishing a lack of authenticity that limits their entire life. Epiphanies in Tozzi are moments that interrupt this state of habitual inauthenticity: with their 'background of mystical conception' they manifest the characters' possibility to remake contact with the part of themselves that is usually etherised, and thus perceive their full potential.

> Io voglio parlare di quelle concentrazioni inaspettate, che accumulano ad un tratto tutte le nostre energie sotto il riflesso di un fine che è mostrato solo inconsciamente. Allora si capisce quanto ordinamento sia nelle disposizioni; si possono prevedere le conseguenze di ciò che adesso si è presentato, come se si trattasse della parte posteriore di una cosa già nota altre volte. Ci sentiamo famigliari con i progetti più arrischiati; e desideriamo questo stato d'animo per lungo tempo.
> Infatti, esso non diviene mai sazievole; perché è la manifestazione di ciò che potremmo fare. ('Esaltazione', O: 760)[121]

This last aphorism, which is probably the closest Tozzi gets to the depiction of a positive epiphany, describes the pleasure of a state of 'flow', when, after a period of striving toward an end, all the faculties of the mind seem to work in unison granting a superior awareness of circumstances and their possible developments. This condition is analogous with what W. James calls a wide field of semi-consciousness, when 'we […] see masses of truth together, and often get glimpses of relations which we divine rather than see, for they shoot beyond the field into still remoter regions of objectivity, regions which we seem rather to be about to perceive than to perceive actually' (James 2012: 181).[122] It is an expansive

[121] 'I want to talk about those unexpected concentrations, which suddenly accumulate all our energies under the reflection of an end that is only unconsciously shown. We then understand how much order is in dispositions; we can foresee the consequences of what has just occurred, as if it was all about the backside of something we have known other times. We feel familiar with the riskiest projects; and we desire this mindset to last a long time. Indeed, we never have enough of it; because it is the manifestation of what we could do'.

[122] 'abbracciamo di un colpo vaste masse di verità, e spesso cogliamo fugacemente relazioni che indoviniamo piuttosto che vederle, perché esse si estendono al di là del campo della coscienza in regioni di obbiettività ancora più remote, regioni che ci sembra piuttosto di essere sul punto di percepire, anziché percepirle realmente' (1945: 203).

feeling that recurs in epiphanic moments, and is indeed familiar to other authors; it will suffice to recall Joyce's fascination for the theosophical 'vastation of spirit', and, further on, Mansfield's desire to 'get a glimpse of the relation between things'. The possibility of 'seeing masses of truth together' which point toward 'remoter regions' appears again as a result of approaching deeper strata of symmetry, with their increasing awareness of similarity and connection. Tozzi's interest in mystical moments is indeed oriented to opening this region, which is, in Matte Blanco's terms, an opportunity to restore a healthy communication between emotion as a source of creativity and conscious thought.

How these experiences translate into fiction is related to the logic behind the choice of words. Cavalli emphasised how Tozzi took inspiration from mystical language to create a 'sintassi del possibile', where ordinary words placed out of their usual context lose their obviousness and reveal new potential significance (2004: 43-44). 'Come leggo io' warned indeed against using words 'con una psicologia approssimativa': 'tutte le parole sono belle […] se adoprate proprio nel momento propizio; come se fossero corde stonate o intonate' (O: 1326).[123] Having seen the kind of 'music' with which Tozzi aimed to be in tune, some observations on how different strata of consciousness can be linguistically expressed appear relevant here. According to Bomford, factual statements involve the most superficial and unemotional stratum of the mind. Similes, where unrelated elements are emotionally associated while still remaining separate, require a second level. The third stratum is the plane on which we understand metaphor, a fully bi-logical structure affirming the emotional identity of things factually distinct. Paradox and contradiction, instead, belong to the fourth stratum, where emotion is so intense that things can be expressed through their opposite: 'the "wolf- man" of the fourth stratum is also a "sheep-man", so to speak. The wolf-man's total aggression is conjoined with total submissiveness"'. On the fifth level these contrasts balance each other out to the point of being resolved, which could only be expressed by a serene silence (2010: 361-362). A preference for intensely emotional figures is conspicuous in Tozzi's language, where the

[123] 'With an approximate psychology'; 'all words are beautiful […] if they are used exactly in a propitious moment; as if they were out-of-tune or well-tuned strings'.

level of contradiction is a particular favourite (Mengaldo 2003). If we accept the proposal to read Tozzi's prose as a compromise formation which models the logic of discourse on the logic of the unconscious (Luperini 1994: 59), Bomford's correlation helps us see how, on a textual level, Tozzi's epiphanies try to work as bridges toward the deepest psyche.

Supported by W. James' claim that 'if you have intuitions at all, they come from a deeper level of your nature than the loquacious level which rationalism inhabits' (2012: 63),[124] his method seems an application of Bergson's principle of intuition, which was precisely supposed to lead consciousness to perceive its origin:

> beaucoup d'images diverses, empruntées à des ordres de choses très différents, pourront, par la convergence de leur action, diriger la conscience sur le point précis où il y a une certaine intuition à saisir. [...] En faisant qu'elles exigent toutes de notre esprit, malgré leurs différences d'aspect, la même espèce d'attention et, en quelque sorte, le même degré de tension, on accoutumera peu à peu la conscience à une disposition toute particulière […] qu'elle devra adopter pour s'apparaître à elle-même sans voile. Mais [...] on ne lui aura rien montré. On l'aura simplement placée dans l'attitude qu'elle doit prendre pour faire l'effort voulu et arriver d'elle-même à l'intuition. (Bergson 1903: 7)[125]

Where Pirandello followed this path with the aim of losing consciousness in the flow of experience, Tozzi uses intuition to push consciousness as far as it can go without losing itself. The principle of juxtaposition that informs Bergson's intuitive method suggests something very different from the epiphanies of translucence we have seen so far. It does not imply seeing a part of reality as a symbol of something beyond it ('we won't have showed anything'), but using different images together, none of which means anything specific by itself, to place consciousness in a state where it can see its depth. This is precisely the mindset that Taylor finds typical of modernism, and which determines its characteristic

[124] 'Solo che voi possediate affatto tali intuizioni, sentite che esse sorgono da elementi della vostra natura assai più profondi di quelli che stanno al livello più loquace e dove domina il raziocinio' (James 1945: 63).
[125] 'many different images, taken from quite different orders of things, will be able, through the convergence of their action, to direct the consciousness to the precise point where there is a certain intuition to seize on. […] By seeing that in spite of their differences in aspect they all demand of our mind the same kind of attention and, as it were, the same degree of tension, one will gradually accustom the consciousness to a particular and definitely determined disposition […] it will have to adopt in order to appear unveiled to itself. But even then […] we shall have shown it nothing. We shall simply have placed it in the attitude it must take to produce the desired effort and, by itself, to arrive at the intuition' (2007: 178).

moment of insight: the framing epiphany, or 'epiphany of interspaces', where nothing is subjectively expressed, but thoughts, fragments and images are juxtaposed in a pattern that points beyond them, to something for which we have no words (Taylor 1989: 473). This scheme is recognisable in Tozzi's descriptions, with their accumulation of correlatives, but also in the multiple, equally likely, but contrasting options that his allegorical epiphanies offer to interpretation.

Insofar as it only indirectly points toward a meaning, this type of epiphany is especially congenial to Tozzi's mature poetics, which recognises the impossibility of attaining subconscious content directly but tries to make it emerge by establishing a suitable pattern. As Palumbo acutely observes:

> L'esterno non è più ora come una corteccia perforata, dalle cui incisioni solo può lampeggiare il senso dell'esistente. Esso, al contrario, deve essere perfettamente analizzato, rappresentato col massimo rigore, nel suo specifico ritmo, perché il fondo impronunciabile dell'esperienza [...] possa ancora manifestarsi. Il registro impersonale è la premessa di questo effetto; il mostrarsi del Mistero è il risvolto del silenzio dell'io. (1982: 59)[126]

Tozzi's step towards realism is thus not only compatible with an epiphanic conception of art, but necessary, even. In the mindset of his maturity, objects no longer express anything by themselves, but through their place in a constellation; and 'when the object serves to frame an epiphanic space, it must stand out distinctly, in its full opacity: the more defined the frame, the more distinct the message' (Taylor 1989: 477). This seems to become somewhat clear for him as, following his eye illness in 1904, he not only abandoned D'Annunzio's pantheistic spirituality for Catholic mysticism, but also cast aside his self-referential psychologism in favour of a renewed attention to the outer world: 'sono stato un anno troppo lontano dalla vita. [...] Conviene che studi come prima, cioè torni a vedere

[126] 'External reality is no longer like a pierced bark, from whose incisions only the sense of existing things can flash. On the contrary, it must be perfectly analysed, represented with the utmost rigour, in its specific rhythm, so that the unpronounceable bottom of experience […] can still manifest itself. The impersonal register is the precondition of that effect; the showing forth of Mystery is a consequence of the silence of the self'.

ciò che mi è intorno' (22 marzo 1907, Nov: 101).[127] Tozzi thus participates in the epochal shift from idealism to phenomenology which is the philosophical face of the transition from Romanticism to Modernism in aesthetic taste. It is important, in this sense, that Joyce's *Portrait* conveyed a similar message, although conversion there worked in reverse: Stephen rejects religious asceticism to make contact with the profane world again. The imperative of artistic truthfulness of life led towards lived experience, producing a modernist 'perspective realism' based on the representation of phenomena as they are perceived by an observer, with the utmost precision but without the attempt to compose them into a unifying meaning.

This is, with a paradox that calls to mind Benjamin's allegorical conception, precisely the way they become significant. 'Proprio questa precisione esasperata è […] la maniera seguita da Tozzi per fondere in un unico stampo coppie di contrari, tradizionalmente antinomici, come oggettività-soggettività, mistero-evidenza, immaginazione-realtà' (Palumbo 1982: 67).[128] No attempt is made to reconcile these oppositions. As Petroni observes, this is substantially connected to Tozzi's mystical temperament: 'il mistico non pone argini alla realtà […] perché essa *è*, e in questa constatazione si risolve ogni spiegazione possible. […] Nella sua unità possono coesistere le opposizioni, senza che vi sia bisogno di una loro risoluzione "dialettica"' (1984: 20-21).[129] In terms of unconscious logic, it is precisely the juxtaposition of incompatible readings and possibilities which should allow the fundamental unity of reality underneath all apparent contrasts to emerge. The 'message' itself cannot be articulated, as Tozzi strives to capture precisely the unsayable; what can be clearly seen is the pattern in things that points the observer toward it, and this is what the writer needs to establish in order to convey to the reader the

[127] 'For a year I have been too far from life. It is better for me to study as before, which means going back to seeing what is around me'.
[128] 'This exasperate precision is the very manner chosen by Tozzi to fuse in a single mould opposite pairings, traditionally contradictory, like objectivity-subjectivity, mystery-evidence, imagination-reality'.
[129] 'The mystic does not impose boundaries on reality […] because reality *is*, and in this verification any possible explanation is resolved. […] In its unity oppositions can coexist , without any need for a "dialectical" resolution'.

possibility of insight. This is also the ground on which his penchant for allegory, with its consubstantial antinomies, can be understood.

Tozzi's epiphanies, like Joyce, Pirandello, and Mansfield, as it will be seen, are substantially ambiguous, both in their being epiphanies at all, and in their narrative effects. This is due partly to their structure. In the vast majority of cases they are not symbolical but allegorical, according to Benjamin's distinction: their attribution of significance is personal, arbitrary, and unstable, because they are referred to a condition of distance from Meaning and from the divine that is intrinsic in the creatural conception of modernity. Ambiguity is also due to their psychological nature, whereby they attempt to bring the conscious mind to the edge of its possibility of understanding. Bergson's intuitionism and W. James' idea of mysticism as a doorway to the subconscious provided the philosophical background to this effort. As a consequence, Tozzi's epiphanies generate a constant tension in relation to meaning, continuously frustrated but continuously renewed. His mature stories collected in *Giovani* give countless examples of this struggle in the occasional moments, textually endowed with a particular intensity, in which something important is felt to happen between the folds of a doomed, meaningless life. What they never show, not even when mystical traits become more prominent, is the reconciliation of these contrasts into pacified unity, as was the main charm of mysticism according to W. James. Arguably, in Tozzi's view this option is unavailable in life. 'What we can look for, and what the best art can give us, are hints and intimations of full "redemption", in addition to a keenly critical eye for the shortcomings of the present reality' (Taylor 1989: 478). Tozzi's epiphanies can offer both, portraying human abjectness and shortcomings on the one hand, capturing the openings of their 'possibilities' on the other. After all, as W. James would say, 'the *chance* of salvation is enough. No fact in human nature is more characteristic than its willingness to live on a chance' (2012: 398).[130]

[130] 'La probabilità di salvezza basta. Nessun fatto nella natura umana è più caratteristico che la sua volenterosità di vivere correndo un'alea' (1945: 457).

4. 'The possibility of something quite other': Katherine Mansfield

> I began by telling him how dissatisfied I was with the idea that Life must be a lesser thing than we are capable of 'imagining' it to be. I had the feeling that the same thing happened to nearly everybody whom I knew and whom I did not know. […] sooner or later, in literature at any rate, there sounded an undertone of deep regret. […] 'This is not what I want. If this is all then Life is not worth living'. But I know it is not all. How does one know that? Let me take the case of K.M. She has led, ever since she can remember, a very typically false life. Yet, through it all, there have been moments, instants, gleams, when she has felt the possibility of something quite other. (D: 436, 14 October 1922)

One of the aspects of the modernist sensibility that Mansfield's reviews, letters and notebooks most clearly bring out is the extent to which literature and life are inextricably linked: literature's matter is life, and life is constantly interpreted as literature. Epiphanies are, accordingly, as much a part of her art as of her lived life, as this diary note remembering a meeting with her friend A.R. Orage indicates. The note is self-contained: the final 'something quite other' that exceptional moments seem to her to promise remains undefined. In that, it is interestingly reminiscent of a riddle Mansfield had posed to readers of the *Athenaeum* in 1920, in which she presented the essence of the short story as 'a special quality – a something' impossible to explain (Mansfield 1930: 211). This consonance is more than incidental, and illuminates two important aspects of her art. First, Mansfield's short story is conceived to have mystery at its centre. Second, the mystery in fiction is endowed with the same ineffability as the mysterious 'something' in life.

In 1919, while she was translating the correspondence of her inspirational Anton Chekhov, Mansfield wrote to Woolf: 'Tchekhov has a very interesting letter published in next week's *A*[*thenaeum*]. What the writer does is not so much to solve the question but to put the question. There must be the question put. That seems to me a very nice dividing line between the true and the false writer' (CLKM 2: 320, to Virginia Woolf, 27 May 1919). Chekhov's letter stated indeed that the writer cannot give philosophical or moral answers: he needs to connect his elements with a question in mind, and then present them to the 'jurors', the public (PCW: 209). That is why his fiction, inaugurating a successful path of

non-interpretation whose legacy is also visible in Tozzi, relates incidents that seem to suggest a meaning and leave it entirely to the reader to decide what this may be. Mansfield found this respect for the complexity of life fully attuned with her artistic programme. As Daiches notes, in her fiction too 'it is the actual form of the story which gives symbolic (universal) value to the incidents' (1993: 172), and not an a-priori idea that shapes a plot. Similarly to Joyce, a truth comes for her directly embodied in a specific form: the aim of the writer is to cultivate a special sensibility, 'an ability to see as symbols objects which to others are not symbols at all or are symbols of more obvious things' (1993: 170)), and by the appropriate technique enable the readers to share her vision. In this way, art can hope to grasp some truth through the artist's capacity to perceive events as symbols – therefore, to receive epiphanies.

Julia van Gunsteren associated Mansfield's moments of vision with the Hegelian 'moment of truth' granting 'the intuition of harmony within dissonance' (1990: 81). Mansfield had indeed read Hegel during her studies at Queen's College, London, in 1907, and a Romantic heritage of thought, revisited through Bergsonian notions, is apparent in the manifesto 'The Meaning of Rhythm', which she composed with John Middleton Murry in 1911: 'reality in the work of art demands true intuition in the artist. It demands that the artist shall have seen the ultimate through the externals; it is an inevitable and infallible directness of vision' (PCW: 731). The cultural root of Mansfield's epiphanies, however, is more complex than just Hegel. In the English intellectual milieu she followed in real time the debate on empirical psychology, vitalist philosophy and psychoanalysis, and combined all these stimuli in personal ways, so that Romantic visions represent only one of the possible inspirations for her special moments. In addition, her 'directness of vision' implies that, like in Tozzi and Joyce, her reader must be enabled to share the sense of importance attached to these objects, but not necessarily the author's interpretation. Often their meaning is ambiguous, so it is possible to see that in her case, too, 'the significant moment […] is an opening out of possibilities rather than a narrowing down, or a particular revelation' (Head 1992: 137).

In fact, Mansfield's poetics of insights, combined with her policy of articulating questions, rather than answers, and giving form to an intuition, rather than to the ensuing deduction, often confronts readers with a symbolism that supports conflictual readings. This leads to the same questions posed by Tozzi and Joyce: what becomes of the 'moment of truth' if the text systematically undermines all clear understanding? Things are further complicated, in this case, by Mansfield's tendency towards impersonation and humour. Since her early infatuation with Wilde, Mansfield had come to the conviction (now strikingly reminiscent of Pirandello) that everyone, including herself, could not help but play a role, and her humour thrived on laying bare these personal constructions. So, when narrative situations are filtered by characters who are admittedly poseurs, what value can be ascribed to the illuminations they claim to receive? In her mature fiction, Mansfield's humour does not aim solely at exposing the characters: it is a 'satire modified by pathos and compassion' (Wheeler 1994: 122) which, as seen in Pirandello, can become a heuristic tool. As Paul De Man put it, irony as an act of *dédoublement* 'divides the flow of temporal experience into a past that is pure mystification and a future that remains harassed forever by a relapse within the inauthentic' (De Man 1983: 222). The definition applies perfectly to Mansfield's moments of insight, not only because they show 'in an ironic, heartbroken and intense way the clash of the character's consciousness with the exterior world' (Correia 2015: 25), but also because, as will be seen, they do not grant characters any stable achievement, whether epistemological, psychological, relational or otherwise. They are moments of crisis, possibility, contemplation, but the narrative frame openly casts doubt on their effect: like the story itself, they are there to pose a question.

The fact that these moments are contrasted with a disappointing 'false life' suggests Mansfield's closeness to an existential sensitivity, whose main trait is the tendency 'to regard everyday human life as something of a sham, as a distortion of a more distressing underlying truth. This truth, once exposed, can serve as a springboard for personal liberation, however, and that makes confronting it worthwhile' (Blattner 2006:4). A substantial vein of pessimism was intrinsic to Mansfield's worldview; yet, as her reported conversation with Orage makes clear, she found the *possibility* special moments adumbrate

so important as to make life worth living. Mansfield herself did not seem interested in clarifying what she meant by that vague 'possibility of something quite other', possibly because, like Pirandello and Tozzi, she saw precisely that undefined potentiality as its main gift. Three different but related senses in which Mansfield conceived these moments will be explored here: their narrative function as 'central points of significance'; their psychological value as 'moments of direct feeling'; and their ecstatic fascination as 'moments of suspension'. Although other nuances could be found, these aspects resonate specifically with the faces of epiphany that have emerged so far, and can effectively illuminate Mansfield's participation in and specific contribution to the aesthetics of her age.

4.1 Central Points of Significance

As Mansfield became passionate about Chekhov's slice-of-life technique, she also remained well aware of the structural necessities of her genre. Thus she would write in a 1919 review:

> If we are not to look for facts and events in a novel – and why should we? – we must be very sure of finding these central points of significance transferred to the endeavours and emotions of the human beings portrayed. […] There must be given the crisis when the great final attempt is made which succeeds – or does not succeed. Who shall say? The crisis, then, is the chief of our 'central points of significance' and the endeavours and the emotions are stages on our journey towards or away from it. […] Without it, how are we to appreciate the importance of one 'spiritual event' rather than another? What is to prevent each being unrelated – complete in itself – if the gradual unfolding in growing, gaining light is not to be followed by one blazing moment? (PCW: 399)

This passage has important implications for Mansfield's art in particular and modernist narrative in general. Defending the structural precept of a climactic moment in an inward-turned fiction that shifts its focus from facts to spiritual events makes epiphanies perfect candidates to fill this narratological position. Indeed, 'the complex moment in Mansfield often has important structural implications, especially in relation to peripeteia or reversal' (Head 1992: 111). The passage above refers to a novel, but the idea of a

significant moment as an organising principle is even more relevant to the limited scope of the short story: 'there seems to be a moment when all is to be discovered. Yes, that is the feeling' (3 May 1922, D: 419).

Mansfield was indeed a major innovator of the genre through her mastery of what Godenne calls *nouvelle-instant*: a piece characterised by specificity and concentration, focused on a single, particularly significant moment in a life, typically an emblematic snapshot of the individual's existence or a unique instance of private drama (1989: 107-116). In both variants, epiphanies are not necessary, but possible: the first type can manifest to the reader the true nature of the character's life, the second can stage an epiphany experienced by the character herself. This second case is often marked by textual signs. Godenne notes, indeed, that in dramatic moments Mansfield often 'resorts to identical words, as if only these were possible': expressions of intense happiness ('for the first time in her/his life'), infinite distress ('it was too much') and hints at change ('was it too late?') (1989: 109). This evokes an interesting parallel with Pirandello, who, from story to story, was also compulsively drawn to repeating the same expressions in epiphanic moments. He was employing a selection of poetic words inspired by Leopardi's poetics of indefiniteness, evoking infinity through vague terms which suggest the absence of boundaries. However, while Pirandello's phrases are attached to lyrical tropes of contemplation focusing on aspects of the landscape or lyrical moods, Mansfield's recurring epiphanic vocabulary is rather concerned with psychological events – chiefly, Godenne notes, states of heightened emotion – thus signalling a focus on inner life that does not declare its literary lineage. This language of intensity and change presents emotional processes and lyrical suspensions as turning points in the plot, suggesting to the reader that something crucial is happening even if nothing is taking place on the plane of events. Other structuring devices, however, complicate this climactic impression. Head noted that, as happens with Joyce, some of Mansfield's stories 'derive their effect from a dissonance between a notional story structure of reversal or progression, and a delimited narrative perspective which indicates confusion or stasis' (1992: 113). Indeed, the central point may be linguistically marked as special and life-changing, but at the same time it may be presented through a focalisation on the

character that makes its effect ambiguous: the character's excitement can lead them to regard everything as shocking and replete with meaning, or, conversely, they can miss the opportunity for change due to a subconscious fear of the consequences.

This dynamics appears evident in 'Je ne parle pas français' (1918), whose prologue recounts an epiphanic emotional experience in the form of artistic inspiration at the same time as its structure complicates this value by rendering 'the entire narrative […] problematic and unreliable' (Head 1992: 116). Unlike an overwhelming majority written in a focalised third person voice, this story breaks the silence with the resounding 'I' of a narrator. The reader's encounter with him, however, is delayed by a long nesting structure of preambles that mimic the meanderings of oral storytelling. Mansfield thus complements the story's humoristic tone with a similarly humoristic structure built on reversal, digression and delay of the narrative core. This choice is no mere virtuosity, but says a great deal about the narrator as a character. Long before introducing himself, indeed, he tries to come across as a cynical, well-travelled artist, who scrutinises people as a customs official examines portmanteaux: 'and the moment of hesitation as to whether I am going to be fooled […], and then the other moment of hesitation just after, as to whether I have been, are perhaps the most thrilling instants in life' (CS: 67). This image closely resembles a 1911 story where Pirandello fictionalises himself as receiving candidate characters in his study: 'Io ascolto tutti con sopportazione; […] tengo conto de' loro sentimenti e delle loro aspirazioni. […] Ma esser gabbato non mi piace. E voglio penetrare in fondo al loro animo con lunga e sottile indagine' ('La tragedia di un personaggio', TN II: 624).[1] In contrast to Pirandello, Mansfield's Raoul Duquette presumes to be able to apply this procedure to real people and offers us a taste of his observational skills by minutely describing his surroundings. Yet, he then surprisingly dismisses the café, its owners and its customers as banal, flat, uninteresting: 'no portmanteaux to be examined' (CS: 61). This meticulous evocation of banality seems therefore guided not by genuine interest, but by the desire to

[1] 'Patiently I listen to all of them […]; I keep a record of their feelings and aspirations. […] But I don't like being fooled. Also, I always want to penetrate to the depths of their souls by long and exhaustive research (1939: 7).

create an underground atmosphere as a contrasting background for his extraordinary experience.

Dunbar (1997) claims that Duquette is Mansfield's humoristic reversal of the myth of the romantic artist. In effect, his story of artistic inspiration follows so scrupulously the script of a story of artistic inspiration that we could be tempted not to take it seriously, if sudden deviations and digressions did not humorously scale down its literary aura. At first, we have an apparent increase in his self-awareness:

> Suddenly I realized that quite apart from myself, I was smiling. Slowly I raised my head and saw myself in the mirror opposite. Yes, there I sat, leaning on the table, smiling my deep, sly smile, the glass of coffee with its vague plume of steam before me and beside it the ring of white saucer with two pieces of sugar. I opened my eyes very wide. There I had been for all eternity, as it were, and now at last I was coming to life . . . (CS: 63)

The lexicon of special moments is there: the realisation arrives 'suddenly', the protagonist sees himself from the outside, in a mirror, smiling 'quite apart from [him]self'. There is a potentially strong link with Pirandello's moments of *dédoublement*, such as the scene in *Uno, nessuno e centomila* (1926), in which the protagonist catches by chance a glimpse of himself in a mirror in the street: 'Non riconobbi in prima me stesso. Ebbi l'impressione d'un estraneo che passasse per via conversando. […] Sono quell'estraneo che non posso veder vivere se non così, in un attimo impensato' (UNC: 13).[2] In Pirandello this is a key moment that brings a tragic revelation of the protagonist's alienated personality. Gabriel, in Joyce's 'The Dead', also finds his reflection in the mirror brings out quite disturbing aspects of himself. Nothing of this kind, apparently, for Duquette: his vision of himself from the outside is a purely aesthetic contemplation of his figure in the setting, so that his 'coming to life' is, in fact, quite the opposite – the reification into a still life: *Artist smiling in café with coffee, sugar and plume of steam*. However, this self-fashioning appears

[2] 'I did not recognize myself at first. The impression was that of a stranger going down the street and engaged in conversation. […] I am that stranger whom I am unable to see living except like that, in a thoughtless second' (1933: I.iv).

only to be the prelude to something else, as his unmotivated 'state of expectation' (CS: 64) creates the conditions for the miracle proper to happen:

> They are always the same, you know. The girls always have the same names, the cups never sit in the saucers; all the hearts are stuck and tied up with ribbons. But then, quite suddenly, at the bottom of the page, written in green ink, I fell on to that stupid, stale little phrase: *Je ne parle pas français*.
> There! it had come – the moment – the geste! and although I was so ready, it caught me, it tumbled me over; I was simply overwhelmed. And the physical feeling was so curious, so particular. It was as if all of me, except my head and arms, all of me that was under the table, had simply dissolved, melted, turned into water. Just my head remained and two sticks of arms pressing on to the table. But, ah! the agony of that moment! How can I describe it? I didn't think of anything. I didn't even cry out to myself. Just for one moment I was not. I was Agony, Agony, Agony.
> Then it passed, and the very second after I was thinking: 'Good God! Am I capable of feeling as strongly as that? But I was absolutely unconscious! I hadn't a phrase to meet it with! I was overcome!' (CS: 64)

The phenomenology of epiphany– suddenness, overwhelming intensity arising from a trivial detail, emotional and physical feeling, self-oblivion – here is so complete that this moment could be taken to be just as artfully constructed as everything else; according to Kaplan, Duquette's narcissism 'makes sure that we do not mistake it for genuine enlightenment' (1991: 186). However, the humorous self-importance of the protagonist paradoxically makes the situation more credible, because his complex cluster of insecurity and self-satisfaction diverts the reader's scepticism away from the experience itself, onto the way he processes it. If he is naïve enough to admit that he was flattered by the intensity of that feeling, and self-conscious enough to bring it up as proof of his first-rate artistic sensibility, is there a chance that the experience itself is genuine?

Duquette's sudden manifestation of emotional memory has a Proustian flavour. As in the famous episode of the madeleine that symbolically initiates the *Recherche*, his intense reaction to the scribbled phrase is first experienced as an undefined feeling. Once the mental association it contains has been decoded, the past opens up and yields the subject of narration. 'Je ne parle' was written in 1918, when Proust was already known and highly appreciated in Bloomsbury and related groups. Mansfield seems to have discovered him

only later, and not actually read him until 1921.[3] Nonetheless, the episode of the madeleine was by far the most memorable, and likely discussed by her friends. It is possible that, while writing the story of a Parisian dilettante with high literary ambitions, she might have wanted to hint at it, perhaps with some implicit irony and the intention to detach herself from the Proustian craze. Proust's model is, indeed, interestingly reversed. While his Marcel takes pages of effort to chase the unknown feeling before the association with a memory finally becomes apparent, Duquette paradoxically displays annoyance towards his artistic material. Apparently, the moment forces him to disregard one of his worldly-man rules:

> I've no patience with people who can't let go of things, who will follow after and cry out. When a thing's gone, it's gone. […] I have made it a rule of my life never to regret and never to look back. Regret is an appalling waste of energy, and no one who intends to be a writer can afford to indulge in it. You can't get it into shape; you can't build on it; it's only good for wallowing in. (CS: 65)

Contrarily to valuing the past and wanting to build on it, he seems intent on trying to forget something regretful that haunts him. His appeal is very similar to Tozzi's declarations on the same subject: 'non date ascolto ai rimpianti. […] La strada dinanzi non finisca mai; quella percorsa sia subito chiusa da una siepe di spine! Lasciate ad altrui il vostro passato' ('Le cose cominciate', O: 725).[4] Neither Tozzi nor his characters, as seen before, succeed in maintaining this wish. The same can be said of Duquette, who is confronted through the little phrase *Je ne parle pas français* with a past that was probably repressed. Whereas Proust's Marcel recognises in involuntary memory the source of his inspiration and actively seeks it as an ally, Mansfield's Duquette is rather chased by an involuntary resurgence of undesired recollections.

Significantly, in this experience his personality is split in two: an 'other self', as soon as the epiphanic moment is recalled, sets out in search of Mouse. It is a dog-like part of Duquette, which is condescendingly silenced at the end of the paragraph and later

[3] For an account of Mansfield's ambiguous appreciation of Proust see Kimber 2008: 87-89.
[4] 'Do not heed your regrets. […] May the route before you never end; may the route already traveled be immediately closed by a hedge of thorns! Leave your past to others'.

reappears in his half-humorous, half-irritated self-definition as a fox terrier. This ironical *dédoublement* highlights a dissociation between a detached, superior observer, and an uncomfortably managed instance of sympathy. The fox terrier appears to be the repository of his emotional attachment, a part of his personality that in fact refuses to back down, causing the would-be cool-blooded dandy no little trouble. When he makes a point to 'take a new line with Dick this time[:] no more confidences and tears on eyelashes', the cold, artificial part of him is momentarily in control: 'he was looking the part; he was the part' (CS: 75). As Henstra notes, he is 'trapped in a narcissistic rehearsal preventing him from perceiving his true self under all his role-playing' (2000: 133). However, while he notes down the thoughts that his performance inspires in him, a voice within raises objections: 'I confess that something did whisper as, smiling, I put down the notebook: "You – literary? you look as though you've taken down a bet on a racecourse!" But I didn't listen' (CS: 75). He somehow appears to know that the narcissistic posing which flatters his conscious ego is not conducive to genuine inspiration. Conversely, the true feelings that affect the fox-terrier ('how could I get her back? I wanted her back. I swear I was not acting then', CS: 89) and the empathetic realisation he finally reaches ('why, they were suffering…those two…really suffering', CS: 90) leave a much deeper mark on him than his pride would be willing to acknowledge. The fox-terrier self is the most 'authentic' part of him, directly in touch with his unconscious as a source of frightening human feelings and genuine creativity, and it is indeed its emotional memory, unleashed by the epiphanic moment, that sets him writing. The staging of the moment in romantic fashion is, instead, what enables his performed self to reluctantly engage with memory in the first place: aestheticisation is the psychological compromise that enables the two selves to provisionally cooperate in the making of honest art.

Following this interpretive line, the central point of significance in 'Je ne parle' would be found at the beginning. This shifts the weight of the plot: in this light it is no longer a story about the love triangle between Duquette, Dick, and Mouse, but certainly a Proustian tale of how Duquette finally found his inspiration and set out to write the story of what inspired him to write the story. This is only one of the possible readings that this

piece, and this character, support. The story is in the first person, after all, and any information given to the reader is prepared and served by Duquette himself. It is thus entirely up to us to decide whether to take his naivety or his declarations of sincerity as honest, or to regard them suspiciously as a more complex level of posturing. The same ambiguity affects the point of significance: is it a genuine experience of the 'deeper self' that the narrator appropriates to an aestheticizing programme? Or is it just a fancy prologue, crafted so as to seem profound? The story poses the same dilemma it evokes at the beginning: with the character of Duquette, we are never entirely sure if we are being fooled.

Nevertheless, the moment in 'Je ne parle' highlights how 'the crisis' that Mansfield mentioned in her 1919 review must be understood in a quite literal sense. If the modern plot is focused on emotional events, the *spannung* can also be a true psychological turmoil, a climax in the development of the self that can lead to evolution or regression, as Tozzi also believed. Epiphanies have indeed received attention in experimental psychology precisely for their role as turning points in a narrative of the self, and have been analysed precisely with a narrative approach, since 'an in-depth understanding of epiphanies can be achieved only by obtaining an account of the participant's life history and with it, his or her temporal unfolding sense of self-identity' (McDonald 2008: 92). However, the short story, particularly in Mansfield's slice-of-life form, is structurally unsuitable to providing this comprehensive view of the subject's life history within which the supposedly life-changing event can be contextualised. In the context of her stories, this narrative approach reveals the same limits as the result-oriented scheme Dettmar applied to Joyce.[5] His epiphany may have led Duquette to write a story, but there is no way of knowing if it had an impact on his life beyond that. Yet, as the link between the moment and the liberation of a fox-terrier personality suggests, this did not prevent Mansfield from placing epiphanies at the centre of a journey of self-discovery and self-definition, encouraging the moment's shift from a lyrical experience 'complete in itself' and 'unrelated' to a milestone of psychological evolution.

[5] See ch 2: 101-102.

4.2 Moments of Direct Feeling

One of the first entries in Mansfield's diaries, dating back to 1907, deals with a love affair she had during her voyage back from England to New Zealand. Within that long note, a moment of unusual intensity stands out:

> I lay on the deck of the vessel, my hands clasped behind my head, and, watching [the stars], I felt a curious complex emotion, a swift mysterious realisation that they were shining steadily & ever more powerfully into the very soul of my soul. I felt their still light permeating the very depths, and fear & ecstasy held me, shuddering. There is some fearful magic in their shining, I thought. […] Then I was drifting, drifting – where – whence – whither. I was drifting in a great boundless purple sea. […] A sense of unutterable loneliness pervaded my spirit. I knew this sea was eternal – I was eternal – this agony was eternal.
> So, smiling at myself, I sit down to analyse this new influence, this complex emotion. I am never anywhere for long without a like experience. (1907, D: 24)

The language of heightened perception, depth, mystery, timelessness & boundlessness, and the sense of despair triggered by the contemplation of the night sky allow us to regard this as a rather conventional lyrical version of epiphany, not exempt from a certain degree of posturing. The young aesthete here seems eager to indulge in special feelings, taking an attitude that her older self would openly mock in the figure of Duquette: 'Good God! Am I capable of feeling as strongly as that? […] After all I must be first-rate' (CS: 64). Even then, she was not taking herself too seriously: expressions like 'smiling at myself', 'I am never anywhere for long without a like experience' indicate irony at her own self-fashioning as a romantic lovesick soul. This interplay of conscious pose and humour, however, does not affect the authenticity of the feeling in itself, which is deemed, on the contrary, sufficiently true and profound to deserve analysis. In the 'curious complex emotion', affect and reflection are intertwined: the narration zooms in on the feeling stage by stage, from perception ('I felt their still light…') to emotion proper ('fear & ecstasy held me'), to, finally, rational elaboration ('I thought'). At the same time, as the feeling is at its most intense, the logic of emotions prevails, with a lack of differentiation between the self

and her surroundings, a loss of coordinates ('where – whence – whither'; 'this sea was eternal') and a sense of ineffability ('unutterable loneliness').

This meticulous rendering confirms Mansfield's affinity with the psychological study of emotions that was being carried out in her time, a strong point in common with Tozzi. Hammond recalls that since the 1880s W. James, C.G. Lange and Théodule Ribot had presented emotions as central psychic phenomena that plunge their roots into a deeper, subconscious realm of experience, and at the same time interact with bodily processes and conscious thought. This idea was particularly interesting for writers fascinated by the possibility of '"descending beneath" the conscious mind' (2016: 60), including all authors under consideration here. While for Tozzi this means that the scary profundities can obscurely impact conscious behaviour, for Mansfield an emotion that has the power to connect the deep dimension of the mind to consciousness can become a privileged opportunity as far as self-knowledge is concerned.

The early epiphany on the vessel shows precisely how, since her early youth, Mansfield valued the emergence of particular emotions as moments of contact with her profoundest being. She never abandoned the Romantic belief in the possible liberation of an authentic self, even as she grew more aware of its difficulty:

> True to oneself! Which self? Which of my many – well, really, thats [*sic*] what it looks like coming to – hundreds of selves. For what with complexes and suppressions, and reactions and vibrations and reflections – there are moments when I feel I am nothing but the small clerk of some hotel without a proprietor who has all his work cut out to enter the names and hand the keys to the wilful guests. […] Is it not possible that the rage for confession, autobiography, especially for memories of earliest childhood is explained by our persistent yet mysterious belief in a self which is continuous and permanent, which, untouched by all we acquire and all we shed, pushes a green spear through the leaves and through the mould, thrusts a sealed bud through years of darkness until, one day, the light discovers it and shakes the flower free and – we are alive – we are flowering for our moment upon the earth. This is the moment which, after all, we live for, the moment of direct feeling when we are most ourselves and least personal. (1921, D: 349-350)

Mansfield's familiarity with the vitalist psychology of W. James and Bergson is apparent here. As Hanson observes, 'a surface and depth model' is presented, where the

image of the overworked clerk embodies a distressed ego trying to administer a personality that is multiple in its composition and mutable in its interaction with the outside, while underneath lies 'a deeper dimension, opaque to everyday consciousness […] where a self persists which is simultaneously "continuous and permanent"' (2016: 25). If this model looks familiar by now, it is because it is based on the same ideas that inspired Pirandello and Tozzi's views of the layered self. This common vision generates similar artistic responses: Mansfield's characters are also given heterogeneous personalities, and often made prey to deep impulses they neither control nor understand. However, Pirandello was sceptical that one deeper self existed beyond the multiplicity, and Tozzi perceived it as unattainable. Mansfield, instead, imagines the authentic self as a living organism that grows and, if offered the right conditions, will flourish – as if, in Pirandellian terms, there could be a moment when matter and life work in unison and give life its fullest material realisation. This flourishing is a quintessential epiphanic moment, when the real self supposedly exists in direct correspondence with its most vital essence. In the light of Bergson's theory, the 'direct feeling when we are most ourselves and least personal' can be read indeed as a contact with the inner current of life, which overrides the limitations of the material persona and brings out the genuine creative potential of all living beings. The fact that Mansfield conceives this flourishing as a positive possibility does not tell us whether she believes it actually likely to happen in a lifetime. She seems interested in it as an inspirational concept, one of the 'gleams […] of something quite other' capable of suggesting an alternative to the usually inauthentic life.

Mansfield's epiphanic moments are thus opportunities to bring the alienated 'I' closer to an authentic 'other' dimension. This can be not only the hidden self, but also a lost past self or a connection with another human being, and in that reveals the proximity of these moments to the phenomenological world, which is 'inséparable de la subjectivité et de l'intersubjectivité qui font leur unité par la reprise de mes expériences passées dans mes expériences présentes, de l'expérience d'autrui dans la mienne' (Merleau-Ponty 1976: XV).[6]

[6] 'Inseparable from subjectivity and intersubjectivity, which find their unity when I either take up my past experiences in those of the present, or other people's in my own' (2002: xxii).

The link with the past became essential to Mansfield after the death of her brother in World War I. From then on, she perceived writing about her past as a duty to rescue from oblivion the life they had shared. Notwithstanding this Proustian agenda, however, memorial epiphanies do not appear as major features of her stories; the past is consciously revisited, but rarely comes back in epiphanic form. Instead, perhaps due to the same traumatic loss, the possibility of authentic contact with another human being is an extremely prominent member of her category of 'blazing moments'.

The story significantly called 'Psychology' (1919), for instance, ambiguously stages a unison of unsettled psyches happening deeper down than the rational mind. It unfolds at once on two parallel levels: an explicit interaction ('Not busy?' 'No. Just going to have tea'), and the whispered dialogue of the characters' secret selves. 'Two conversations are apparently going on – one at the level of fantasy, and the other at the level of reality' (Pero 2016: 106). However, the implicit interaction of the characters speaks more truly and powerfully than their small talk, so that their contrapuntal articulation of voices exposes the characters' struggle between a conviction of self-mastery and self-understanding, voiced through conscious speech, and a subconscious awareness of their reciprocal desire, articulated in unconscious enunciation (Pero 2016: 101). The awkward silences that interrupt their small talk, indeed, do not happen for lack of words, but because a different kind of speech suddenly interferes with their explicit conversation, unsettling their self-assurance. As the man describes his predilection for the woman's room, his discourse becomes progressively more passionate, until the sculpture on the mantelpiece betrays him: '"I love that little boy", he murmured' (CS: 114). This causes the first unpleasant silence, and as soon as another silence occurs, it is repeated: '"It's raining," she murmured. And her voice was like his when he had said: "I love that little boy"' (CS: 115). In uttering these words, the characters murmur: their conscious speech is suddenly tinged by the unconscious enunciation of their hushed secret selves. As this interference takes place, the man's declaration of love for the statuette assumes emotionally charged tones. Whether because it acknowledges his childlike desire for affection, or because it transfers his feelings

for the woman onto one of her belongings, his murmur betrays the presence of an unacknowledged depth:

> A new silence came between them. Nothing in the least like the satisfactory pause that had followed their greetings […]. That silence could be contained in the circle of warm, delightful fire and lamplight. How many times hadn't they flung something into it just for the fun of watching the ripples break on the easy shores. But into this unfamiliar pool the head of the little boy sleeping his timeless sleep dropped – and the ripples flowed away, away – boundlessly far – into deep glittering darkness. (CS: 114)

The contrast between the pool and the circle of lamplight evokes the Freudian mind split. As long as the characters remain in the circle of light, in the conscious sphere of thought, they can even venture so far as probing the stream, taking pride in their exploration. Now, however, the boy's head, loaded with new emotional force, drops (significantly, it is not 'flung': they have no agency here) deeper down in an 'unfamiliar pool', the sphere of emotional intercourse, and its ripples reach as far as the darkness of the unconscious. The feeling that this episode arouses in the characters is not merely 'unfamiliar' but, in Freudian terms, uncanny. The uncanny is an eerie sense of familiarity of the unfamiliar that arises 'when we are faced with the reality of something that we have until now considered imaginary, when a symbol takes on the full function and significance of what it symbolizes' (Freud 2003: 150). Indeed, the characters' emotional attachment, previously dismissed as a completely imaginary option, is here discovered to be real, and the sleeping child, a symbol of innocence and genuine surrender, is recognised as truly embodying their desire for authentic affection. Yet, uncanny is also what 'was intended to remain secret, hidden away, and has come into the open' (Freud 2003: 132), and in fact, the characters' emotional need, when recognised, appears frightening and elicits a rejection from the conscious selves. Freud's treatise *Das Unheimlich* [*The uncanny*] was published in 1919, and 'Psychology' appeared in 1920. It is difficult to establish whether this particular essay influenced this story, but Freud's ideas certainly did. The story sneers indeed at what Mansfield called 'cheap psycho analysis' (to J.M. Murry, 13 October 1920, CLKM 4: 69) when the characters chatting about the relevance of psychology for their generation almost

succeed in silencing their deeper selves. In this sense, 'Psychology' becomes both the subject of the story identified by the title and the topic of the characters' literary discussion. But as the story itself *is* a literary text about psychological dynamics, its irony is also self-mockery: is it possible to trust a psychological story which shows how psychological discourse serves to cover, rather than explore, real dynamics of the mind?

While scorning some of her colleague's practice to 'turn life into a case', Mansfield did value psychoanalysis as a literary resource, and even claimed to believe that 'ones [*sic*] novel if its [*sic*] a good one will be capable of being *proved* scientifically to be correct' (CLKM 4: 69). The evolution of the characters in 'Psychology' is in fact punctuated by moments of realisation that continue to lend themselves to psychological analysis. The first comes right when their last attempt at intellectual talk seems to have succeeded: 'the smile undid them. It lasted too long; it became a grin. They saw themselves as two little grinning puppets jigging away in nothingness' (CS: 116). The unspoken interaction elicits here a *dédoublement*, whereby the characters see themselves as having become what they initially pictured, two intellectuals in their armchairs discussing artistic matters. But this success disappoints them; they realise that they want something else from each other:

> And now the silence put a spell upon them like solemn music. It was anguish – anguish for her to bear it and he would die – he'd die if it were broken. . . . And yet he longed to break it. Not by speech. At any rate not by their ordinary maddening chatter. There was another way for them to speak to each other, and in the new way he wanted to murmur: 'Do you feel this too? Do you understand it at all?' . . . (CS: 116)

The opening 'and now', which calls the reader's attention to a narrative turn, the repeated ellipses, the insistence on 'anguish', and the mention of a spell charging the atmosphere with solemnity frames this as one of Mansfield's special moments. The man now becomes aware of their 'other way' of speaking to each other: he suddenly longs, significantly, to murmur. As the unison of their secret selves becomes perceptible in a strong empathic bond, the question he wants to ask evokes another of Mansfield's stories: 'Bertha knew, suddenly, as if the longest, most intimate look had passed between them – as if they had said to each other: "You too?" – that Pearl Fulton, […] was feeling just what

she was feeling' (CS: 99-100). Bertha's empathic connection with Pearl in 'Bliss' is often explained as her own delusion, and the text allows for this reading. While, however, we do not have any evidence on Miss Fulton's side to decide whether she is reciprocating, we have plenty indeed in 'Psychology'. Here, from the beginning the characters' 'perfect agreement is voiced in unison' (Harmat 1989: 122). It is not clear to what extent the conscious personae are aware of what their whispering selves are saying, but on both the conscious and the unconscious plane their experiences are coordinated. Even after the moment has passed, their outer selves keep cooperating, and their inner selves experience a parallel pain. Similar to what happens in Tozzi's 'Marito e Moglie', the characters are somehow in unison even as they grow apart. However, while Tozzi presents the couple's separation as a tragic situation which the characters have no choice but to endure, Mansfield stresses the opportunities characters take or miss to embrace their authentic selves.

As the couple stands right on the threshold, the woman, torn between conflicting desires, experiences another moment of suspension as she 'looked out upon the night':

> She saw the beautiful fall of the steps, the dark garden ringed with glittering ivy, on the other side of the road the huge bare willows and above them the sky big and bright with stars. But of course he would see nothing of all this. He was superior to it all. He – with his wonderful 'spiritual' vision! (CS: 117)

Recalling, with Smith, that earlier on she had evoked the Book of Genesis while offering her partner some cake, this garden surrounded by ivy acquires a biblical resonance. As Smith suggests, when the woman sees 'the beauty of the "fall"' she both senses the allure of what lies unexplored and becomes conscious of having sinned against their authentic feelings (2000: 119). However, her attitude contradicts the apocalyptic declarations about the end of their friendship, for as soon as the doorbell rings she behaves like Raoul Duquette's fox-terrier self: 'It was he, of course. And equally, of course, she oughtn't to have paid the slightest attention to it […]. She flew to answer' (CS: 117).

The 'elderly virgin' (in keeping with the biblical imagery) that appears in the finale constitutes a variation on a repeated motif. The protagonist's usual interaction with her was also based on saying the opposite of what they felt: the woman 'had this habit of turning

up and ringing the bell and then saying, when she opened the door: "My dear, send me away!" She never did. As a rule she asked her in' (CS: 117). Today, however, the main character cannot keep up the pretence any longer and refuses to let the undesired guest inside. For the first time, her manifest actions correspond to her emotional need, and this reversal of habit generates an echo of the moment of revelation:

> while she stood just inside, holding the door, a strange thing happened. Again she saw the beautiful fall of the steps, the dark garden ringed with glittering ivy, the willows, the big bright sky. Again she felt the silence that was like a question. But this time she did not hesitate. She moved forward. Very softly and gently, as though fearful of making a ripple in that boundless pool of quiet she put her arms round her friend. (CS: 118)

This display of affection for a person that until then she seemed hardly to tolerate is legitimately puzzling. Why does she suddenly hug her goodbye as 'my friend' and invite her to come again soon? A key might lie in the elements of repetition and variation. The door is opened for a visitor again, an interaction happens on the threshold which evokes an intense perception of the questioning silence. The change, however, ('but this time she did not hesitate') leads to an unequivocal sense of liberation: 'This time she walked back to the studio slowly, and standing in the middle of the room with half-shut eyes she felt so light, so rested, as if she had woken up out of a childish sleep. Even the act of breathing was a joy . . . ' (CS: 118), in diametrical opposition to the furious rage she had experienced after parting with her novelist friend. The word 'childish' here is not innocuous, evoking precisely the sense of genuine fulfilment of the need of affection that had been embodied by the sleeping boy.

The liminal position of this whole final interaction supports the view that something crucial is happening between the conscious and the unconscious self. In a letter written about two years later, Mansfield explains her fascination with liminal spaces as spaces of liberation:

> Don't you think the stairs are a good place for reading letters? I do. One is somehow suspended. One is on neutral ground – not in ones [*sic*] own world nor in a strange one. They are an almost perfect meeting place. […] People come

> out of themselves on stairs – they issue forth, unprotected. (To Dorothy Brett, 29 July 1921, CLKM 4: 256)

If we consider this idea that on stairs people come out of their shell to encounter the other, and if Hammond is right that 'it is only through the body that […] emotional pain can be healed' (2016: 62), this moment can be confirmed as a release of the woman's most authentic self, which finally dares 'issuing forth'. Still, its effects are not obvious. The fact that after this intense emotional experience she is able to go back to her study, tidy up, and resume the conversation with her male friend supports two contrasting readings. It is certainly possible to see it as a happy ending: she learnt to 'reconcile her conscious and subconscious inclinations' (Harmat 1989: 123), and she is now able to propose a friendship that satisfies their intellectual selves ('I have been thinking over our talk about the psychological novel') while still being open to the newfound emotional self ('Good night, my friend. Come again soon'). On the other hand, however, Hammond recalls the Jamesian idea that if we calm our bodies and 'actively induce emotions more appropriate to our situation' through physical action, our feelings can be 'conquered by the intellect' (Hammond 2016: 65). From this perspective, we see here another case of transference: the woman redirects her affection from her male peer, of whose reaction she is afraid, to a 'safe' target, her enthusiastic admirer whom she considers her inferior. She is thus able to give an outlet to her feelings, recover her composure, and resume the role of her constructed persona as if nothing had happened. Here again, Mansfield's epiphanies are concerned with the fulfilment of the 'real self', but the moments of revelation refuse to grant any univocal solution, preferring to offer a question, and a possibility, rather than spelling out an answer.

A crucial point that 'Psychology' foregrounds, however, is that while for other authors epiphany tends to be mostly a deeply personal event, Mansfield can often think of it as a shared experience. The attempt to empathise with a different being was at the basis of her writing, which she presented as a constant endeavour to become someone else:

> When I pass the apple stalls I cannot help stopping and staring until I feel that I, myself, am changing into an apple, too […]. When I write about ducks I swear I am a white duck […]. In fact this whole process of becoming the duck […] is so thrilling that I can hardly breathe, only to think about it. […] There follows the moment when you are more duck, more apple, or more Natasha than any of these objects could ever possibly be, and so you create them anew. […] I don't see how art is going to make that divine spring into the bounding outlines of things if it hasn't passed through the process of trying to become these things before recreating them. (To Dorothy Brett, 11 October 1917, CLKM 1: 330)

Joyce had theorised the last stage of beauty, epiphany, as the interception of *claritas*, the specific individuality of the aesthetic object. In this passage, Mansfield proposes instead to reach the goal, a very similar 'spring into the outline of things', through a process of empathic identification that opens a different breech between the subject and the artistic object. This identification, as Kaplan notices, must have come straight from Bergson's definition of intuition as 'intellectual sympathy' (1991: 186). Not just special sensitivity, but the mental metamorphism capable of turning the artist herself into an apple or a duck is needed to bring out the object's truth, because that truth is to be found in the innermost creative thrust of life that the subject and the object share, the common feature that empathic intuition brings out as the necessary condition of its happening. The view of artistic technique shifts thus from a discovery, where the artistic mind is receptive enough to detect the *quidditas* of things and re-embody it in appropriate circumstances, to biological generation, where the same *quidditas* is encountered in a fusion of beings that leads to a rebirth of the object in the artistic realm. It is still, however, firmly within the phenomenological perspective: 'si les qualités rayonnent autour d'elles un certain mode d'existence, si elles ont un pouvoir d'envoûtement […], c'est parce que le sujet sentant ne les pose pas comme des objets mais sympathise avec elles, les fait siennes et trouve en elles sa loi momentanée' (Merleau-Ponty 1976: 247).[7]

This ability to go beyond the boundaries of the self assumes fundamental importance in relation to the 'problem of other minds', according to which it is impossible

[7] 'If the qualities radiate around them a certain mode of existence, if they have the power to cast a spell […], 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' (2002: 248).

to ever have access to the psyche of another being (Hammond 2014: 9-29). Mansfield was aware of this issue: not only do her stories repeatedly address the search for mutual understanding, but her very effort to enter the minds of her characters and lay them bare for the reader provides a ground for exploring the other, with total identification, as a self. Entering another's mind, as much as an aesthetic object, is in itself an epiphanic experience, insofar as it moves from 'what Bergson would call an intuition of the vital, in which we become conscious of the sympathies that connect us with others' (Hanson 2016: 30). The sense of similarity deriving from this intuition can be so strong that, as Robert Katz put it, 'the two become one […]. When we empathize, we lose ourselves in the new identity we have temporarily assumed' (1963, cited in Hammond 2016: 6). In order to experience another being as a self, it is necessary to undergo a process of exit from oneself which, Hammond observes, 'gives one the feeling of being outside of time. For if we experience time as the forward march of our stream of life, the illusion that we have slipped into another stream clearly disrupts our sense of time' (2014: 49). Two interpersonal forms of Mansfield's epiphany, shared illuminations and deep emotional connections, can thus also be read as moments in which the conditions of cognitive empathy – understanding the thoughts or feelings of the other – and affective empathy – implying a 'vicarious or shared feeling' (Hammond 2014: 8) – are respectively achieved. Transgressing the boundaries of the self and stepping outside of time indeed mark the engagement of the logic of the unconscious, which taps into a feeling of interconnectedness of all living beings. In this sense, it opens particularly interesting possibilities with regard to a third form of Mansfield's epiphany: the lyrical moment of suspension.

4.3 Moments of Suspension

Mansfield has been labelled a 'lyrical prose writer' since her very first publications came out.[8] She was aware of this as she wrote to her late brother, 'I feel always trembling

[8] See reviews by Rebecca West and Conrad Aiken in Pilditch 1996.

on the brink of poetry. […] But especially I want to write a kind of long elegy to you perhaps not in poetry. No, perhaps in Prose – almost certainly in a kind of special *prose*' (22 Jan 1916, D: 192). As epiphanies become prominent in English literature through Romantic poetry, it is not surprising that lyrical suspension seems to be Mansfield's favourite type of illumination.

> God forbid that another should ever live the life I have known here and yet there are moments you know, old boy, when after a dark day there comes a sunset – such a glowing gorgeous marvellous sky that one forgets all in the beauty of it – these are the moments when I am really writing. Whatever happens I have had these blissful, perfect moments and they are worth living for. (To Richard Murry, c. 12 January 1920, CLKM 3: 176)

This is not just a metaphor for the darkness of depression being dissolved, at the end of the day, by a moment of joy. The sunset is to be intended literally as the atmospheric condition, the overwhelming beauty of which generates a state of oblivion in which real writing can happen. The moments that make life worth living are here related to nature and to writing in a way that recalls Wordsworth:

> From Nature and her overflowing soul
> I had receiv'd so much that all my thoughts
> Were steep'd in feeling; I was only then
> Contented when with bliss ineffable
> I felt the sentiment of Being spread
> O'er all that moves, and all that seemeth still.
> (ll. 397-402, 1992: 49)

In reworking the natural sublime as the source of art in a modernist sensibility, Mansfield is not alone. Her notes linking nature, ecstasy, and writing resonate strikingly not only with Pirandello's poetic moments, but especially with the exceptional moments described by Woolf. Woolf relates three (also Wordsworthian) instances when, as a child, she unexpectedly received a shock of feeling so intense as to remain memorable. She treasured these occurrences as precious discoveries and, most importantly, associated them with art: 'I go on to suppose that the shock-receiving capacity is what makes me a writer' (Woolf 1985: 72). Two cases were negative, revealing the existence of violence and death;

the third moment, however, was positive, and related to nature: 'I was looking at the flower bed by the front door; "That is the whole", I said. […] it seemed suddenly plain that the flower itself was a part of the earth; […] and that was the real flower; part earth; part flower' (Woolf 1985: 71). From this intuition of interconnectedness, Woolf claims to have reached 'a philosophy; at any rate it is a constant idea of mine; that behind the cotton wool is hidden a pattern; that we – I mean, all human beings – are connected with this; that the whole world is a work of art; that we are parts of the work of art' (Woolf 1985: 72).

This same perception of a pattern hidden behind appearances must have made Mansfield receptive to the esoteric doctrines in M.B. Oxon's *Cosmic Anatomy*, which she read in 1922. As Ascari (2016) noted, Oxon proposed a cooperation between psychology and religion to create a new spirituality. He identified under the surface of consciousness an essence that links our passing moods together and creates our identity – applying the same surface-and-depth model of personality that many, including Mansfield, had elaborated following Bergson and W. James. As seen before, several other writers were interested in a spiritual vision of the deeper self; Tozzi, for one, had not read *Cosmic Anatomy*, yet reconciled the scientific view of the psyche with his faith by thinking the unconscious as a point of contact between the human and the divine. Thus, when Mansfield claims 'such a book does fascinate me. […] It's only a greater view of psychology' (4 January 1922, D: 399), we can take her literally. Oxon's 'esoteric view of the unconscious as an inner infinite in which the outer infinite is mirrored' (Ascari 2016: 47) addressed the same feeling of a universal pattern that the culture of the time had developed through philosophical and scientific sources.

Mansfield's inclination to a form of lay mysticism is not a phenomenon of her late years. As early as 1916, while reading Dostoevsky's *The Possessed*, she made a note of the passage about the 'seconds […] when you suddenly feel the presence of the eternal harmony perfectly attained' with a feeling of intense joy that is almost unbearable for the soul, and commented: 'I know that' (D: 187). An instance of these moments appears particularly striking in the final story of her first collection, 'The Escape' (1920). An unnamed couple on a journey is delayed at the hotel, misses a train and is forced to take a

coach to the next station, where they continue their trip. Through this minimal plot, the shift in focalisation, quickly going from the woman's interior monologue, through her voiced complaints, to finally settle on the man's point of view, contrasts the characters' perspectives exposing their lack of harmony. The woman is suffering from nerves like Monica Tyrrell in the preceding story 'Revelations'. Monica's neurosis, as Shen (2006) argues, is due to her being deprived of agency in a male-dominated upper-middle-class environment. Likewise, the female protagonist here disagrees with the course of action taken by her partner, but social conventions prevent her from doing things herself: 'had he expected her to go outside, to stand under the awning in the heat, and point with her parasol? Very amusing picture of English domestic life' (CS: 197). Excluded from all activity, her repressed energy turns into resentful restlessness. She is reduced to a doll by the conventions she has accepted, and, what is worse, she does not receive the care and reassurance that she would expect in this role. While, in 'Je ne parle', Duquette hesitates to smoke, thinking he might disturb Mouse, the protagonist here forgets what a nuisance smoking is to his partner; and Mouse's act of sponging her eyes after having been abandoned is sarcastically echoed here by the woman 'pressing her handkerchief to her eyes' 'as though she were doing it for somebody else, pitifully' (CS: 197). Despite being formally polite, her partner is not attentive to her, not even with the slightest 'I know, my dear'. His unresponsiveness causes her to feel even more wronged, and pushes her to seek his attention in ever more detrimental ways.

In this toxic dynamics of inauthenticity and incommunicability, as New puts it, 'the 'escape' of the title can refer to their simple (or complicated, depending on one's point of view) process of departure. It can also refer to each main character's […] techniques for removing the self from (or denying) the present, and their separate flights from themselves and from each other' (1998: 161). The woman's escape is physical, and coincides with the only time in the story when she truly acts to resolve her problem, taking the initiative to stop the driver and fetch the parasol she dropped. Being well outside the social context, alone in the countryside with a driver who cannot understand them, she is temporarily free from the rules of gallantry. As soon as she is gone, the atmosphere changes completely. The

cart has stopped, the wind has stopped, her babbling has stopped – only replaced by the distant sound of the sea, which seems in itself an invitation to silence: 'Hish, hish'. Finally alone, in this moment of quiet and stillness, the man reaches an awareness of himself 'lying there, a hollow man, a parched, withered man, as it were, of ashes' (CS: 201). This echo from the beginning of their journey by cart, when the wind had blown up with the woman's powder 'a snatch of dust that settled on their clothes like the finest ash', presents the female character as a bearer of aridity, sterility and death. Her company – or her behaviour on this particular day – has indeed a withering and even deadly power over him.

> It was then that he saw the tree, that he was conscious of its presence just inside a garden gate. It was an immense tree with a round, thick silver stem and a great arc of copper leaves that gave back the light and yet were sombre. There was something beyond the tree – a whiteness, a softness, an opaque mass, half-hidden – with delicate pillars. As he looked at the tree he felt his breathing die away and he became part of the silence. It seemed to grow, it seemed to expand in the quivering heat until the great carved leaves hid the sky, and yet it was motionless. (CS: 201)

Suddenness, vagueness and paradox raise the register of this passage to the poetry of epiphanic moments. Typical phrases and images appear, from the 'he was conscious', sign of privileged awareness, to the image of the silver tree that seems to swell like in 'Bliss': 'although it was so still it seemed, like the flame of a candle, to stretch up, to point, to quiver in the bright air, to grow taller and taller as they gazed – almost to touch the rim of the round, silver moon' (CS: 102). Trees are among Mansfield's favourite and most enigmatic epiphanic triggers, and the tree here is no exception. Upon looking at it, the man's painful self-awareness gives way to self-oblivion and mystical fusion ('he felt his breathing die away and he became part of the silence'). Again, however, the loss of consciousness is only the prelude to finding something hidden deeper:

> Then from within its depths or from beyond there came the sound of a woman's voice. A woman was singing. The warm untroubled voice floated upon the air, and it was all part of the silence as he was part of it. Suddenly, as the voice rose, soft, dreaming, gentle, he knew that it would come floating to him from the hidden leaves and his peace was shattered. What was happening to him? Something stirred in his breast. Something dark, something unbearable and

> dreadful pushed in his bosom, and like a great weed it floated, rocked . . . it was warm, stifling. He tried to struggle to tear at it, and at the same moment – all was over. Deep, deep, he sank into the silence, staring at the tree and waiting for the voice that came floating, falling, until he felt himself enfolded. (CS: 201-02)

From the profundities of the mysterious tree comes the soothing sound of singing. The voice is female and characterised as the opposite of his partner's: it is, first of all, 'untroubled' and, in a typical paradox of mystical (and deeply emotional) experience, part of the silence and of himself. As happens in Tozzi, and as is common in mystical experience, music conveys a powerful, inarticulable truth. Be it the call of nature, the *Sehnsucht* for a harmonious love that is lost or never was, or simple desire for peace, the voice awakens an emotional cluster buried deep down in him, a feeling that is at once aroused and quenched: no sooner does he try to tear at it, that the moment passes, leaving its mystery unsolved. Was it despair at his conjugal misery? Or the burgeoning awareness of having led, as Mansfield later said, 'a very typically false life'? We only know that he keeps sinking in the singing silence until he feels 'enfolded', probably both in the physical sense of 'enveloped' and in the affective sense of 'embraced'. In fact, the epilogue presents the character as appeased and recharged as the protagonist of 'Psychology' is after 'enfolding' her friend.

This poetic passage is definitely the climax of the story, but leaves us with more questions than answers. What the character finds seems 'on the surface to be some sensibility to life that is missing in the daily routine. But [...] it is the man's discovery of his nascent sensibility, or is it a retaliatory escape from his wife, or is it something else? Is it a revelation or a re-veiling?' (New 1998: 174). The brief epilogue does not help to solve the problem: the sunlight is gone and the man is again immersed in motion and noise; not only the corridor is 'shaking' and the train 'roars', but the female voice that reaches his ears from the compartment is again the relentless chatter of his partner. While she is talking to other passengers, their 'false life' of socially defined roles seems restored: '*Oui, Madame, je suis un peu souffrante. . . . Mes nerfs.* Oh, but my husband is never so happy as when he is travelling. He likes roughing it. . . . My husband. . . . My husband. . . .'(CS: 202). This final repetition strikes a nerve, making clear what from the beginning had not been spelt out: they are husband and wife, legally bound together in this unfortunate mismatch. Yet the blazing

moment appears to have had consequences: 'so great was his heavenly happiness as he stood there he wished he might live for ever' (CS: 202).

Why this happiness? New argues that his epiphany seems to have separated him even more from others: it is an escape, and the last line about happiness is sardonic (1998: 172-174). In a different perspective, however, his joy could be coming from a true achievement. Mansfield could have lent him her discovery that 'suffering can be overcome' by acceptance: 'do not resist. Take it. Be overwhelmed. Accept it fully – make it *part of Life*' (1920, D: 336). She made this note in the same year as she wrote the story, in a moment of crisis with Murry, when her way of coping was to transfer the affection that she did not feel was reciprocated by her husband to the world at large: 'this is what I must do. I must pass from personal love which has failed me to greater love'. Could her character also overcome his frustration in a communion with life that enables his unsated love to find a greater outlet? Or is his epiphany really just an alienated consolation against the victory of inauthentic life?

As the text stops here, all interpretive hypotheses remain open. However, the reflection on the 'eternal harmony' encompassing and overcoming pain had by now taken centre stage in Mansfield's reflections, in both an existential and an artistic sense:

> Ive [*sic*] two 'kick offs' in the writing game. One is joy – real joy […] that sort of writing I could only do in just that state of being in some perfectly blissful way at peace. Then something delicate and lovely seems to open before my eyes, like a flower without thought of a frost […]. And that I try, ever so humbly to express. The other 'kick off' is my old original one, and (had I not known love) it would have been my all. Not hate or destruction […] but an extremely deep sense of hopelessness – of everything doomed to disaster – almost wilfully, stupidly […] a cry against corruption that is absolutely the nail on the head. Not a protest – a cry, and I mean corruption in the widest sense of the word of course. (To J.M. Murry, 3 Feb 1918, CLKM 2: 54)

This note strengthens the link between ecstatic experiences of blissful joy and writing, while also calling attention to their counterpart: a dark view of hopeless dissipation against which the blazing moments stand out. Wattie argues that this 'corruption that causes Katherine Mansfield to cry out is the corruption of the cosmos itself', and traces her

philosophical pessimism back to an indirect influence of Schopenhauer (1989: 152). In effect, Schopenhauer's idea that in mystical or aesthetic contemplation 'we are mentally, though not physically, liberated from the restraints of time and place and therefore, however fleetingly, from the inevitability of suffering' (Wattie 1989: 154) seems relevant. Mansfield is not insensitive to the disquieting side of nature. It will suffice to remember Linda's thoughts about the Manuka flowers in 'At the Bay': 'as soon as they flowered, they fell and were scattered. […] Why, then, flower at all? Who takes the trouble – or the joy – to make all these things that are wasted, wasted…' (CS: 221). The apparent purposelessness of things is thus acknowledged. In the end, however, Mansfield appears convinced that dissipation itself is deceiving:

> It really does seem that the world has reached a pitch of degradation that never could have been imagined – but we know it – we are not deceived. And the fact of our knowing it and having suffered, each in our own way cannot make Life – the Life of the Universe – what we mean when we stand looking up at the stars or lie watching the ladybird in the grass – or feel – talking to one we love – less marvellous. (To Dorothy Brett, 26 March 1920, CLKM 3: 262)

After discovering she had tuberculosis, she confessed: 'I had a sense of the *larger breath* – of the mysterious lives within lives, and the egyptian [*sic*] parasite beginning its new cycle of being in a water snail affected me like a *great* work of Art' (21 June 1919, D: 284). The vision of parasites and worms being equally part of natural processes alongside all that she loves offers her a relief from the suffering that those very processes are causing her, not by making her escape the natural chain of cause and effect, but by allowing her to contemplate its universal harmony: if this order is purposeless, it is as purposeless as a great work of art. Mansfield thus shares the double focus of her elder colleagues, being able to hold the negatives and positives of life in dialectical unity. Since her letter about corruption briefly predated 'Je ne parle pas français', a human and urban story in which natural processes have little place, it is plausible that the disaster she mentions is the corruption of human life as separate from the cosmos. This idea is aligned with younger currents of existentialism: while for Schopenhauer corruption was to be found in nature itself, for Mansfield, as for Nietzsche, the problem seems to be rather with the human constructions

that render life 'false'. Hence her praise for authenticity, for the effort to live by one's most individual self, and her hope, stronger than in any author seen so far, that this will flourish one day. Once 'corruption' is intended in this sense, the idea of aesthetic perceptions as moments that suspend inauthenticity resonates perfectly with Mansfield's 'gleams' that constellate a 'typically false life' and make it worth living.

The possibility of escaping a false construction of the self and witnessing the coexistence of marvel and destruction is the animating principle of 'The Garden Party' (1922), often regarded as a 'coming of age' narrative concerned with issues of social identity. In effect, 'her first corpse and an adult party, two contradictory kinds of initiation, happen to Laura on the same day' (Smith 2000: 124). Arguably, however, class issues are only a first level of Laura's initiatory experience, which, at the same time, confronts her with deeper existential questions.

> And yes, that is what I tried to convey in The Garden Party. The diversity of life and how we try to fit in everything, Death included. That is bewildering for a person Laura's age. She feels things ought to happen differently. First one and then another. But life isn't like that. We haven't the ordering of it. Laura says 'but all these things must not happen at once' and Life answers 'Why not? How are they divided from each other'. And they do all happen, it is inevitable. And it seems to me that there is beauty in that inevitability. (To William Gerhardi, 11 March 1922, CLKM 5: 101)

This description confirms the idea of a rite of passage, showing the watermark of Mansfield's own spiritual effort to reconcile herself with life and death. The story separates Laura's experience of these concepts into two separate movements different in imagery, pace and tone. Each movement has a well-identifiable potential illumination at its core, which acquires meaning in relation and opposition to the other. The first part is evidently dedicated to life: a glorious day full of excitement, buzz and activity, in which young Laura and her siblings are for the first time put in charge of the family's celebrations. This section questions personal and social identity, confronting the conditioning under which these children are being raised. Laura's child-like enthusiasm struggles to be contained within the conventions of her upbringing: 'How very nice workmen were! And what a beautiful morning! She mustn't mention the morning; she must be business-like' (CS: 246). She sees

workmen as more genuine and attuned to her enthusiasm than the role she is being asked to play. Despite her claim against class distinctions, this is in itself a classist perspective, and the text exposes her superficial delusion of communality: while 'she felt just like a working-girl' she is in fact biting a piece of bread and butter – a small status-symbol of wealth – and watching the men work as if they were unreal, a 'little drawing' (CS: 248). However, this deliberate engagement with classism coexists with a deeper discovery that has a universal value. Amidst mere frivolities – wearing a *sweet* hat, having 'enough' canna lilies – the first moment of suspension takes place:

> "Huh," she sighed, and the moment after the sigh she sat up quickly. She was still, listening. All the doors in the house seemed to be open. The house was alive with soft, quick steps and running voices. The green baize door that led to the kitchen regions swung open and shut with a muffled thud. And now there came a long, chuckling absurd sound. It was the heavy piano being moved on its stiff castors. But the air! If you stopped to notice, was the air always like this? Little faint winds were playing chase, in at the tops of the windows, out at the doors. And there were two tiny spots of sun, one on the inkpot, one on a silver photograph frame, playing too. Darling little spots. Especially the one on the inkpot lid. It was quite warm. A warm little silver star. She could have kissed it. (CS: 249)

As in a movie scene in slow motion, all sounds and movements are perceived with heightened intensity. Laura manages for a moment to look at her joyous elation colouring the perception of all things round her, like Bertha in 'Bliss'. Everything is open, buzzing with signs of activity, even the heavy piano is dragged out of its stiffness. Fairy-like spots of sun and a touch of oxymoronic warm silver appear, and to complete Mansfield's favourite epiphanic imagery with plants we are soon served with 'canna lilies, big pink flowers, wide open, radiant, almost frighteningly alive on bright crimson stems' (CS: 249). Laura's excitement has a corporeal dimension, too, which, like Bertha's, is sexually charged: she 'crouched down as if to warm herself at that blaze of lilies; she felt they were in her fingers, on her lips, growing in her breast' (CS: 249). She feels immersed in a celebration of life. The scene is scattered with markers of wealth – the piano, the silver frame, the lilies – but, in contrast with these, 'the pleasures of life, the breezes stirring the leaves of flowers, are simple pleasures. To live, and to live fully, means to be aware of these aesthetic delights,

and to appreciate them' (Bowler 2011: 84). The core of Laura's feeling is this simple enjoyment, like the workman's smelling the lavender. In this sense, she does feel 'like a work-girl'.

Mansfield's two writing 'kick-offs', in this story, coexist: it is possible to appreciate and celebrate 'pure joy', and simultaneously cry against the corruption of the social system in which it is experienced. This is evident in the scene of the hat, often read as the corruption of an upper-middle-class girl by her own mother. Mrs Sheridan is definitely manipulative, but behind her shallow arguments about not being 'expected' to make sacrifices for 'people like that' lies the very lesson about life that Mansfield mentioned in her letter. Life and death happen at once, and not being able to stop the party acknowledges this inevitable fact. The problem is that this obvious yet hard-to-digest truth is so tainted by Mrs Sheridan's classist nonsense that the two seem indistinguishable: it is difficult, for Laura and for the reader, to understand and accept this more profound message without also buying into the classist ideology in which it is embedded.

In the second movement of the story, Laura confronts the problem of life and death on the Other side. Suddenly the tone and pace change: 'It was growing dusky as Laura shut their garden gates. A big dog ran by like a shadow. The road gleamed white, and down below in the hollow the little cottages were in deep shade. How quiet it seemed after the afternoon' (CS: 258-59). Light, noise and movement give way to a sombre atmosphere, so that the statement 'now the broad road was crossed' can be perceived as symbolic. The heroine is now going through a core experience of ancient myths, the *katabasis*, a journey to the underworld that happens here both on the social and on the spiritual plane. Thorndike-Breeze notices how the 'low hum', 'flicker of light' and 'crab-like' shadows moving behind the windows in the 'smoky and dark lane' reverse Laura's suspended moment in her house: here, life swarms about in an alien, disquieting key (2016: 76).

There is also an otherworldly creepiness in the figure of the widow's sister, who does not answer Laura's questions and simply commands her to follow her into the house of the dead. Her presence recalls an allegory that Mansfield had drafted two years before: 'We resist – we are terribly frightened. The little boat enters the dark fearful gulf and our

only cry is to escape – "put me on land again". But it is useless. Nobody listens. The shadowy figure rows on. One ought to sit still and uncover ones [*sic*] eyes' (to JMM, 18 October 1920, CLKM 4: 75). According to Smith, in this note 'the shadowy figure can be seen as death, but also as the secret self which wants to unravel what the body knows about mortality, and not to live by fairy tales in blindness' (2000: 138-139). In the story, Em's sister fulfils a similar function, dragging Laura somewhere that frightens her, and uncovering her eyes to what she would not want to see. Under her spell, which on the realistic plane boils down to simple incommunicability, Laura is led to an experience of otherness on two levels. First, she encounters real pain in the young widow, whose look engenders a *dédoublement* that enables Laura to recognise herself as a meaningless 'stranger in the kitchen' (Hammond 2014: 99; Thorndike-Breeze 2016: 78). Then, trying to flee the widow's pain, she progresses further into the netherworld, stepping into the bedroom to encounter the dead carter himself.

She is still guided in the discovery by Em's sister, who now fondly introduces the unveiling with the contradictory announcement: ''e looks a picture. There's nothing to show' (CS: 261). These conventional words eerily echo Mrs Sheridan's praise in giving Laura the hat: 'My child! […] I have never seen you look such a picture. Look at yourself!' (CS: 255). In that instance as well, Laura had initially not intended to look: only 'quite by chance', as she walked into her bedroom, had she seen 'this charming girl in the mirror', topped with a black hat that holds some association with mourning. Thus, when Laura goes to look at the carter's body, she implicitly accepts to look at her self, too.

> There lay a young man, fast asleep — sleeping so soundly, so deeply, that he was far, far away from them both. Oh, so remote, so peaceful. He was dreaming. Never wake him up again. His head was sunk in the pillow, his eyes were closed; they were blind under the closed eyelids. He was given up to his dream. What did garden-parties and baskets and lace frocks matter to him? He was far from all those things. He was wonderful, beautiful. While they were laughing and while the band was playing, this marvel had come to the lane. Happy . . . happy . . . All is well, said that sleeping face. This is just as it should be. I am content. (CS: 261)

There is a general agreement that this is the story's central point of significance, but whether it grants a revelation to Laura, and of what kind, is still subject to debate. According to Head, Laura's insight is blurred by the persistence of her acquired 'Sheridanese' language which does not have words to express deeper feelings of human unity across class boundaries (1992: 135-36). Defromont thinks that Laura 'misses the last step in her experience': when faced with the dead carter, she is led astray by her childlike imagination and 'at the very moment of reaching the other gloomy shore, she transformed it into its opposite: life itself' (1989: 163). Readings like these are textually plausible. Mourning is aestheticised at other points in the story, by Josie while trying her voice, and by Goldberg's man enjoying his tragic account. There is a chance that Laura here might be unconsciously repeating this attitude as a distancing strategy. However, a reverse reading is also possible. Wheeler claims that 'the quintessential form success in self-realisation takes in Mansfield's stories is an aesthetic response - either to the beauty in nature or in works of art' (1994: 140). If this is true, Laura shows signs of even greater achievement, going so far as responding to the beauty in death. This is plausible, considering the vision Mansfield had elaborated since after the war:

> Now we know ourselves for what we are. In a way its [*sic*] a tragic knowledge. Its [*sic*] as though, even while we live again we face death. But through Life: thats [*sic*] the point. We see death in life as we see death in a flower that is fresh unfolded. Our hymn is to the flower's beauty – we would make that beauty immortal because we know. (To JMM, 16 November 1919, CLKM 3: 97)

Laura's journey to the otherworld forces her to come to pacts with life and death and the presence of the one into the other. Her identification with the carter frames a truth that lies deeper than the petty concerns of human society: 'what did garden-parties and baskets and lace frocks matter to him?'. The carter is 'beautiful' and 'far' from these things, just as life's core is a wholly different thing from how it is usually thought about.

This discovery marks the completion of Laura's initiation journey: she finally 'found her way out of the door', but also found herself unable to articulate her discovery: '"Isn't life", she stammered, "isn't life – "But what life was she couldn't explain. No matter. He

quite understood. "*Isn't* it, darling?" said Laurie' (CS: 261). These lines reinforce the mystery of Laura's experience with Mansfield's favourite question about the possibility of unspoken understanding. Does Laurie really get what she feels, or is his answer just an empty phrase for when there is nothing to say? Mansfield's memories of her own brother encourage the first interpretation: 'it was always our delight to sit together – you remember? - & talk of the old days, […] & by our eyes expressing when speech ended how intimately we understood each other' (14 February 1916, D: 204). Based on this entry, we can imagine a genuine understanding between the siblings, precisely when words fail. Inarticulateness, besides, might not have to do with Laura's personal limitations, but with the intrinsic ineffability of her discovery:

> color shines and wants only to shine. If we try to make it comprehensible by analyzing it into numbers of oscillations it is gone. It shows itself only when it remains undisclosed and unexplained. [...] The earth is openly illuminated as itself only where it is apprehended and preserved as the essentially undisclosable, as that which withdraws from every disclosure (Heidegger 2002: 25).

Heidegger's words aptly describe Laura's discovery, and Mansfield's epiphanies at large. Life's truth can only shine as unexplained, it is only discovered as essentially concealed. Language, a fundamentally analytical tool, cannot deal with these intrinsic contradictions, and that is why, as Laura proves by herself, in the face of an authentic epiphany words fail. At the same time, since the ultimate truth remains undisclosed, there is always the possibility of being deceived, which Mansfield's stories leave dutifully open. Through Laura, and throughout her work, Mansfield addresses the frustration of any attempt to impose on this mystery of life an order and a clear interpretation. 'The Garden Party', more explicitly than other examples, fulfils the aim of the story as Mansfield conceived it, leaving us with the most explicit and elusive of all questions: what is life?

4.4 Conclusion

> And yet one has these 'glimpses' before which all that one ever has written (what has one written) all (yes, all) that one has ever read, pales…The waves, as I drove home this afternoon – and the high foam, how it was suspended in the air before it fell…What is it that happens in that moment of suspension? It is timeless. In that moment (what do I mean) the whole life of the soul is contained. One is flung up – out of life – one is 'held' – and then, down, bright, broken, glittering on to the rocks, part of the ebb and flow. I don't want to be sentimental. But while one hangs, suspended in the air – held – while I watched the spray I was conscious for life of the white sky with a web of torn grey over it, of the slipping, sliding, slithering sea, of the dark woods blotted against the cape, of the flowers on the tree I was passing – and more – of a huge cavern where my selves (who were like ancient seaweed gatherers) mumbled, indifferent and intimate…and this other self apart in the carriage grasping the cold knob of her umbrella. (1921, D: 310)

This journal entry offers a comprehensive summary of Mansfield's special moments, and not only hers. They are events happening in real life, whose intensity she has yet to express satisfactorily (as all that she ever wrote pales before them). They arrest time and space and temporarily fling the self out of life, where it can contemplate things with a different intensity. The object of its contemplation however is hardly reportable, because it participates in ecstatic ineffability ('what do I mean'). This reaches out to a millennial tradition of mysticism where ecstatic and aesthetic contemplation are joined. Aesthetic perception is very strong. The sky, the sea, the 'dark wood blotted against the cape' and the inevitable flowered tree strike Mansfield as a composition of things existing at the same time in her visual field, as if in a picture. Gumbrecht claims that aesthetic experience, the pure perception of an object outside its usual function in everyday life, brings us closer to the sheer presence of things. An epiphany is the way in which the pure presence of an object manifests itself unpredictably in everyday life and soon fades, giving to aesthetic experience the status of an exceptional event (2004: 94-118). This view that things can suddenly become extra-ordinary just in their presence seems to describe how the landscape catches Mansfield's attention here: she does not 'understand' anything new from it, but feels 'conscious for life' of the existence of things, like the man in 'The Escape' was

'conscious' of the tree, in a way that would not have been possible if she had remained, as usual, 'in' life. She involuntarily achieved a successful *epoché*.

As this intense perception of things grants the feeling of a more unmediated encounter with the world, the aesthetic moment thus conceived assumes epistemological value. Even in the 1930s, Heidegger claimed that art enables people to overcome their usual mental filters and come in contact for a moment with the true being of things. This experience is temporary, because truth is etymologically *aletheia*, the ancient Greek for 'un-hidden-ness', and for something to be unhidden, it is necessary to have it hidden most of the time (2002: 28-30). Thus, truth cannot be permanently attained, but 're-dis-covered' every now and then in moments in which the everyday layer of ordinary perceptual habit is lifted. This is a possible interpretation of Mansfield's image of being 'held' out of life before going back once more to the ordinary ebb and flow, an experience she often transposes to her characters. In this light, Mansfield's poetics of vision and her struggle against ineffability find their reason: the only way to recreate a contact with the true being of things is to reproduce their presence, because it is in the encounter that the epistemological discovery is embedded; yet, if truth can only be seen in a suspension of the everyday, our language suited to everyday use will struggle to convey it. This impermanence of truth also affects the flowering of the self. The experience above is said indeed to make Mansfield 'conscious for life' not just of the outside world, but also of the hidden dimension of her layered self. If this discovery can only be temporary, perhaps the flourishing of the authentic self, like all flourishing, will also be a cyclical rather than permanent attainment, implying that authenticity, in all its declensions, is always provisional.

Here the prismatic view of exceptional moments as ecstatic, psychological and structural comes together. There are moments when things manifest their presence to our senses with unexpected intensity. Their aesthetic perception suspends the course of ordinary life and, as it seems to bring the things of the world in closer contact, grants the impression of having attained a more authentic level of experience. From this position, it is possible to perceive a relation between things, a web of connections that joins all beings,

including the self, in a meaningful pattern whose purpose is unknown, but whose balance is as perfect as a work of art. The condition of authenticity enables a true connection with one's profoundest self or with another human being and, by contrast, exposes the falsity and alienation of ordinary human life. For Mansfield, as for many colleagues of hers, these experiences needed to feature at the core of literature: art tries to piece them together and rebuild a pattern, drawing on the special instances in which the whole becomes apparent. Thus, in Mansfield's fiction, epiphanic moments generate a displacement that grants a clearer vision and opens up possibilities of authentic existence, provisional but constantly renewed.

Conclusions

When this work started, its intent was to explore epiphany in the work of four authors in order to clear its nebulosity and come closer to defining it as a concept. However, it became apparent that trying too hard to pin down an experience whose power comes from vagueness and suggestiveness risks altogether missing its point. The first discovery that this journey brought out was precisely that dealing with modernist epiphanies requires being willing to dwell in an area of uncertainty, subjectivity, and ambiguity that offers no landing point. When we accept that a variety of experiences can be defined as epiphanies based on their family resemblance, and that the critical notion they frame is a blurred concept, we are left with no comprehensive checklist to decide whether or not a particular narrative scene is an epiphany. Any decision in this sense must be argued for, and can always be subjectively disputed. This is probably why this experience felt congenial to early-twentieth-century authors interested in actively involving the reader in their text. This is also why previous critical approaches based on 'verifying' the manifestation or its efficacy prove ultimately unsatisfactory. To the reader looking for evidence and clear answers, modernist epiphany rather offers more complex questions. This does not, however, undermine its sense of deep and undisputable truth. Quite the contrary – this is a second, maybe not-so-obvious finding – precisely its openness to interpretation and logical ambiguity may be the origin of its perceived authority of insight.

The unprofitability of a unique, all-encompassing theory of epiphany does not imply that studying the phenomenon is impossible or without value. The family resemblance of these different experiences is real and historically warranted, and investigating its cultural causes and aesthetic effects provided valuable tools for close reading. As was desirable in a comparative analysis, the case studies here juxtaposed shed light on each other, bringing out common threads and individual nuances in the aesthetics of illuminations. A complex set of stimuli emerged which, singularly or combined, may have attracted the attention of these different authors to the same kind of experience. Each of the chapters explored a prominent mode of an author's epiphanic imagination, in order to highlight one of the

many faces of modernist epiphanies. At the same time, an attempt has been made to suggest that each perspective is neither unique nor exclusive and could bear valuable fruit if applied to other authors, in this selection and beyond. The present findings are indeed also an invitation to readers to continue experimenting with these interpretive keys outside the limited area of application allowed by this work. The evidence gathered here suggests they not only allow for a more profound appreciation of the modernist interest in epiphanies, but also chime with broader aesthetic issues, and thus may be of use in understanding the literary taste of early twentieth-century Europe at large.

A first trait that is common among all cases considered is the estrangement from ordinary perception that creates the conditions for exceptional insight. From Pirandello's 'vedersi vivere' to Joyce's contemplation of *integritas* and *consonantia*, from Tozzi's defamiliarising outlook to Mansfield's suspension, the root of modernist epiphany is an experience of wonder at the ordinary: a readjustment of focus that questions the triviality of things and allows the subject to perceive them as if for the first time. Thus freed from the filter of assumptions, reality displays implications that are normally overlooked, granting a sense of authenticity to its subjective discovery. This process, as was foreshadowed by Debenedetti (1992: 336) and Barilli (1986: 285), among others, is analogous to the *epoché* described by Husserl as the bracketing of judgement that is required in order to experience phenomena as they are first given to consciousness. A phenomenological interpretive key, drawing mainly on Merleau-Ponty's or Husserl's thought, has been insightfully applied in recent years to Joyce's epiphanies (Azérad 2002; Kearney 2010; Levina 2017). The intercultural affinities that emerged in the previous chapters suggest it could be extremely relevant to other authors as well, including, but not only, those investigated here.

In the present context, Merleau-Ponty's discussion of Husserl's thought in his Preface to the *Phenomenology of Perception* has been taken as the main theoretical reference point, precisely for its retrospective synthesis of phenomenology's core themes. This introduction is illuminating about the modernist attitude towards experience, aesthetics, and, as a consequence, epiphanies. Langbaum's claim that 'realism and psychology make epiphany a modern mode' (1983: 341), for instance, acquires a specific resonance in the light

of Merleau-Ponty's suggestion that 'la plus importante acquisition de la phénoménologie est sans doute d'avoir joint l'extrême subjectivisme et l'extrême objectivisme dans sa notion du monde' (1976: XV).[1] One of the broader aesthetic concerns of authors writing in these years was precisely to balance out naturalist objectivity and aestheticist psychologism. Phenomenology's consequent aim to describe the world exactly as it is experienced by a subject, since 'tout ce que je sais du monde, même par science, je le sais à partir d'une vue mienne' (Merleau-Ponty 1976: II),[2] is thus strongly reminiscent of the typical perspective realism of modernist literary experimentation. Even the famous 'inward turn' of modernist writers, with its interest in how the individual consciousness processes the world, resembles an aesthetic anticipation of the phenomenological 'ambition d'égaler la réflexion à la vie irréfléchie de la conscience' (Merleau-Ponty 1976: XI).[3] Underlying this impressionistic method is the intention to embrace individual experience as capable of knowing things for what they are, perceiving their essence not as a metaphysical abstraction, but as an intrinsic part of their embodied existence. Both phenomenology and modernism are in this sense intent on re-achieving 'ce contact naïf avec le monde' (Merleau-Ponty 1976: I).[4] It seems thus particularly interesting that, in many scholars' opinion, what distinguishes modern epiphany from pre-modern vision is that it arises directly from perception or sensation (Beja 1971; Langbaum 1983; Nichols 1987). Even when it is framed as a metaphysical insight, as in some of Pirandello's and Mansfield's moments, modernist epiphany is concerned with concrete reality: the impalpable force of life or an overarching divine spirit are only ever *sensed* in and through their effects on incarnate beings. Epiphanies respond to the attempt of a consciousness embedded in reality to gain enough distance from it to observe its greater picture, sense her place in it, and try to understand something of its function.

[1] 'The chief gain from phenomenology is to have united extreme subjectivism and extreme objectivism in its notion of the world' (2002: xxii).
[2] 'All my knowledge of the world, even my scientific knowledge, is gained from my own particular point of view' (2002: ix).
[3] 'Ambition to make reflection emulate the unreflective life of consciousness' (2002: xvii).
[4] 'A direct and primitive contact with the world' (2002: vii).

The works considered in this research were partly developed in the same years as Husserl was forming his own ideas, which makes direct philosophical influence unlikely. However, the points of contact suggest that a new sensitivity was in the making, which bore its fruits in literature as well as in philosophical thought. This, after all, confirms the view of Merleau-Ponty himself, who presented phenomenology 'comme manière ou comme style [qui] existe comme mouvement, avant d'être parvenue à une entière conscience philosophique', and whose practitioners included antecedents like Hegel, Kierkegaard, Nietsche, and Freud, among others, whose influence on the writers of this generation has long been acknowledged (1976: II).[5] Further research will be able to illuminate more specifically the crucial philosophical evolution from idealism to phenomenology in relation to the epochal shift from Romanticism to Modernism in European literature, as Bourne-Taylor and Mildenberg (2010) have begun to do.

This kinship with phenomenology helps to contextualise the other primary ingredient of a modernist epiphany: the experience of transcendence. Transcendence, as Moran (2008) remarks, seems to contradict the phenomenological intention to stay 'within' the world. Yet to some extent it is embedded in the phenomenological attitude, as well as in the exceptional moments of the authors here presented. Pirandello talked quite literally of epiphany as a 'going beyond' the forms of human reason, detailing estrangement, in Merleau-Ponty's terms, as a way of overcoming the natural attitude and becoming aware of the frames through which our consciousness relates to reality. On the other hand, Joyce's idea of an object's soul 'leaping from the vestments of its appearance' brings into focus the process of 'transcendance vers le monde' (Merleau-Ponty 1976: VIII)[6] whereby a subject tunes in to reality, discovering truth at once in the object observed and in himself. It is important to note that both processes are at once reliable *and* biased: the truth discovered is genuine but it is also incomplete, in the same way as one can only ever see a few sides of a die at any one time. There is indeed a third sense in which a phenomenological attitude ends up reinstating transcendence: its awareness that, no matter how successful the

[5] 'As a manner or style of thinking, that […] existed as a movement before arriving at complete awareness of itself as a philosophy' (2002: viii).
[6] 'Process of transcendence toward the world' (2002: xv).

bracketing, reality always exceeds subjective perception. 'Je suis ouvert au monde, je communique indubitablement avec lui, mais je ne le possède pas, il est inépuisable' as Merleau-Ponty puts it (1976: XII).[7] This is true not only for the outer world, but also for inner reality, since 'il n'y a pas de pensée qui embrasse toute notre pensée' (1976: IX).[8] Tozzi's perception of a mysterious life within the self and of the limitations of the human power of understanding can plausibly be read in this key. Mansfield, Pirandello, and Woolf's intuitions on interconnectedness are also reminiscent of this motif. It is thus possible to recognise modernist epiphanies as moments of transcendence of human limitations and encounter with a greater reality, but which remain firmly and deliberately within this world.

It is arguably due to this transcendence that the experience of epiphany, as Levina notices, recalls the double structure of linguistic signs, where appearance and essence do not coincide. There follows the impression that what appears is not all there is to know, but a hint at a further meaning which emerges in the conditions of proper receptivity. This vision seems to hark back to older currents of idealism, but the impression of reality as 'ciphered' is not a critical misinterpretation to be discarded 'for its metaphysical assumptions' (Levina 2017: 192). The fundamental continuity between the Romantic sensitivity and its late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century evolution provides a consistent historical and cultural reason for which this idea was familiar and fascinating for all authors considered here. Early-twentieth-century authors focused on overcoming the structural biases of our ordinary attitude that distort knowledge of existing reality, rather than on realising reality's participation in a rational spiritual order. Yet the perception of 'some real thing behind appearances' (Woolf 1985: 72), the common starting notion that reality has depths that are not immediately apparent, is common to all of them. For Pirandello, there lies the relentless indifferent movement of life, which he stoically faces. Joyce finds further layers of reality, which he aesthetically appreciates. For Tozzi there is a psychological profundity, which he probes. Mansfield discerns there a possibility of

[7] 'I am open to the world, I have no doubt that I am in communication with it, but I do not possess it, it is inexhaustible' (2002: xviii-xix).
[8] 'There is no thought which embraces all our thought' (2002: xv).

fulfilment, which she questions. It is unnecessary and potentially misleading to deny their fascination with transcendence in the attempt to purge metaphysical assumptions from them and detach them from their 'less modern' antecedents. After all, modernity had begun much earlier than the period here considered, and there is an undeniable continuity of concerns and solutions between these authors and their antecedents, even as their understanding of the world and of the place of humanity within it had remarkably evolved.

The possibility of interpreting reality in this sign-meaning key is noticeable in the association of epiphanies with symbols and allegories. Both these figures rely precisely on a discrepancy between signifier and signified, whereby what is visible refers to something greater than itself. The aesthetic debate around their distinctive value during the Romantic age extolled the symbol as the master trope, capable of manifesting in a finite image the infinity in which it was organically inscribed. Largely due to Benjamin's and De Man's reappraisal of allegory as a form which, in its self-awareness of its distance from meaning, could brutally convey the truth of the human condition, the perspective was later reversed, with allegory coming to be perceived as more attuned to modern consciousness. However, as Carr (2017) notes, the theoretical debate reveals vast areas in which distinctions become blurred, to the point where the two figures only make sense as independent concepts when conceived in dialectic relation to each other. From the point of view of the present investigation, distinguishing between allegory and symbol does not add to an understanding of epiphanies as experiences of transcendence: both are effective ways to read reality as especially significant and present it as such on the page. There may be a preferred use of symbols in epiphanies of translucence or a prevalence of allegories in framing epiphanies, as more specialised research might be able to confirm. Based on the material considered here, however, both devices are part of these authors' toolbox. Their search for essence through existence and their perspectivist approach to genuine truth suggest precisely a dialectic employment of the two: symbols are embedded in allegorical narrative structures which relativise their significance and enhance their enigmatic quality, and at the same time endow those structures with a universal value. The figures are indeed used to varying degrees, according to how the authors themselves negotiate their double

attraction to reality and idealism, temporality and aspiration to the atemporal, internal fragmentation and longing for wholeness, distance from meaning and pursuit thereof.

Both symbol and allegory have a long tradition of use in religious discourse, and indeed reading reality as 'signs pointing to a greater meaning' is a characteristic feature of religious experience. Mircea Eliade describes precisely in symbolic terms the manifestation of the sacred: 'a *sacred* stone remains a *stone*; apparently (or, more precisely, from the profane point of view), nothing distinguishes it from all other stones. But for those to whom a stone reveals itself as sacred, its immediate reality is transmuted into a supernatural reality' (1987: 12). An epiphany does not necessarily manifest the sacred, but functions exactly as described by Eliade, manifesting reality at once as *the thing as we knew it* and as *the thing itself*. The lawyer in 'La carriola' is still himself after realising that he is not-himself; Gretta Conroy is Gabriel's wife and a stranger with a life of her own; the abject girl in 'Il crocifisso' is just a girl and the whole of humanity; the woman's song in 'The Escape' is still music as it becomes the voice of silence. The sense that the world and its significance exceed individual understanding is, indeed, culturally contiguous with religious experience, and so is the modality in which this transcendence becomes manifest. Epiphanies seem to behave exactly like sacred events, interrupting homogeneous time and space with experiences of timeless significance and putting the human subject in contact with the real fullness of being.

The strong connection between epiphanies and religious experiences, as well as with the tradition of their literary representation, is no new concept in epiphany scholarship. Their usual association, initiated by Beja's seminal study, is with 'the archetypal pattern of conversion' (1971: 25-26). This view has often been referred to in scholarship, not least because of its compatibility with the criterion of efficacy, leading in some case to the depiction of epiphany in all respects as a lay conversion (e.g. McDonald 2008). While recognising the validity of some of Beja's objections to the identification between epiphanies and mysticism, however, the results of the present investigation invert his preference and affirm that a parallel between epiphany and conversion exists only insofar as conversions are one possible outcome of mystical experiences. This interpretation draws

on William James' psychological study of religion, which considers mysticism not as a rare and radical extreme, but as the origin and primary expression of the religious feeling. W. James' study is coeval with the years of these authors' formation and can thus provide an insight into their age's secular interest in religious phenomena. His perspective made it possible to move away from the analogy between epiphany and conversion and rather reappraise their resemblance to mystical experiences as occasional, repeatable moments of insight whose value is intrinsic and self-contained. As explored in the previous chapters, modernist epiphanies are remarkably close to W. James' description of mystical experiences, both being characterised by ineffability, noetic quality, transiency, and passivity. Furthermore, textual analysis highlighted how epiphanies sometimes correspond to specific types of mystical experience inventoried by W. James: Pirandello's waves of scepticism for the unreality of reality, Joyce's sensitivity to the deepened significance of words or sensory impressions, Tozzi's perception of an incomprehensible all-encompassing meaning, Mansfield's cosmic consciousness are some particularly memorable examples – while, of course, none of these types is strictly specific to any of these authors, and many are common to more than one.

The occurrence of these sacred-looking manifestations, however, takes place in a desacralized culture, dominated by isolation, relativity and fragmentation, where cyclical time has been divorced from any divine perspective and only appears as terrifying, nonsensical repetition. In this context, epiphanies can certainly be seen as a reaction to the anguish of meaninglessness, a tool that, as Neuhold puts it, 'patches up the sore spots of early 20th century experience' (2009: 203). If reaction they be, however, it is not necessarily an escapist one; they may well aim at re-endowing the world with meaning through a centuries-old anthropological pattern. The permanence of religious models in an age of secularisation is not surprising when considering that the religious need 'expresses an unquenchable ontological thirst' (Eliade 1987: 64) closely aligned with what phenomenology and vitalism were grappling with at the time. It seems significant, for instance, that the ancient religious symbolism of water as 'the universal sum of virtualities' '"spring and origin", the reservoir of all the possibilities of existence' which 'precede every

form and support every creation' (Eliade 1987: 130) is discernible in two crucial metaphors of modern philosophy, Bergson's vital flow and W. James' current of consciousness. Manifestations of life inspired by these views are thus, to an extent, supported by still-productive religious interpretive frames. Whether it is the metaphor that endows the idea of life with a sense of sacredness, or it is the perception of the sacredness of life that evokes this primordial religious imagery is a chicken-and-egg problem.

Epiphanies, in sum, accord importance to the thing as such, affirming its value even as it is detached from any rational divine design, but still largely do so by relying on religious paradigms. They are by-products of the decline of Christianity and could not disregard their heritage: even in secular modernity, Eliade remarks, a purely nonreligious person is as rare as 'a purely rational man is an abstraction' (Eliade 1987: 209). Our authors were certainly neither of the two. Not only were they in close contact with orthodox religion – whether, like Pirandello and Joyce, through a strictly Catholic education they later rejected, or through subsequent rapprochements like Tozzi and Mansfield – but, most importantly, they shared an avowed fascination for spirituality in the most intimate sense. This fostered an early interest in the late-nineteenth-century religion of art and in the Romantic sublime, and subsequently in the sphere of religious spirituality proper, whether as official Christian mysticism, in the case of Tozzi and Joyce, or through the contemporary esoteric vogue, for Pirandello and Mansfield. It is thus definitely possible, on the basis of the evidence presented here, to support Kim's claim that 'the secularisation of epiphany does not provide an aesthetic substitute for religion, but for spirituality, which has no formal structure of belief' (2012: 17).

What attracted these authors to spirituality outside the public religious structures was the psychological side: the perception of mental expansion, or, in W. James' terminology, the 'wide field of consciousness' that comes when passing from waking reason into the different mental state that characterises spiritual experience (2012: 181). W. James' mental model can be pictured as a succession of waves of consciousness coming from the subconscious sea, whose crests rise just above the threshold of awareness. If that threshold is lowered, it becomes possible to sense that the separate 'peaks' all come from

that mysterious subconscious whole. This suggests a reading of the epiphanic experiences as events that, similarly to mystical states, lower the threshold of consciousness to include a greater portion of each wave. The consequent insight is perceived as irrational because it brings awareness closer to the a-rational subconscious region, and yet feels true because it grants a feeling of the greater whole to which each manifestation of mental activity belongs. Hence comes the sense of ineffable, unjustifiable, and yet unquestionable insight, and of full existence in cosmic interconnection, where 'the other in its various forms appears absorbed into the One' (James 2012: 297). This is also not foreign to Merleau-Ponty, for whom the single subjective consciousness is immediately in touch with the real world 'en tant que nous sommes tous une seule lumière et que nous participons à l'Un sans le diviser' (2002: xiii).[9] Indeed, as hinted above, the 'thirst for being' (Eliade 1987: 64) is the ground on which religious feeling and phenomenological attitude cohere.

Recent studies on Tozzi provide the missing link between mysticism, lay transcendence, and the phenomenological 'ambition to make reflection emulate the unreflective life of consciousness' (Merleau-Ponty 2002: xvii) by proposing to look at epiphanies as bi-logical structures. The feelings of timelessness, of ineffable depth, of being acted upon by a superior power and of universal connection that constitute a major appeal of mystical experiences are indeed prominent features of the system unconscious that, according to Matte Blanco's theory, emerges when the logic of emotions intervenes to complement waking thought. In the present work, this reading has been most directly applied to Tozzi's stories, due to his declared interest in investigating the mind, but emotional build-up in a character or in the passage's narrative style emerged as a transversally crucial component of epiphanic moments, and can no doubt offer a major key for close readings in other corpuses as well. This interpretation suggests that the interest in epiphanies as crypto-religious experiences was neither just a matter of tradition, nor a backward-looking refuge from the anguish of the present, but, to a large extent, another way of investigating the darker regions of the psyche and the specific knowledge they can

[9] 'Insofar as we are all one light and participate in the One without destroying its unity' (2002: xiii).

provide. In this light, even when their interpretation is dubious or the character's reaction is negative, they promote an instance of reconciliation, opposing the individual's alienation from the primordial, affective part of the self that modernity overlooks, fears, or represses. Perhaps it is precisely the bridge they create between the conscious and the unconscious, the cognizant self and its hidden repository of connection, spirituality, and creativity, that grants this moment the power to restore, if only fleetingly, the sense of fullness to life.

Unconscious logic pushes human reason to its limits, confronting it with inarticulable content and multi-dimensional thought which can hardly be unfolded in logical discourse. The ensuing sense of ineffability and proliferation of paradoxes can feel frustrating but also profoundly satisfying, in that it allows one to perceive a 'coincidence of opposites' – the closest thing to seeing the multifaceted solid of reality *all at once*. Precisely in pursuit of this capacity Bergson developed his method of intuition. If Matte Blanco's theory brings out epiphany's link with phenomenology, religion, and psychology, Bergson's thought, alongside W. James', was probably the philosophical crossroads where all these tendencies converged, circulating in the European debate as stimuli for our authors' imagination. Mansfield and Tozzi studied and appreciated Bergson, and most likely Pirandello and Joyce also encountered his ideas as they were discussed in their intellectual circles. Bergson's interest in the world as processed by consciousness, and his effort to reverse it toward its very origin brought him close, in several respects, both to Husserl and W. James (Kelly 2010: 3; Evans 2017: 4). His metaphysics studies life as an embodied principle shaping reality and the human perception of it. His effort to find this principle *in interiore homine* by reversing the course of consciousness coincides with an attempt to boost the capability of rational knowledge by merging it with irrational instinct. The resulting concept of intuition is another close relative in the family of epiphanies. Bergson's suggestion that intuition could be induced by an evocation of contrasts relies precisely on the summoning of unconscious logic and its principle of '*no*-contradiction'. Literary epiphanies, while appearing as sudden and unexpected gifts rather than as the fruit of a deliberate philosophical method, can be seen to work in a similar way. The source

of their charm is their summoning all the faculties of the mind, conscious and unconscious, as an aesthetic way to achieve an intuition of the vital.

It thus becomes clearer how literary epiphany is part of the modernist dream of understanding life. The complex suggestions from philosophy and psychology just mentioned are woven together in an effort to excavate deeper into reality and into the self, and find the point where these two directions of research converge. Epiphany is thus another facet of the modernist effort to reach the universally human through a full immersion into the individually subjective. It continues a Romantic endeavour, but with the phenomenological intention to look *at* reality through subjective perception, not *through* reality at its ideal essence. The ultimate aesthetic target for all these authors, what they try so hard to capture in their writing, is 'life': a mysterious, complex, and evanescent entity, even more so in the circumstances of historical modernity. Investigations of early twentieth-century literature often focus on its power to highlight the negative sides of modern life: alienation, incommunicability, incomprehension. There is, however, also another side to be kept into account: the declarations of love for life that many of these authors shared. This is not incompatible with their criticism of their age, nor should it be taken as replacing that critical key in a sort of false reconciliation. The positive thrust of life, its affirmative power which can be felt despite any philosophical acknowledgement of absurdity, meaninglessness, and evil, is perhaps the ultimate paradox they grapple with in an effort to understand it fully and do it justice. The same rule applies to this endeavour as to the epiphanies that support it: 'il s'agit de décrire, et non pas d'expliquer ni d'analyser' (Merleau-Ponty 1976: II).[10]

This foregrounds another important distinction that is key in an investigation of epiphanies: they are areas where *understanding* does not necessarily lead to the possibility of *explaining*, where authors feel they reached the limits of what can be articulated. Perhaps due to the high degree of unconscious logic involved, when life manifests itself in their texts, it does so in ambiguous, elusive or contradictory ways, and *that* is the sign that it

[10] 'It is a matter of describing, not of explaining or analysing' (2002: ix).

appeared in its most authentic shape: a state of highest complexity and moral neutrality of which it is only possible, and necessary, to give subjective descriptions. It is thus unsurprising that the modernist epiphanies where life seems to be understood fully and directly cannot but result ambiguous on the page, both in their narrative consequences and in their being epiphanies at all. Pirandello generously highlights his epiphanies through lyrical or essayistic treatment, but his aesthetic of opposites implies the characters' findings are often contradictory, and their perspective is subtly shown to be partial to say the least. In Joyce's stories, by contrast, epiphanies are so embedded in the realistic rendering that is nearly impossible to claim with complete certainty that they are there at all, or that they affirm something more than the characters' own self-delusions. Yet his focus on the significance of trivial things induces a reconsideration of every smallest detail, thus drawing attention through the text to the richness of everyday existence. Tozzi poses a similar signalling problem, but in reverse: his focalised characters are so evidently oversensitive that we can hardly claim we caught a meaningful moment out of the many somersaults of their consciousness. Precisely this neurosis, however, makes them receptive to genuine manifestations of the emotional capability of their subconscious. Mansfield also calls into question the reliability of illuminations filtered through her character's point of view, but many of her stories nonetheless feature mysterious moments endowed with a lyrical or dramatic force which, in *Dubliners* and *Giovani*, is comparatively rare. The plausibility of diverse and even contradictory interpretations for all their moments condenses in epiphanies life's own creative potential. They become parts of the text where 'the virtual totality of experience […] tends to unfold itself and reconstitute itself by playing out all its possible combinations' (Derrida in Levina 2017: 215). This interpretive fluidity evokes the constellation in whose centre the reader, according to Bergson, can achieve an intuition of the vital. By constructing frames for the readers themselves to make sense of experience, they offer an example of how 'le monde phénoménologique, c'est, non pas de

l'être pur, mais le sens qui transparaît à l'intersection de mes expériences' (Merleau-Ponty 1976: XV).[11]

The framing principle underlies Charles Taylor's description of the modernist 'epiphanies of interspaces', which appear to be based on what is fundamentally Bergson's method: catalysing an intuition through a constellation of realistic details. His analysis of epiphanies in *Sources of the Self* remains crucial for understanding the value of modernist epiphanies in early twentieth-century (and contemporary) Western culture. However, his case studies were necessarily limited in number and in the space that could be given to close reading, and, like much other research on epiphany, focused on poetry rather than prose. The present work has aimed, among other things, to show the fruitfulness of applying his idea of interspatial epiphanies to fiction, specifically choosing short stories for their narrative concentration. In so doing, it highlighted recurrent aspects of the experience that in previous investigations have often remained secondary, including their being self-contained and their evoking a coincidence of opposites – both of which suggest the infinite possibilities of life and of its interpretation. The most exciting discovery, in this sense, is the positive light that modernist epiphanies shed on ambiguity and indeterminacy. The common effort that can be recognised behind these authors' aesthetic research is to convey reality as complex, multi-layered, and charged with infinite potential for evolution. Questioning our ordinary perception of the world and refusing to assert a univocal new vision in its place is not merely a destructive act of mistrust in human understanding, but a decision to foreground the capability – hardly conquered and always subject to failure and relapse – for personal creation and choice. In other words, in reading modernist literature 'il nous faut reconnaître l'indéterminé comme un phénomène positif. C'est dans cette atmosphère que se présente la qualité. Le sens qu'elle renferme est un sens équivoque' (Merleau-Ponty 1976: 12).[12]

[11] ''The phenomenological world is not pure being, but the sense which is revealed where the paths of my various experiences intersect' (2002: xxii).
[12] 'We must recognize the indeterminate as a positive phenomenon. It is in this atmosphere that quality arises. Its meaning is an equivocal meaning' (2002: 7).

As with any comparative work, much more is left to be done than could ever be accomplished here. Further research could look at whether the concept of epiphany that emerged from this encounter of perspectives can be applied to these authors beyond the limited number of works considered here. It could be extended to other genres, particularly novels. Other authors of the same period could be considered under this lens, to test whether the cultural affinities that here suggest a possible use of modernism as an international category still hold true; or it could be possible to explore what happens to this phenomenon in more modern literature. It is hoped, however, that this reassessment of modernist epiphanies can serve to deepen our understanding of this elusive phenomenon without stripping it of its fascination, and lead us to better appreciate its power of enchantment – or re-enchantment – of literary texts and ordinary life.

Bibliography

Primary Sources

Alighieri, Dante. 1999. *Commedia*, 3 vols, ed. by Anna M. Chiavacci Leonardi (Bologna: Zanichelli), Eng. tr. 1867. *The Divine Comedy of Dante Alighieri*, trans. by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (London: Routledge)

Baudelaire, Charles. 1976. 'De l'essence du rire et généralement du comique dans les arts plastiques', in *Œuvres complètes*, Bibliothèque de la Pléiade (Paris: Gallimard), pp. 525–43

Benjamin, Walter. 1977. *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*, ed. by George Steiner, trans. by John Osborne (London: NLB)

Bergson, Henri. 1903. 'Introduction à la métaphysique', *Revue de métaphysique et de morale*, 11.1: 1–36, Eng. tr. 2007. *The Creative Mind: An Introduction to Metaphysics*, trans. by Mabelle L. Andison (New York: Dover Publications)

———. 1907. *L'Evolution créatrice* (3ème éd.) (Paris: Alcan) <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k991406s> [accessed 31 January 2019]

Eng. tr. 2001. *Creative Evolution*, trans. by Arthur Mitchell (London: Electric Book Company)

———. 1915. 'Notes and News', *The Journal of Philosophy, Psychology and Scientific Methods*, 12.22: 615–16

D'Annunzio, Gabriele. 1900. *Il fuoco*, (Milano: Fratelli Treves) <http://archive.org/details/ilfuocod00dannuoft> [accessed 23 August 2018]

Eng. tr. 1916. *The Flame of Life*, trans. by Kassandra Vivaria (Boston: Page) <http://archive.org/details/flameoflifenovel00dann> [accessed 23 August 2018]

Eliade, Mircea. 1987. *The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion*, trans. by Willard R. Trask (Orlando: Harcourt)

Freud, Sigmund. 2003. *The Uncanny*, Methuen Drama Modern Classics, trans. by David McLintock (London: Penguin)

Gogarty, Oliver St John. 1954. *As I Was Going down Sackville Street : A Phantasy in Fact* (Melbourne : Penguin Books) <http://archive.org/details/asiwasgoingdowns00goga>

Heidegger, Martin. 2002. 'The Origin of the Work of Art', in *Off the Beaten Track (Original Title: Holzwege)*, ed. by Julian Young and Kenneth Haynes (Cambridge: Cambridge University

Press), pp. 1–52 <http://users.clas.ufl.edu/burt/filmphilology/heideggerworkofart.pdf> [accessed 30 March 2017]

James, William. 2012. *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, Oxford World's Classics, ed. by Matthew Bradley (Oxford: Oxford University Press), It. tr. 1945. *Le varie forme della coscienza religiosa. Studio sulla natura*, 2nd edn, trans. by Giulio Cesare Ferrari and Mario Calderoni (Milano: Fratelli Bocca) <http://archive.org/details/JamesLeVarieFormeDellaCoscienzaReligiosa> [accessed 26 September 2019]

Joyce, James. 1956. *Epiphanies*, ed. by Oscar A. Silverman (Buffalo: Lockwood Memorial Library, University of Buffalo)

———. 1960. *Stephen Hero. Part of the First Draft of A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, ed. by Theodore Spencer (London: Cape)

———. 1964. *The Critical Writings of James Joyce*, ed. by Ellsworth Mason and Richard Ellmann (New York: Viking Press)

———. 1975. *Selected Letters of James Joyce*, ed. by Richard Ellmann (London: Faber and Faber)

———. 1996. *Dubliners*, Penguin Popular Classics (London: Penguin)

———. 2008. *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, Oxford World's Classics (Oxford: Oxford University Press)

Joyce, Stanislaus. 1958. *My Brother's Keeper* (London: Faber and Faber Limited)

Klima, Gyula, Fritz Allhoff, and Anand Vaidya (eds.). 2007. 'Thomas Aquinas on Being and Essence', in *Medieval Philosophy: Essential Readings with Commentary*, Blackwell Readings in the History of Philosophy (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing) <http://www.loc.gov/catdir/toc/ecip0619/2006025789.html> [accessed 23 January 2018]

Leopardi, Giacomo. 2001. *Zibaldone*, Grandi tascabili economici I mammut 0061, 2. ed (Roma: Newton Compton)

Mansfield, Katherine. 1930. *Novels and Novelists*, ed. by John Middleton Murry (London: Constable & Co.)

———. 2007. *The Collected Stories*, Penguin Classics (London: Penguin)

———. 2014. *The Poetry and Critical Writings of Katherine Mansfield*, Edinburgh Edition of the Collected Works of Katherine Mansfield, v. 3, ed. by Gerri Kimber and Angela Smith (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press)

———. 2016. *The Diaries of Katherine Mansfield: Including Miscellaneous Works*, Edinburgh Edition of the Collected Works of Katherine Mansfield, v. 4, ed. by Gerri Kimber and Claire Davison (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press)

Matte Blanco, Ignacio. 1998. *The Unconscious as Infinite Sets: An Essay in Bi-Logic* (London: Karnac Books)

Merleau-Ponty, Maurice. 1976. *Phénoménologie de la perception* (Paris: Gallimard), Eng. tr. 2002. *Phenomenology of Perception*, Routledge Classics (London: Routledge)

Montale, Eugenio. 2010. 'Avrei voluto sentirmi scabro ed essenziale...', in *Ossi di seppia*, Oscar poesia del Novecento (Milano: Mondadori), pp. 146–48, Eng. tr. 2017. 'I Would Have Liked to Feel Rude and Essential' in 'Selected Poems by Eugenio Montale', *Comparative Critical Studies*, 14.1, trans. by Keith Lander and Carla Scarano D'Antonio: 90–97 <https://doi.org/10.3366/ccs.2017.0223>

de Musset, Alfred. 1857. 'Rolla', in *Poésies Nouvelles (1836-1852)* (Paris: Charpentier), pp. 1–27 <https://fr.wikisource.org/wiki/Po%C3%A9sies_nouvelles_%281836-1852%29/Rolla>

O'Sullivan, Vincent, and Margaret Scott (eds.). 1984. *The Collected Letters of Katherine Mansfield*, 5 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press)

Pirandello, Luigi. 1939. *The Medals and Other Stories* (New York: E.P. Dutton) <http://archive.org/details/medalsotherstori00pira> [accessed 1 January 2020]

———. 1965. *Saggi, poesie, scritti varii*, Classici contemporanei italiani, 2a ed. accresciuta, ed by Manlio Lo Vecchio Musti (Milano: Mondadori)

———. 1984. *Tales of Madness: A Selection from Luigi Pirandello's Short Stories for a Year*, trans. by Giovanni R. Bussino (Brookline Village, MA: Dante University of America Press)

———. 1986. *Maschere nude*, Opere di Luigi Pirandello, 4 vols, ed. by Alessandro D'Amico (Milano: Mondadori)

———. 1988. *Tales of Suicide: A Selection from Luigi Pirandello's Short Stories for a Year*, trans. by Giovanni R. Bussino (Boston: Dante University of America Press)

———. 1993. *Il Fu Mattia Pascal*, ET Classici, ed. by Giancarlo Mazzacurati (Torino: Einaudi), Eng tr. 1923. *The Late Mattia Pascal*, trans. by Arthur Livingston (New York: E.P. Dutton & Company) <https://archive.org/details/in.ernet.dli.2015.39840/page/n5> [accessed 29 December 2019]

———. 1997. *Taccuino segreto*, ed. by Annamaria Andreoli (Milano: Mondadori)

———. 2006. *Saggi e interventi*, I Meridiani, ed. by Ferdinando Taviani (Milano: Mondadori)

———. 2007. *Tutte le novelle*, BUR Classici moderni, 3 vols, ed. by Lucio Lugnani (Milano: BUR)

———. 2013. *Uno, nessuno e centomila*, Live (Roma: Newton Compton), Eng. tr. 2016. *One, None and a Hundred-Thousand* [Online], trans. by Samuel Putnam (Project Gutenberg) <http://gutenberg.net.au/ebooks16/1600681h.html#ch01-02> [accessed 1 January 2020]

———. 2017. *L'umorismo*, Oscar moderni, ed. by Daniela Marcheschi (Milano: Mondadori), Eng. tr. 1974. *On Humor*, ed. by Antonio Illiano and David P. Testa (Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press) <http://archive.org/details/onhumor0000pira> [accessed 29 December 2019]

Proust, Marcel. 1954. *A la recherche du temps perdu*, Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, 100, 3 vols (Paris: Gallimard), I, Eng. tr. 1992. *Swann's Way*, *In Search of Lost Time*, trans. by C.K. Scott Moncrieff and Terence Kilmartin (New York: The Modern Library), I

Svevo, Italo. 2004a. *La coscienza di Zeno*, in *Romanzi e continuazioni*, I Meridiani, ed. by Nunzia Palmieri and Fabio Vittorini (Milano: Mondadori)

———. 2004b. 'Soggiorno Londinese', in *Italo Svevo, Teatro e Saggi*, I Meridiani, ed. by Federico Bertoni (Milano: Mondadori), pp. 893–910

Tozzi, Federigo. 1921. *Three Crosses*, trans. by R. Capellero (London, Secker) <http://archive.org/details/threecrosses00tozzrich> [accessed 31 December 2019]

———. 1925. *Novale: diario*, ed. by Emma Tozzi (Milano: Mondadori)

———. 1989. *Realtà di ieri e di oggi*, Biblioteca di Amadeus (Montebelluna: Amadeus)

———. 1993. *Pagine critiche*, Piccola miscellanea 14, ed. by Giancarlo Bertoncini (Pisa: ETS)

———. 1994. *Giovani e altre novelle*, Biblioteca Universale Rizzoli 956, ed. by Romano Luperini (Milano: Rizzoli, Biblioteca universale Rizzoli)

———. 1999. *Opere: romanzi, prose, novelle, saggi*, Meridiani, 5a edizione, ed. by Marco Marchi (Milano: Arnoldo Mondadori Editore)

———. 2001. *Love in Vain: Selected Stories of Federigo Tozzi*, trans. by Minna Proctor (New York: New Directions Book)

———. 2017. 'A Cinematic Performance', in *Early Film Theories in Italy, 1896-1922*, ed. by Francesco Casetti, Silvio Alovisio, and Luca Mazzei, trans. by Marco Ladd (Amsterdam University Press), pp. 427–33 <http://oapen.org/download?type=document&docid=633213> [accessed 31 December 2019]

———. 2018. *Giovani*, Edizione nazionale dell'opera omnia di Federigo Tozzi, ed. by Paola Salatto (Roma: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura) <https://doi.org/9788893592932>

Wittgenstein, Ludwig. 2009. *Philosophische Untersuchungen / Philosophical investigations*, Rev. 4th ed. by P.M.S. Hacker and Joachim Schulte. (Chichester, West Sussex, U.K.; Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell)

Woolf, Virginia. 1985. *Moments of Being*, ed. by Jeanne Schulkind (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Company)

———. 2000. *Mrs. Dalloway*, Oxford World's Classics (Oxford: Oxford University Press)

———. 2008. *To the Lighthouse*, Oxford World's Classics (Oxford: Oxford University Press)

Wordsworth, William. 1992. *The Prelude* [Electronic Resource], Chadwyck-Healey Literature Collections (Cambridge: Chadwyck-Healey) <https://ezproxy-prd.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/login?url=http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&xri:pqil:res_ver=0.2&res_id=xri:ilcs&rft_id=xri:ilcs:ep2:Z000543876> [accessed 2 January 2020]

Secondary Sources

Abrams, M.H. 1971. *Natural Supernaturalism: Tradition and Revolution in Romantic Literature* (New York: Norton)

Agostini, Paola. 1988. *Lo spazio della notte. Pirandello: le novelle e il simbolo* (Firenze: Franco Cesati Editore)

Ailwood, Sarah, and Melinda Harvey (eds.). 2015. *Katherine Mansfield and Literary Influence* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press)

Alessio, Antonio. 1981. 'Pirandello pittore e critico d'arte (con una lettera inedita)', *Quaderni d'italianistica*, 2.2: 192–203

Amberson, Deborah. 2012. *Giraffes in the Garden of Italian Literature: Modernist Embodiment in Italo Svevo, Federigo Tozzi and Carlo Emilio Gadda*, Italian Perspectives; 22 (London: Legenda)

Anderson, Loredana. 1990. 'Tozzi's Readings, 1901-1918', *MLN*, 105.1: 119 <https://doi.org/10.2307/2905128>

Andersson, Gösta. 1966. *Arte e teoria : studi sulla poetica del giovane Luigi Pirandello.*, Acta Universitatis Stockholmiensis. Romanica Stockholmiensia; 2 (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell)

Andreoli, Annamaria. 1997. 'Nel laboratorio di Pirandello', in *Taccuino segreto* (Milano: Mondadori), pp. 129–215

Ansell-Pearson, Keith. 2007. 'Beyond the Human Condition: An Introduction to Deleuze's Lecture Course', *SubStance*, 36.3: 57–71 <https://doi.org/10.1353/sub.2007.0048>

———. 2018. *Bergson: Thinking beyond the Human Condition* (London; New York: Bloomsbury Academic)

Ardoin, Paul, S. E. Gontarski, and Laci Mattison. 2013. *Understanding Bergson, Understanding Modernism* (New York: Bloomsbury)

Argenziano Maggi, Maria. 1977. *Il motivo del viaggio nella narrativa pirandelliana* (Napoli: Liguori)

Ascari, Maurizio. 2015. 'An "utterly concrete and yet impalpable" Art: The Early Reception of Katherine Mansfield in Italy', in *Katherine Mansfield and Continental Europe - Connections and Influences*, ed. by Janka Kascakova and Gerri Kimber (Palgrave Macmillan), pp. 7–25

———. 2016. 'A Raft in the Sea of Loneliness: Katherine Mansfield's Discovery of Cosmic Anatomy', in *Katherine Mansfield and Psychology*, ed. by Clare Hanson, Gerri Kimber, and Martin W. Todd (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press), pp. 38–55

Auerbach, Erich. 2003. *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature*, ACLS Humanities E-Book, 50th anniversary ed. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press)

Azérad, Hugo. 1999. 'Epiphany, Aura and Myths in Marcel Proust and William Faulkner', *New Comparison. A Journal of Comparative and General Literary Studies*, 27/28: 170–86

———. 2002. *L'Univers constellé de Proust, Joyce et Faulkner. Le concept d'épiphanie dans l'esthétique du modernisme* (Bern: Peter Lang)

Baldacci, Luigi et al. 1985. *Per Tozzi*, ed. by Carlo Fini (Roma: Editori Riuniti)

———. 1993. *Tozzi moderno*, Piccola biblioteca Einaudi; 579 (Torino: Einaudi)

Baldeshwiler, Eileen. 1969. 'The Lyric Short Story: The Sketch of a History', *Studies in Short Fiction*, 6: 443–53

Balducci, Marino Alberto. 1994. *Il nucleo dinamico dell'imbestiamento. Studio su Federigo Tozzi* (Anzio: De Rubeis)

Baldwin, Thomas. 2007. *Reading Merleau-Ponty: On Phenomenology of Perception* (London; New York: Routledge)

Balinisteanu, Tudor. 2015. *Religion and Aesthetic Experience in Joyce and Yeats* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan)

Barattoni, Luca. 2011. 'Ritornare a Tilgher: Bergsonian Themes and the Human Condition in the *Notebooks of Serafino Gubbio, Cinematograph Operator*', *Forum Italicum*, 45.1: 80–99 <https://doi.org/10.1177/001458581104500104>

Bargazan, Susan. 2004. 'Epiphany as Scene of Performance', in *A New and Complex Sensation: Essays on Joyce's Dubliners*, ed. by Oona Frawley (Dublin: Lilliput Press)

Barilli, Renato. 1964. *La barriera del Naturalismo. Studi sulla narrativa italiana contemporanea* (Milano: Mursia)

———. 1972. *La linea Svevo-Pirandello* (Milano: Mursia)

———. 1986. *Pirandello. Una rivoluzione culturale*, Civiltà Letteraria del Novecento. Saggi, 39 (Milano: Mursia)

———. 1999. *L'azione e l'estasi* (Torino: Testo & Immagine)

Barolsky, Paul. 1989. 'Joyce's Distant Music', *Virginia Quarterly Review: A National Journal of Literature and Discussion*, 65.1: 111–18

Bassanese, Fiora A. 1997. *Understanding Luigi Pirandello*, Understanding Modern European and Latin American Literature (Columbia, S.C.: University of South Carolina Press)

Bataillard, Pascal. 2017. 'From the Stupidity of a Woman to That of a Thought, and Back: On Idealism and Epiphanies in the Early Joyce, with a Postscript on John Huston's "The Dead"', in *Joyce's Dubliners : Lectures Critiques - Critical Approaches*, GRAAT, ed. by Claudine Raynaud (Tours: Presses universitaires François-Rabelais), pp. 53–65 <http://books.openedition.org/pufr/4519> [accessed 7 February 2018]

Beebe, Maurice. 1957. 'Joyce and Aquinas: The Theory of Aesthetics', *Philological Quarterly*, 36: 20–35

Behler, Ernst. 1988. 'The Theory of Irony in German Romanticism', in *Romantic Irony*, Comparative History of Literatures in European Languages, v. 8, ed. by Frederick Garber (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó), pp. 43–81

Beja, Morris. 1971. *Epiphany in the Modern Novel* (London: Peter Owen)

———. 1972. 'Mau-Mauing the Epiphany Catchers', *PMLA*, 87.5: 1131–32

———. 1984. 'Epiphany and the Epiphanies', in *A Companion to Joyce Studies*, ed. by Zack R. Bowen and James F. Carens (Westport, Conn ; London: Greenwood), pp. 707–25

Benedetti, Arrigo. 1963. 'Federigo Tozzi come maestro', *La Stampa* (Torino), anno 97, n.174, p. 7

Bertoncini, Giancarlo. 1974. 'Per un esame delle forme narrative dell'ideologia di Tozzi attraverso le novelle', *Critica Letteraria*, 3

———. 1996. *Studi tozziani*, Memoria bibliografica; 28 (Roma: Vecchiarelli)

———. 2008. 'Tozzi e la "geometria della novella"', in *Narrazione breve e personaggio: Tozzi, Pirandello, Bilenchi, Calvino*, Quodlibet studio lettere (Macerata: Quodlibet), pp. 11–199

Beyer, Christian. 2016. 'Edmund Husserl', in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Winter 2016, ed. by Edward N. Zalta (Metaphysics Research Lab, Stanford University) <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2016/entries/husserl/> [accessed 25 January 2018]

Bianchini, Olivia. 2000. 'La carne, la luce. Tozzi e Dante', in *Il rabdomante consapevole: ricerche su Tozzi*, Quaderni di Aldo Palazzeschi; 14, ed. by Marco Marchi (Firenze: Le lettere), pp. 15–46

Bianco, Michele. 2018. 'La religiosa irreligiosità di Luigi Pirandello tra nichilismo antimetafisico e spiritualismo', in *C'è un oltre in tutto voi non volete o non sapete vederlo. Dialogo tra i saperi intorno all'opera di Pirandello (Atti del seminario interdipartimentale, campus di Fisciano, 29-30 Marzo 2017)*, ed. by Milena Montanile (Salerno: Edizioni Sinestesie), pp. 51–69

Bidney, Martin. 1997. *Patterns of Epiphany. From Wordsworth to Tolstoy, Pater and Barrett Browning* (Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press)

Blattner, William D. 2006. *Heidegger's Being and Time: A Reader's Guide*, Continuum Reader's Guides (London; New York: Continuum)

Bomford, Rodney. 2010. 'The Question of God and the Doctrine of the Trinity', *British Journal of Psychotherapy*, 26.3: 360–67 <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1752-0118.2010.01193.x>

Bond, Steven. 2011. '"R.C.": Rosicrucianism and Cartesianism in Joyce and Beckett', *Miranda. Revue Pluridisciplinaire Du Monde Anglophone / Multidisciplinary Peer-Reviewed Journal on the English-Speaking World* <https://doi.org/10.4000/miranda.1939>

Boni Fellini, Paola. 1967. 'Pirandello a Roma', *Studi Romani*, 15.2: 198

Boni, Marco. 1948. 'La formazione letteraria di Pirandello', *Convivium, raccolta nuova*, 3: 321–50

Bontempelli, Massimo. 1938. 'Pirandello o del candore', in *Pirandello; Leopardi; D'Annunzio* (Milano: Bompiani), pp. 3–41

Borgese, Giuseppe Antonio. 1923. 'Federigo Tozzi', in *Tempo di edificare* (Milano: Treves), pp. 23–63

Bossche, Bart van den, Michelangela Monica Jansen, and Natalie Dupré (eds.). 2013. *Finzioni & finzioni: illusione e affabulazione in Pirandello e nel modernismo europeo : atti del convegno internazionale, Lovanio-Anversa, 19-21 maggio, 2010*, Corvo di Mizzaro; 3 (Firenze: Cesati)

Bourne-Taylor, Carole, and Mildenberg, Adriane (eds.). 2010. *Phenomenology, Modernism and Beyond* (Bern; Oxford: Peter Lang)

Bowen, Zack. 1981. 'Joyce and the Epiphany Concept: A New Approach', *Journal of Modern Literature*, 9.1: 103–14

Bowler, Rebecca. 2011. '"The Beauty of Your Line – the Life behind It": Katherine Mansfield and the Double Impression', *Katherine Mansfield Studies*, 3.1: 81–94 <https://doi.org/10.3366/kms.2011.0008>

Bradbury, Malcolm. 1987. 'The Nonhomemade World: European and American Modernism', *American Quarterly*, 39.1: 27 <https://doi.org/10.2307/2712628>

Bradbury, Michael, and James McFarlane. 1991. *Modernism: 1890-1930* (Harmondsworth: Penguin)

Bradley, Matthew. 2012. 'Introduction', in William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, Oxford World's Classics, ed. by Matthew Bradley (Oxford: Oxford University Press), pp. ix–xxviii

Bradshaw, David. 2017. '"Perished Alive": Dubliners and the Reek of Rubber', *Essays in Criticism*, 67.1: 20–36 <https://doi.org/10.1093/escrit/cgw024>

Bramble, J. C. 2015. *Modernism and the Occult* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan)

Breuer, Horst. 1999. 'The "Elderly Gentleman" in Joyce's "Clay"', *James Joyce Quarterly*, 36.4: 951–54

Campigli, Lisa. 2000. 'Tozzi e la Bibbia', in *Il rabdomante consapevole: ricerche su Tozzi*, Quaderni di Aldo Palazzeschi ; 14, ed. by Marco Marchi (Firenze: Le lettere), pp. 47–72

Carmignani, Paul. 1995. *Aspects de la nouvelle (II)* (Perpignan: Presses de l'Université de Perpignan)

Carr, Nicholas. 2017. 'Symbol and Allegory in Romantic History', *New Literary History*, 48.1: 171–92 <https://doi.org/10.1353/nlh.2017.0007>

Carvalho, Richard. 2010. 'Matte Blanco and the Multidimensional Realm of the Unconscious', *British Journal of Psychotherapy*, 26.3: 324–34 <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1752-0118.2010.01190.x>

Castellana, Riccardo. 2002. *Tozzi* (Palermo: Palumbo)

———. 2003. 'Procedimenti analogici e costruzione del "correlativo oggettivo" nelle descrizioni tozziane', in *Tozzi: la scrittura crudele. Atti del Convegno internazionale, Siena, S. Maria della Scala, Palazzo pubblico, 24-26 ottobre 2002*, Moderna: semestrale di teoria e critica della letteratura, IV, ed. by Maria Antonietta Grignani (Pisa: Fabrizio Serra), II, pp. 59–76

———. 2008. 'Tozzi: Bildungsroman e Realismo Modernista', in *Federigo Tozzi: bibliografia delle opere e della critica (1901-2007)* (Pontedera: Bibliografia e informazione), pp. 9–38

———. 2009. *Parole, cose, persone. Il realismo modernista di Tozzi* (Pisa-Roma: Fabrizio Serra Editore)

———. 2013. 'La Novella Modernista in Italia. Pirandello e Tozzi', in *La forma breve del narrare: novelle, contes, short stories*, I libri dell'Associazione Sigismondo Malatesta. Studi di letterature comparate, 2. Serie 12, ed. by Loretta Innocenti (Pisa: Pacini), pp. 185–204

———. 2014. 'Il realismo creaturale di Tozzi: una lettura di Giovani', in *La punta di diamante di tutta la sua opera: Sulla novellistica di Federigo Tozzi: atti del Convegno di Perugia, 14-15 novembre 2012*, Testi e studi di letteratura italiana 0009, ed. by Massimiliano Tortora (Perugia: Morlacchi), pp. 35–70

———. 2018. 'Introduzione', in *Finzione e Memoria. Pirandello Modernista* (Napoli: Liguori)

Cavalli, Annamaria. 2004. *L'ansia dell'inesprimibile: introduzione all'opera di Federigo Tozzi e storia della critica tozziana* (Quarto Inferiore Bologna: Pàtron)

Cavalli Pasini, Annamaria. 1984. *Il 'mistero' retorico della scrittura: saggi su Tozzi narratore*, Esperienza critica 7, 1a ed. (Bologna: Pàtron)

Chambers, Ross. 1987. *Mélancholie et opposition. Les débuts du modernisme en France* (Paris: Corti)

Childs, Peter. 2007. *Modernism*, New Critical Idiom, 2nd ed. (Hoboken: Taylor & Francis)

Chircop, Karl. 2010. 'Contatti e affinità tra James Joyce e Luigi Pirandello' (unpublished PhD thesis, Università degli Studi di Roma Tor Vergata - Università di Malta) <https://www.academia.edu/30745198/Contatti_e_affinit%C3%A0_tra_James_Joyce_e_Luigi_Pirandello> [accessed 10 January 2015]

Choi, Young Sun. 2011. '"All Glittering with Broken Light": Katherine Mansfield and Impressionism', *Katherine Mansfield Studies*, 3.1: 67–80 <https://doi.org/10.3366/kms.2011.0007>

Cianci, Giovanni. 1991. 'Modernismo/Modernismi', in *Modernismo/Modernismi. Dall'avanguardia storica agli anni Trenta e oltre*, ed. by Giovanni Cianci (Milano: Principato), pp. 15–45

Codebò, Marco. 1998. 'Guy de Maupassant in Federigo Tozzi', *MLN*, 113.1: 213–230

———. 1999. 'Straniamento ed epifania in" Pigionali" di Federigo Tozzi', *MLN*, 114.1: 157–171

Cornwell, Ethel F. 1962. *The 'Still Point'. Theme and Variations in the Writings of T.S. Eliot, Coleridge, Yates, Henry James, Virginia Woolf, and D.H. Lawrence* (New Brunswick: Rutger University Press)

Correia, Alda. 2015. 'The Shape of the "moment" in Virginia Woolf and Katherine Mansfield's Short Stories', *Virginia Woolf Miscellany*: 23–25

Corsinovi, Graziella. 2018. 'Il brivido dell'oltre: paranormale, metapsichica e teosofia nell'opera di Pirandello', in *C'è un oltre in tutto voi non volete o non sapete vederlo. Dialogo tra i saperi intorno all'opera di pirandello (atti del seminario interdipartimentale, campus di Fisciano, 29-30 Marzo 2017)*, ed. by Milena Montanile (Salerno: Edizioni Sinestesie), pp. 69–85

Costa, Simona. 2015. 'Introduzione', in Luigi Pirandello, *Opere*, La letteratura italiana, storia e testi, ed. by Simona Costa (Milano, Napoli: Riccardo Ricciardi Editore), III, I

Cross, Roland R. 1998. 'Edwardian Mansfield: The forgotten career of an early modernist' (unpublished Ph.D., Ann Arbor, United States) <http://search.proquest.com/docview/304439192/abstract/2204CA87D8B94C61PQ/1> [accessed 7 December 2016]

Daiches, David. 1993. 'Katherine Mansfield and the Search for Truth', in *Critical Essays on Katherine Mansfield*, Critical Essays on British Literature, ed. by Rhoda B. Nathan (New

York: Toronto: Oxford: GKHall; Maxwell Macmillan Canada; Maxwell Macmillan International), pp. 166–73

Dashwood, Julie. 1991. 'I momenti eccezionali di Pirandello: umorismo, novelle e "paradiso terrestre"', in *Pirandello e l'oltre: atti del XXV Convegno internazionale, Agrigento, 5-9 dicembre 1990*, ed. by Enzo. Lauretta (Milano: Mursia), pp. 169–78

De Angelis, Palmira. 1989. *L'immagine epifanica: Hopkins, D'Annunzio, Joyce: momenti di una poetica* (Roma: Bulzoni)

De Castris, Arcangelo Leone. 1962. *Storia di Pirandello* (Bari: Laterza)

De Lucca, Robert. 1995. 'Tozzi, Automatism and Epistemology', *Quaderni d'italianistica*, 16.2: 245–59

De Man, Paul. 1973. 'Semiology and Rhetoric', *Diacritics*, 3.3: 27 <https://doi.org/10.2307/464524>

———. 1983. *Blindness and Insight: Essays in the Rhetoric of Contemporary Criticism*, Theory and History of Literature v. 7, 2nd ed., rev. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press)

Debenedetti, Giacomo. 1970. 'Con gli occhi chiusi', in *Il personaggio uomo* (Milano: Il Saggiatore)

———. 1992. *Il romanzo del Novecento: quaderni inediti*, Saggi (Milano: Garzanti)

Dedola, Rossana. 1992. 'Il fumo, la maschera, gli insetti: Crisi del romanzo e nuove proposte narrative in Svevo, Pirandello e Tozzi', *Italica*, 69.1: 19–29 <https://doi.org/10.2307/479455>

Defromont, Françoise. 1989. 'Impossible Mourning', in *The Fine Instrument: Essays on Katherine Mansfield*, ed. by Paulette Michel-Michot and Michel Dupuis (Sydney; Coventry: Dangaroo Press), pp. 157–65

Deleuze, Gilles. 2007. 'Lecture Course on Chapter Three of Bergson's Creative Evolution', *SubStance*, 36.3, trans. by Bryn Loban: 72–90 <https://doi.org/10.1353/sub.2007.0040>

Deppman, Jed. 2012. 'James Joyce: From Hero to Author of the Bildungsroman', *James Joyce Quarterly*, 49.3–4: 527–55 <https://doi.org/10.1353/jjq.2012.0057>

Dettmar, Kevin J. H. 1996. 'The Dubliners Epiphony: (Mis)Reading the Book of Ourselves', in *The Illicit Joyce of Postmodernism: Reading against the Grain* (Madison, Wis.: University of Wisconsin Press)

Dunbar, Pamela. 1997. 'Exile and Its Metaphors: A Reading of Katherine Mansfield's "Je Ne Parle Pas Français"', *Journal of the Short Story in English [Online]*, 29 <http://jsse.revues.org/136> [accessed 18 October 2014]

Eco, Umberto. 1968. 'Joyce et D'Annunzio. Les sources de la notion d'epiphanie', *L'Arc*, 36: 29–38

Edensor, Louise. 2016. 'Me or I? The Search for the Self in the Early Writings of Katherine Mansfield', in *Katherine Mansfield and Psychology*, ed. by Clare Hanson, Gerri Kimber, and Martin W. Todd (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press), pp. 82–99

Elliott, Brian. 2014. *Phenomenology and Imagination in Husserl and Heidegger* (Abingdon, Oxon, United States: Taylor and Francis) <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/oxford/detail.action?docID=200526> [accessed 22 February 2018]

Ellmann, Richard. 1982. *James Joyce*, New and rev. ed (New York: Oxford University Press)

Emerick, Betsy Kruizenga. 1990. 'Voices in the city: Joyce's Dublin and Pirandello's Rome' (unpublished Ph.D., Ann Arbor, United States) <http://search.proquest.com/docview/303817207/abstract> [accessed 11 November 2015]

Evans, David H. (ed.). 2017. *Understanding James, Understanding Modernism* (Bloomsbury Publishing USA)

Fairhall, J. 1986. 'Joyce's "Dubliners"', *Explicator*, 45.1: 32–34

Fallon, Erin et al. (eds.). 2001. *A Reader's Companion to the Short Story in English* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press)

Federici, Corrado. 1996. 'Il discorso poetico di Pirandello: tra leopardismo e pirandellismo', in *Le fonti di Pirandello*, ed. by Antonio Alessio and Giuliana Sanguinetti Katz (Palermo: Palumbo), pp. 97–110

Feschbach, Sidney. 1972. 'Hunting Epiphany-Hunters', *PMLA*, 87.2: 304–6

Finetti, Stéphane, and Michela Summa. 2010. 'Merleau-Ponty: penser sans dualisme aujourd'hui', *Rivista di storia della filosofia*, fascicolo 1.1: 159–62 <https://doi.org/10.3280/SF2010-001015>

Fischer, Therese. 1971. 'From Reliable to Unreliable Narrator: Rhetorical Changes in Joyce's "The Sisters"', *James Joyce Quarterly*, 9.1: 85–92

Fonyi, Antonia. 2013. 'Perché una novella fa l'effetto di essere breve? L'esempio di Maupassant', in *La forma breve del narrare: novelle, contes, short stories*, I libri dell'Associazione Sigismondo Malatesta. Studi di letterature comparate, 2. Serie 12, ed. by Innocenti, Loretta (Pisa: Pacini), pp. 155–68

Friedman, Norman. 1989. 'Recent Short Story Theories: Problems in Definition', in *Short Story Theory at a Crossroad*, ed. by Susan Lohafer and Jo Ellyn Clarey (Baton Rouge: Louisiana University Press), pp. 13–31

Garber, Frederick (ed.). 1988. *Romantic Irony*, Comparative History of Literatures in European Languages, v. 8 (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó)

Geddes da Filicaia, Costanza. 2001. *La biblioteca di Federigo Tozzi*, Quaderni Aldo Palazzeschi ; 18 (Firenze: Le lettere) <https://www.academia.edu/7949569/La_biblioteca_di_Federigo_Tozzi>

Gibson, Andrew. 2006. *James Joyce*, Critical Lives (London: Reaktion)

———. 2013. *The Strong Spirit: History, Politics and Aesthetics in the Writings of James Joyce 1898-1915* (Oxford: Oxford University Press)

Gillies, Mary Ann. 1996. *Henri Bergson and British Modernism* (Montreal, Canada: MQUP)

Giulio, Rosa. 2018. 'Il "di là" di Serafino: dal "tutto è nulla" di Leopardi al "nulla che diventa subito un tutto" di Pirandello', in *C'è un oltre in tutto voi non volete o non sapete vederlo. Dialogo tra i saperi intorno all'opera di Pirandello (Atti del seminario interdipartimentale, campus di Fisciano, 29-30 Marzo 2017)*, ed. by Milena Montanile (Salerno: Sinestesie), pp. 109–17

Godenne, René. 1974. *La nouvelle française*, SUP. Littératures modernes, 3 (Paris: PUF)

———. 1989. 'Katherine Mansfield's "nouvelle-instant"', in *The Fine Instrument: Essays on Katherine Mansfield*, ed. by Paulette Michel-Michot and Michel Dupuis (Sydney; Coventry: Dangaroo Press), pp. 107–16

Godioli, Alberto. 2015a. *Laughter from Realism to Modernism* (Oxford: Legenda)

———. 2015b. '"Sciogliermi da tutto''. Forme del distacco nei finali delle *Novelle per un anno*', *Pirandelliana* 9: 41–53

Gordon, Ian A. 1989. 'Katherine Mansfield in the Late Twentieth Century', in *The Fine Instrument: Essays on Katherine Mansfield*, ed. by Paulette Michel-Michot and Michel Dupuis (Sydney; Coventry: Dangaroo Press), pp. 15–27

Goyet, Florence. 1997. '« La nouvelle en Europe » (du Moyen Age au XXe siècle)', in *Précis de littérature Européenne*, ed. by Béatrice Didier (Paris: PUF) <http: //rare.u-grenoble3.fr/spip/spip.php ?art347> [accessed 26 May 2015]

Gozzi, Francesco. 2002. *Epicleti ed epifanie: la narrativa giovanile di Joyce* (Pisa: ETS)

Granese, Antonio. 2018. 'La stupefazione immota di tutte le cose": epifanie dell'"oltre" pirandelliano', in *C'è un oltre in tutto voi non volete o non sapete vederlo. Dialogo tra i saperi intorno all'opera di Pirandello (Atti del seminario interdipartimentale, campus di Fisciano, 29-30 Marzo 2017)*, ed. by Milena Montanile (Salerno: Edizioni Sinestesie), pp. 119–32

Grenfell-Williams, Tanya. 1989. 'Katherine Mansfield and Time', in *The Fine Instrument: Essays on Katherine Mansfield*, ed. by Paulette Michel-Michot and Michel Dupuis (Sydney; Coventry: Dangaroo Press), pp. 71–79

Grignani, Maria Antonietta (ed.). 2003. *Tozzi: la scrittura crudele. Atti del Convegno internazionale, Siena, S. Maria della Scala, Palazzo pubblico, 24-26 ottobre 2002*, Moderna: semestrale di teoria e critica della letteratura, IV (Pisa: Fabrizio Serra), II

Grimaldi, Emma. 2007. *Il labirinto e il caleidoscopio. Percorsi di letture tra le 'Novelle per un anno' di Luigi Pirandello* (Soveria Mannelli: Rubbettino) <https://www.pirandelloweb.com/biblioteca/il-labirinto-e-il-caleidoscopio/> [accessed 15 February 2018]

Gumbrecht, Hans Ulrich. 2004. *Production of Presence: What Meaning Cannot Convey* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press)

van Gunsteren, Julia. 1990. *Katherine Mansfield and Literary Impressionism* (Amsterdam: Rodopi)

Hammond, Meghan Marie. 2014. *Empathy and the Psychology of Literary Modernism* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press)

———. 2016. 'Mansfield's Psychology of the Emotions', in *Katherine Mansfield and Psychology*, ed. by Clare Hanson, Gerri Kimber, and Martin W. Todd (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press), pp. 56–67

Hankin, C. A. 1993. 'Katherine Mansfield and Her Confessional Stories', in *Critical Essays on Katherine Mansfield*, Critical Essays on British Literature, ed. by Rhoda B. Nathan (New York: Toronto: Oxford: Hall; Maxwell Macmillan Canada; Maxwell Macmillan International), pp. 12–36

Hanson, Clare. 1989. 'Katherine Mansfield's Life as a Work of Art', in *The Fine Instrument: Essays on Katherine Mansfield*, ed. by Paulette Michel-Michot and Michel Dupuis (Sydney; Coventry: Dangaroo Press), pp. 61–70

———. 2016. 'Katherine Mansfield and Vitalist Psychology', in *Katherine Mansfield and Psychology*, ed. by Clare Hanson, Gerri Kimber, and Martin W. Todd (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press), pp. 23–37

Hanson, Clare, Gerri Kimber, and Martin W. Todd (eds.). 2016. *Katherine Mansfield and Psychology* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press)

Harmat, Andrée-Marie. 1989. '"Is the Master out or in?" or Katherine Mansfield's Twofold Vision of Self', in *The Fine Instrument: Essays on Katherine Mansfield*, ed. by Paulette Michel-Michot and Michel Dupuis (Sydney; Coventry: Dangaroo Press), pp. 117–25

Harty, John. 1988. 'Joyce's The Dead', *Explicator*, 46.2: 23–24

Hawkins, Stephanie L. 2011. 'William James, Gustav Fechner, and Early Psychophysics', *Frontiers in Physiology*, 2 <https://doi.org/10.3389/fphys.2011.00068>

Hayman, David. 1986. 'The Joycean Inset', *James Joyce Quarterly*, 23.2: 137–155

———. 1998. 'The Purpose and Permanence of the Joycean Epiphany', *James Joyce Quarterly*, 35: 633–655

Head, Dominic. 1992. *The Modernist Short Story: A Study in Theory and Practice* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press)

Hendry, Irene. 1946. 'Joyce's Epiphanies', *The Sewanee Review*, 54.3: 449–67

Henstra, Sarah. 2000. 'Looking the Part: Performative Narration in Djuna Barnes's Nightwood and Katherine Mansfield's "Je Ne Parle Pas Francais"', *Twentieth Century Literature*, 46.2: 125 <https://doi.org/10.2307/441954>

Hinnov, Emily M. 2015. 'The Daughters of the "Tyrant Father" in Virginia Woolf and Katherine Mansfield', *Virginia Woolf Miscellany*, 86: 16–19

Hope, A.D. 1943. 'The Esthetic Theory of James Joyce', *Australasian Journal of Psychology and Philosophy*, 21.2–3: 93–114 <https://doi.org/10.1080/00048404308541194>

Hughes, Brian. 1988. 'Lyric Compression in the Stories of Katherine Mansfield', *Revista alicantina de estudios ingleses*, No. 01: 109-119 <http://193.145.233.67/dspace/handle/10045/5578> [accessed 17 November 2014]

Illiano, Antonio. 1968. 'Momenti e problemi di critica pirandelliana: "L'umorismo," Pirandello e Croce, Pirandello e Tilgher', *PMLA*, 83.1: 135 <https://doi.org/10.2307/1261241>

Innocenti, Loretta. 2013. 'Introduzione', in *La forma breve del narrare: novelle, contes, short stories*, I libri dell'Associazione Sigismondo Malatesta. Studi di letterature comparate, 2. serie 12, ed. by Loretta Innocenti (Pisa: Pacini), pp. 13–23

Invitto, Giovanni. 2013. 'Su Croce, Bergson e Pirandello. A proposito della fenomenologia del comico', *Bollettino filosofico*, 28: 183–197

Jacobs, Joshua. 2000. 'Joyce's Epiphanic Mode: Material Language and the Representation of Sexuality in Stephen Hero and Portrait', *Twentieth Century Literature*, 46.1: 20–33

Jarvis, Arianna Nicole. 1996. 'Taking a Break: Preliminary Investigations into the Psychology of Epiphanies as Discontinuous Change Experiences' (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Massachusetts Amherst) <http://search.proquest.com/docview/304317193/citation?accountid=13857> [accessed 21 January 2015]

Johnson, Jeri. 2008. 'Introduction', in James Joyce, *Dubliners*, Oxford World's Classics (Oxford: Oxford University Press), pp. vii–xl.

Kaplan, Sydney Janet. 1991. *Katherine Mansfield and the Origins of Modernist Fiction* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press)

———. 2010. *Circulating Genius: John Middleton Murry, Katherine Mansfield and D.H. Lawrence* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press)

Kearney, Richard. 2005. 'Epiphanies in Joyce', in *Global Ireland: Irish Literatures for the New Millennium*, ed. by Ondrej Pilný and Clare Wallace (Prague: Litteraria Pragensia), pp. 147–82 <https://www2.bc.edu/~kearneyr/pdf_articles/pl86273.pdf> [accessed 1 December 2015]

———. 2006. 'The Irish Mind Debate', in *Navigations: Collected Irish Essays, 1976-2006* (Dublin, Ireland: Lilliput Press), pp. 17–31

———. 2010. 'Sacramental Imagination: Eucharists of the Ordinary Universe', in *Through a Glass Darkly: Suffering, the Sacred, and the Sublime in Literature and Theory*, ed. by Holly Faith Nelson, Lynn R. Szabo, and Jens Zimmermann (Waterloo, ON: Wilfrid Laurier University Press), pp. 240–88

———. 2013. 'Eucharistic Imagination in Merleau-Ponty and James Joyce', in *Human Destinies: Philosophical Essays in Memory of Gerard Hanratty* (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press), pp. 415–33

Kelly, Michael R. 2010. *Bergson and Phenomenology* (London, UK: Palgrave Macmillan)

Kenner, Hugh. 1984. 'The Making of the Modernist Canon', *Chicago Review*, 34.2: 49–61 <https://doi.org/10.2307/25305247>

Kermode, Frank. 2000. *The Sense of an Ending: Studies in the Theory of Fiction* (New York: Oxford University Press)

Kidd, John. 1984. 'Joyce and Freud:" Only Namesakes"', *James Joyce Quarterly*, 22.1: 81–83

Kim, Sharon. 2012. *Literary Epiphany in the Novel, 1850-1950. Constellations of the Soul* (London: Palgrave Macmillan)

Kimber, Gerri. 2008. *Katherine Mansfield: The View from France* (Bern: Peter Lang)

———. 2015. *Katherine Mansfield and the Art of the Short Story*, Palgrave Pivot (Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan)

King, R.S. 1973. 'Francis Carco's "Les Innocents" and Katherine Mansfield's "Je Ne Parle Pas Français"', *Revue de Litterature Comparée*, 47.3: 427–41

Klem, Lone. 1991. 'Certi momenti di silenzio interiore', in *Pirandello e l'oltre: atti del XXV Convegno internazionale, Agrigento, 5-9 dicembre 1990*, ed. by Enzo. Lauretta (Milano: Mursia), pp. 313–24

Knight, Mark, and Thomas Woodman (eds.). 2006. *Biblical Religion and the Novel, 1700-2000* (Ashgate: Aldershot)

Kumar, Shiv K. 1959. 'Joyce's Epiphany and Bergson's "L'intuition Philosophique"', *Modern Language Quarterly*, 20.1: 27–30

Lalor, Doireann. 2012. 'Italian Postwar Experimentalism in the Wake of English-Language Modernism' (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Oxford)

Langbaum, Robert. 1983. 'The Epiphanic Mode in Wordsworth and Modern Literature', *New Literary History*, 14.2: 335 <https://doi.org/10.2307/468689>

Lauretta, Enzo. 1984. 'Dall'involontario soggiorno sulla terra all'oltre', in *Pirandello e la cultura del suo tempo*, Collana di saggi e documentazioni del Centro Nazionale di Studi Pirandelliani, 9, ed. by Stefano Milioto and Enzo Scrivano (Milano: Mursia), pp. 55–61

——— (ed.). 1991. *Pirandello e l'oltre: atti del XXV Convegno internazionale, Agrigento, 5-9 dicembre 1990* (Milano: Mursia)

Lazar, Mary. 2001. 'James Joyce's "A Little Cloud" and Chandler's Tears of Remorse', *Journal of the Short Story in English. Les Cahiers de La Nouvelle*: 41–63

Leonard, Garry. 1993. 'The Free Man's Journal: The Making of His[Story] in "The Sisters"', in *Reading Dubliners Again: A Lacanian Perspective* (Syracuse University Press), pp. 24–55

———. 2017. 'The Momentary as Momentous in Dubliners', in *Joyce's Dubliners : Lectures Critiques - Critical Approaches*, GRAAT, ed. by Claudine Raynaud (Tours: Presses universitaires François-Rabelais), pp. 33–40 <http://books.openedition.org/pufr/4513> [accessed 7 February 2018]

Levin, Harry. 1944. *James Joyce: A Critical Introduction*, Makers of Modern Literature (London, England) (London: Faber and Faber)

Levina, Jūratė. 2017. 'The Aesthetics of Phenomena: Joyce's Epiphanies', *Joyce Studies Annual*, 2017.1: 185–219

Levy, Antoine OP. 2010. 'Great Misinterpretations: Umberto Eco on Joyce and Aquinas', *Logos: A Journal of Catholic Thought and Culture*, 13.3: 124–63 <https://doi.org/10.1353/log.0.0080>

Loomis, C. C. 1960. 'Structure and Sympathy in Joyce's "The Dead"', *PMLA*, 75.1: 149 <https://doi.org/10.2307/460438>

Lucente, Gregory L. 1980. 'D'Annunzio's Il Fuoco and Joyce's Portrait of the Artist: From Allegory to Irony', *Italica*, 57.1: 19 <https://doi.org/10.2307/478715>

Lugnani, Lucio. 2007. 'Introduzione', in *Tutte le novelle*, BUR Classici moderni, 3 vols, ed. by Lucio Lugnani (Milano: BUR), I

Lugnani, Lucio, Laura Carotti, Silvia Delaimo, Gianluigi Goggi, Antonella Ricciardi, and others. 1980. 'Dalla raccolta al corpus', in *Le novelle di Pirandello: atti del 6. convegno internazionale di studi, Agrigento, 6-10 dicembre 1979*, ed. by Stefano Milioto (Agrigento: Centro Studi Pirandelliani), pp. 253–360

Luperini, Romano. 1994. 'Il "solco aperto" di Tozzi. Strategie di scrittura e di lettura nelle novelle', in *Giovani e altre novelle*, Biblioteca Universale Rizzoli 956, ed. by Romano Luperini (Milano: Rizzoli, Biblioteca universale Rizzoli), pp. 5–68

———. 1995. *Federigo Tozzi: le immagini, le idee, le opere*, Biblioteca universale Laterza 435 (Roma: Laterza)

———. 2003. 'A proposito della religiosità di Tozzi. L'uomo di fuoco, tre donne e un crocifisso', in *Tozzi: la scrittura crudele. Atti del Convegno internazionale, Siena, S. Maria della Scala, Palazzo pubblico, 24-26 ottobre 2002*, Moderna: semestrale di teoria e critica della letteratura, IV, ed. by Maria Antonietta Grignani (Pisa: Fabrizio Serra), II, pp. 113–23

———. 2005. 'Verga e l'invenzione della novella moderna', in *Verga moderno*, Biblioteca universale Laterza, 568 (Roma: Editori Laterza), pp. 89–104

———. 2007. *L'incontro e il caso. Narrazioni moderne e destino dell'uomo occidentale* (Roma-Bari: Laterza)

———. 2012. 'Il modernismo italiano esiste', in *Sul modernismo italiano*, ed. by Romano Luperini and Massimiliano Tortora (Napoli: Liguori)

———. 2017. 'Tozzi e Le Emozioni', in *Federigo Tozzi in Europa. Influssi culturali e convergenze artistiche*, ed. by Riccardo Castellana and Ilaria De Seta (Roma: Carocci), pp. 19–24

Luperini, Romano, and Massimiliano Tortora (eds.). 2011. 'Il Modernismo in Italia [Special Section]', *Allegoria*, XXIII.63: 7–102

——— (eds.). 2012. *Sul modernismo italiano* (Napoli: Liguori)

Macann, Christopher E. 1993. *Four Phenomenological Philosophers: Husserl, Heidegger, Sartre, Merleau-Ponty*, Ebook Central (London; New York: Routledge)

Macchia, Giovanni. 1981. *Pirandello, o, La stanza della tortura* (Milano: Mondadori)

Malato, Enrico. 1989. 'La nascita della novella italiana: un'alternativa letteraria borghese alla tradizione cortese', in *La novella italiana: atti del Convegno di Caprarola, 19-24 settembre 1988*, Biblioteca di filologia e critica 0003 (Roma: Salerno), pp. 3–45

Marchi, Marco (ed.). 2000. *Il rabdomante consapevole: ricerche su Tozzi*, Quaderni di Aldo Palazzeschi 14 (Firenze: Le lettere)

———. 2003. 'Leggere ed esistere. Ancora sulla cultura di Tozzi', in *Tozzi: la scrittura crudele. Atti del Convegno internazionale, Siena, S. Maria della Scala, Palazzo pubblico, 24-26 ottobre 2002*,

Moderna: semestrale di teoria e critica della letteratura, IV, ed. by Maria Antonietta Grignani (Pisa: Fabrizio Serra), II, pp. 129–43

——— (ed.). 2010. *Stagioni di Tozzi*, Itinerari e proposte 0015 (Siena: Fondazione Monte dei Paschi di Siena)

Martella, Giuseppe. 2001. *Introduzione alla lettura di Dubliners* (Imola: La mandragora)

Martin, Kirsty. 2010. 'DH Lawrence, Katherine Mansfield and Happiness', *Katherine Mansfield Studies*, 2.0: 87–99

Martini, Martina. 1999. *Tozzi e James: letteratura e psicologia*, Quaderni (Fondazione Carlo Marchi) 5 (Firenze: Olschki)

———. 2000. 'Metafore del profondo. Per un confronto Tozzi-James', in *Il rabdomante consapevole: ricerche su Tozzi*, Quaderni di Aldo Palazzeschi 14, ed. by Marco Marchi (Firenze: Le lettere), pp. 143–89

Martino, Giulia. 2011. 'Luigi Pirandello e la crisi dell'uomo contemporaneo' (unpublished PhD thesis, Università degli Studi Roma Tre)

Materer, Timothy. 1995. *Modernist Alchemy: Poetry and the Occult* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press)

Mattei, Guido. 1950. *La religiosità di Luigi Pirandello* (Milano-Roma: Gastaldi)

May, Charles E. 1984. 'The Nature of Knowledge in Short Fiction', *Studies in Short Fiction*, 21.4

Mazzacurati, Giancarlo. 1990. *Effetto Sterne: la narrazione umoristica in Italia da Foscolo a Pirandello*, Porta di corno, 8 (Pisa: Nistri-Lischi)

Mazzoni, Guido. 2011. *Teoria del romanzo*, Saggi 760 (Bologna: Il Mulino)

McDonald, Matthew G. 2008. 'The Nature of Epiphanic Experience', *Journal of Humanistic Psychology*, 48.1: 89–115 <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022167807311878>

McDonnell, Jenny. 2010. *Katherine Mansfield and the Modernist Marketplace: At the Mercy of the Public* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan)

McFadzean, Angus. 2010. 'Epiphany and Transgression: From Aesthetics to Narrative in the Novels of James Joyce' (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Oxford)

Mengaldo, Pier Vincenzo. 2003. 'Appunti linguistici e formali sulle novelle', in *Tozzi: la scrittura crudele. Atti del Convegno internazionale, Siena, S. Maria della Scala, Palazzo pubblico, 24-26 ottobre 2002*, Moderna: semestrale di teoria e critica della letteratura, IV, ed. by Maria Antonietta Grignani (Pisa: Fabrizio Serra), II, pp. 33–45

Micali, Simona. 2015. 'Pirandello e il mito come archetipo', *PirandelloWeb* <https://www.pirandelloweb.com/pirandello-e-il-mito-come-archetipo/> [accessed 29 May 2018]

Michel-Michot, Paulette, and Michel Dupuis (eds.). 1989. *The Fine Instrument: Essays on Katherine Mansfield* (Sydney; Coventry: Dangaroo Press)

Mignosi, Pietro. 1937. *Il segreto di Pirandello* (Milano: Tradizione editrice)

Milioto, Stefano, and Enzo Scrivano (eds.). 1984. *Pirandello e la cultura del suo tempo*, Collana di saggi e documentazioni del Centro Nazionale di Studi Pirandelliani, 9 (Milano: Mursia)

Moestrup, Jorn. 1984. 'L'elemento metafisico in Pirandello', in *Pirandello e la cultura del suo tempo*, Collana di saggi e documentazioni del Centro Nazionale di Studi Pirandelliani, 9, ed. by Stefano Milioto and Enzo Scrivano (Milano: Mursia), pp. 327–37

Moran, Dermot. 2008. 'Immanence, Self-Experience, and Transcendence in Edmund Husserl, Edith Stein, and Karl Jaspers', *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly*, 82.2: 265–91 <https://doi.org/10.5840/acpq20088224>

Moran, Patricia. 2015. '"The Sudden 'Mushroom Growth' of Cheap Psychoanalysis": Mansfield and Woolf Respond to Psychoanalysis', *Virginia Woolf Miscellany*, 86: 11–14

Mori, Roberta. 2010. 'Un apparente ritorno all'ordine: *Quand'ero Matto* di Luigi Pirandello (1902)', in *Un genere senza qualità. Il racconto italiano nell'età della short story*, Moderna: semestrale di teoria e critica della letteratura XII.2, ed. by Sergio Zatti and Arrigo Stara <http://www.libraweb.net/articoli.php?chiave=201001902&rivista=19> [accessed 12 May 2015]

Mounic, Anne. 2009. '"And He Handed Her an Egg": The Art of Memory in "Feuille d'Album", Katherine Mansfield and Proust', *Katherine Mansfield Studies*, 1.1: 35–52

Mugnai, Duccio. 2000. 'Tozzi e Bergson', in *Il rabdomante consapevole: ricerche su Tozzi*, Quaderni di Aldo Palazzeschi 14, ed. by Marco Marchi (Firenze: Le lettere), pp. 192–215

Murry, John Middleton. 1911. 'Art and Philosophy', *Rhythm*, 1.1: 9–12

Nakano, Eiko. 2009. 'Katherine Mansfield and French Philosophy: A Bergsonian Reading of Maata', *Katherine Mansfield Studies*, 1.1: 68–82

Nathan, Rhoda B. 1993. *Critical Essays on Katherine Mansfield*, Critical Essays on British Literature (New York: Toronto: Oxford: Hall; Maxwell Macmillan International)

Navraj, Narula. 2012. 'The Epiphany as the Evanescent Moment: Flashes of Unintellectual Light in James Joyce's "Dubliners"', *WR: Journal of the CAS Writing Program*

Neuhold, Birgit. 2009. *Measuring the Sadness. Conrad, Joyce, Woolf and European Epiphany* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang)

New, W. H. 1998. *Reading Mansfield and Metaphors of Form* (Montreal; London: McGill-Queen's University Press)

Nichols, Ashton. 1987. *The Poetics of Epiphany: Nineteenth-Century Origins of the Modern Literary Moment* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press)

Nobili, Sebastiana. 2014. 'Pirandello lunatico: breve storia di un'ossessione astrale', *Griseldaonline*, 14 <http://www.griseldaonline.it/temi/lune/pirandello-lunatico-nobili.html> [accessed 16 May 2018]

Noon, William T. 1955. 'Joyce's "Clay": An Interpretation', *College English*, 17.2: 93–95 <https://doi.org/10.2307/372144>

Noon, William Thomas. 1957. *Joyce and Aquinas*, Yale Studies in English, v. 133 (New Haven; London: Yale University Press)

Norris, Margot. 2003. *Suspicious Readings of Joyce's Dubliners* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press)

North, Michael. 2013. 'The Making of "Make It New"', *Guernica. A Magazine of Global Arts and Politics* <https://www.guernicamag.com/the-making-of-making-it-new/> [accessed 28 April 2017]

O'Connor, Frank. 1963. *The Lonely Voice: A Study of the Short Story* (Harper & Row)

O'Grady, Thomas B. 1991. 'Little Chandler's Song of Experience', *James Joyce Quarterly* 28.2 : 399–405

Onans, Rose. 2015. 'Seeking the Self in the Garden: Class, Femininity and Nature in *To the Lighthouse*, "Bliss" and "The Garden Party"', *Virginia Woolf Miscellany*, 86: 21–23

O'Rawe, Catherine. 2005. *Authorial Echoes: Textuality and Self-Plagiarism in the Narrative of Luigi Pirandello* (London: Legenda)

O'Rourke. 2011. 'Joyce's Early Aesthetic', *Journal of Modern Literature*, 34.2: 97 <https://doi.org/10.2979/jmodelite.34.2.97>

Orsini, François. 2001. *Pirandello e l'Europa*, Iride, 26 (Cosenza: Pellegrini)

O'Sullivan, Vincent, and Margaret Scott (eds.). 1984. *The Collected Letters of Katherine Mansfield*, 5 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press)

Paghi, Antonio. 1988. '"Il Crocifisso" di Federigo Tozzi: strutture narrative e ideologia', *Annali della Facoltà di Lettere e Filosofia, Università Di Siena*, IX: 83–110

Palumbo, Matteo. 1982. 'Il narratore interdetto: epifania e paralisi della realtà in F. Tozzi', *Lavoro Critico*, 27

———. 2017. ‘Le epifanie di Tozzi’, in *Federigo Tozzi in Europa. Influssi culturali e convergenze artistiche*, ed. by Riccardo Castellana and Ilaria De Seta (Roma: Carocci), pp. 25–37

Parke, Nigel. 1999. ‘Stifled Cries and Whispering Shoes: Rites of Passage in the Modern Epiphany’, in *Moments of Moment. Aspects of the Literary Epiphany*, ed. by Tigges, Wim (Amsterdam: Rodopi), pp. 207–32

Pasco, Allan H. 1991. ‘On Defining Short Stories’, *New Literary History*, 22.2: 407 <https://doi.org/10.2307/469046>

Peake, Charles. 1977. *James Joyce, the Citizen and the Artist* (Stanford University Press) <http://digital.library.wisc.edu/1711.dl/JoyceColl.PeakeJamesJoyce> [accessed 15 May 2015]

Pero, Allan. 2016. ‘“Jigging Away into Nothingness”: Knowledge, Language and Feminine Jouissance in “Bliss” and “Psychology”’, in *Katherine Mansfield and Psychology*, ed. by Clare Hanson, Gerri Kimber, and Martin W. Todd (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press), pp. 100–112

Perosa, Sergio. 2013. ‘Unità d’effetto e punta dell’iceberg: da Poe a Raymond Carver’, in *La forma breve del narrare: novelle, contes, short stories*, I libri dell’Associazione Sigismondo Malatesta. Studi di letterature comparate, 2. Serie 12, ed. by Loretta Innocenti (Pisa: Pacini), pp. 205–29

Petroni, Franco. 1984. *Ideologia del mistero e logica dell’inconscio nei romanzi di Federigo Tozzi* (Firenze: Manzuoli)

———. 2003. ‘La funzionalità narrativa della descrizione in Bestie di Federigo Tozzi’, in *Tozzi: la scrittura crudele. Atti del Convegno internazionale, Siena, S. Maria della Scala, Palazzo pubblico, 24-26 ottobre 2002*, Moderna: semestrale di teoria e critica della letteratura, IV, ed. by Maria Antonietta Grignani (Pisa: Fabrizio Serra), II, pp. 77–88

Pilditch, Jan. 1996. *The Critical Response to Katherine Mansfield*, Critical Responses in Arts and Letters, No. 21 (Westport, Conn; London: Greenwood Press)

Pilkington, Anthony Edward. 1976. *Bergson and His Influence: A Reassessment* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press)

Pott, Heleen. 2017. ‘Why Bad Moods Matter. William James on Melancholy, Mystic Emotion, and the Meaning of Life’, *Philosophia* <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11406-017-9842-z>

Prescott, Joseph. 1949. ‘James Joyce’s Epiphanies’, *Modern Language Notes*, 64.5: 346 <https://doi.org/10.2307/2909918>

Providenti, Elio. 1996a. 'Gli anni della formazione di Luigi Pirandello' <https://www.academia.edu/24735291/GLI_ANNI_DELLA_FORMAZIONE_DI_LUIGI_PIRANDELLO> [accessed 16 May 2018]

———. 1996b. 'Il problema della formazione', in *Le fonti di Pirandello*, ed. by Antonio Alessio and G. Sanguinetti Katz (Palermo: Palumbo)

———. 2009. 'Il sentimento, la logica e la lanterninosofia' <https://www.academia.edu/25169788/IL_SENTIMENTO_LA_LOGICA_E_LA_LANTERNINOSOFIA> [accessed 15 May 2018]

Pupino, Angelo R. 2003. 'Un'idea di paesaggio in Pirandello', in *Ragguagli di modernità: Fogazzaro, Pirandello, 'La ronda', Contini, Morante*, Pubblicazioni del 'Centro Pio Rajna.' Sezione prima, Studi e saggi 33 (Roma: Salerno), pp. 66–101

———. 2008. *Pirandello o l'arte della dissonanza: saggio sui romanzi*, Studi e saggi 0047 (Roma: Salerno)

Puppa, Paolo. 1984. 'Pirandello e l'oltre', in *Pirandello e la cultura del suo tempo*, Collana di saggi e documentazioni del Centro Nazionale di Studi Pirandelliani, 9, ed. by Stefano Milioto and Enzo Scrivano (Milano: Mursia), pp. 63–85

Randall, Bryony. 2010. 'Modernist Literature and the Everyday', *Literature Compass*, 7.9: 824–35 <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-4113.2010.00742.x>

Reid, Susan. 2015. 'On Form/s: Woolf, Mansfield and Plato', *Virginia Woolf Miscellany*, 86: 14–16

Robertson, Ritchie. 2017. 'Everyday Transcendence? Robert Musil, William James, and Mysticism', *History of European Ideas*, 43.3: 262–72 <https://doi.org/10.1080/01916599.2017.1336355>

Rodríguez Salas, Gerardo. 2015. '"A Queer Sense of Being 'like'": Female Friendship in Katherine Mansfield and Virginia Woolf', *Virginia Woolf Miscellany*, 86: 19–21

Rössner, Michael. 1988. 'Nietzsche e Pirandello: Paralleli e Differenze', in *L'enigma Pirandello. Proceedings of an international congress, Ottawa, October 24-26, 1986*, The Pirandello Society of Canada series, v. 2; Biblioteca di Quaderni d'italianistica, v. 5, ed. by Antonio Alessio, Claudia Persi Haines, and Leonard Gregory Sbrocchi (Ottawa: The Canadian Society for Italian Studies), pp. 228–42 <https://www.pirandelloweb.com/nietzsche-e-pirandello-paralleli-e-differenze/> [accessed 29 May 2018]

Rössner, Michael, and Fausto De Michele (eds.). 2007. *Pirandello e l'identità europea: atti del Convegno internazionale di studi pirandelliani, Graz, 18-20 ottobre 2007*, Collana di saggi e documentazioni del Centro Nazionale di Studi Pirandelliani, 57 (Pesaro: Metauro)

Ruggieri, F., J. McCourt, and E. Terrinoni (eds.). 2009. *Joyce in Progress: Proceedings of the 2008 James Joyce Graduate Conference in Rome* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing)

Saccone, Eduardo. 1979. 'La memoria e i simboli: i ricordi di Tozzi', *MLN*, 94.1: 16 <https://doi.org/10.2307/2906328>

———. 1993. 'Le allegorie di Tozzi', *MLN*, 108.1: 87–112

———. 2003. 'Narrative di crisi. Sulla forma di alcuni romanzi e novelle di Federigo Tozzi', *MLN*, Italian Issue, 118.1: 194–208

Saponaro, Diana, and Lucia Torsello. 2015. *La biblioteca di luigi Pirandello. Dediche d'autore*, Pubblicazioni dell'Istituto di Studi Pirandelliani, 12 (Roma: Bulzoni) <http://www.studiodiluigipirandello.it/joomla/documenti/biblioteca_pirandello.pdf> [accessed 1 September 2019]

———. [n.d.]. 'La biblioteca di Luigi Pirandello. Catalogo alfabetico per autore [Online]' (Istituto di Studi Pirandelliani), Studio di Luigi Pirandello <http://www.studiodiluigipirandello.it/joomla/documenti/biblioteca_pirandello.pdf> [accessed 16 November 2015]

Sarlet, Claudette. 1989. 'The Remembered Gardens Where Writing Wells: An Exploration of Katherine Mansfield's Work', in *The Fine Instrument: Essays on Katherine Mansfield*, ed. by Paulette Michel-Michot and Michel Dupuis (Sydney; Coventry: Dangaroo Press), pp. 134–46

Schneider, Elisabeth. 1935. 'Katherine Mansfield and Chekhov', *Modern Language Notes*, 50.6: 394–397 <https://doi.org/10.2307/2912862>

Scholes, Robert. 1964. 'Joyce and the Epiphany: The Key to the Labyrinth?', *The Sewanee Review*: 65–77

Scholes, Robert, and Richard M. Kain. 1965. *The Workshop of Daedalus. James Joyce and the Raw Materials for A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press) <http://digital.library.wisc.edu/1711.dl/JoyceColl.ScholesWorkshop>

Scholes, Robert, and A. Walton Litz (eds.). 1969. 'Epiphanies and Epicleti', in *Dubliners. Text, Criticism and Notes*, The Viking Critical Library (Penguin), pp. 253–56

Scholes, Robert, and Florence L. Walzl. 1967. 'The Epiphanies of Joyce', *PMLA*, 82.1: 152 <https://doi.org/10.2307/461060>

Shaw, Valerie. 1983. *The Short Story: A Critical Introduction* (London: Longman)

Shen, Dan. 2006. 'Subverting Surface and Doubling Irony: Subtexts of Mansfield's "Revelations" and Others', *English Studies*, 87.2: 191–209 <https://doi.org/10.1080/00138380600610084>

Short, Clarice. 1957. 'Joyce's "A Little Cloud"', *Modern Language Notes*, 72.4: 275 <https://doi.org/10.2307/3043104>

Sichera, Antonio. 2018. 'La svolta nietzschiana. Pirandello, "Il viaggio" e i prodromi di un nuovo eden', in *C'è un oltre in tutto voi non volete o non sapete vederlo. Dialogo tra i saperi intorno all'opera di Pirandello (Atti del seminario interdipartimentale, campus di Fisciano, 29-30 Marzo 2017)*, ed. by Milena Montanile (Salerno: Edizioni Sinestesie), pp. 191–203

Simon, Irène. 1989. 'Irony in the Short Stories of Katherine Mansfield', in *The Fine Instrument: Essays on Katherine Mansfield*, ed. by Paulette Michel-Michot and Michel Dupuis (Sydney; Coventry: Dangaroo Press), pp. 97–106

Sinicropi, Giovanni, and Luigi Pirandello. 1961. 'Arte e vita nelle opere di Luigi Pirandello', *Italica*, 38.4: 265 <https://doi.org/10.2307/477556>

Smith. 1965. 'A Superstition in Joyce's "Clay"', *James Joyce Quarterly*, 2.2: 133–134

Smith, Angela. 2000. *Katherine Mansfield: A Literary Life*, Macmillan Literary Lives (Basingstoke: Palgrave)

Somigli, Luca, and Mauro Moroni. 2004. 'Modernism in Italy: An Introduction', in *Italian Modernism. Italian Culture between Decadentism and Avant-Garde*, ed. by Luca Somigli and Mauro Moroni (Toronto: University of Toronto Press), pp. 3–34

Spoo, Robert E. 1987. '"Una Piccola Nuvoletta": Ferrero's "Young Europe" and Joyce's Mature "Dubliners" Stories', *James Joyce Quarterly*: 401–410

Staley, Thomas F. 1966. 'Moral Responsibility in Joyce's "Clay"', *Renascence*, 18.3: 124–28

Stasi, Beatrice. 1995. *Apologie della letteratura: Leopardi tra De Roberto e Pirandello*, Collana del Dipartimento di italianistica, Università di Bologna, 3 (Bologna: Il Mulino) <http://solo.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/OXVU1:oxfaleph012114387>

Steppe, Wolfhard. 1995. 'The Merry Greeks (With a Farewell to "Epicleti")', *James Joyce Quarterly*, 32.3/4: 597–617

Storchi, Simona. 2011. 'Notions of Tradition and Modernity in Italian Critical Debates of the 1920s' (unpublished PhD thesis, University College London) <http://discovery.ucl.ac.uk/1317702/1/272229.pdf> [accessed 16 November 2014]

Sugisaki, Shingo. 1987. 'Narrative Counterpoint: James Joyce's "A Little Cloud" (Synopsis)', *The Harp*, 2: 13–14

Talarico, Laura. 2010. 'From James Joyce to Katherine Mansfield: Epiphanic Poetics and Writing of the Self', in *James Joyce: Metamorphosis and Re-Writing, Joyce Studies in Italy*, 11 ed. by Franca Ruggieri Punzo (Roma: Bulzoni), pp. 227–39 <http://digital.casalini.it/10.1400/193080>

Taylor, Charles. 1989. *Sources of the Self. The Making of the Modern Identity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press)

Tellini, Gino. 1972. *La tela di fumo. Saggio su Tozzi novelliere* (Pisa: Nistri-Lischi)

Thorndike-Breeze, Rebecca. 2016. 'Feeling "Like a Work-Girl": Class, Intimacy and Alienation in "The Garden Party"', in *Katherine Mansfield and Psychology*, ed. by Clare Hanson, Gerri Kimber, and Martin W. Todd (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press), pp. 68–81

Tigges, Wim. 1999. 'The Significance of Trivial Things: Towards a Typology of the Literary Epiphany', in *Moments of Moment. Aspects of the Literary Epiphany*, ed. by Wim Tigges (Amsterdam: Rodopi), pp. 11–35

Tilgher, Adriano. 1923. 'Il teatro di Pirandello', in *Studi sul teatro contemporaneo* (Roma: Libreria de Scienze e Lettere), pp. 157–218

Tindall, William York. 1960. *A Reader's Guide to James Joyce* (London: Thames and Hudson)

Tinkler-Villani, Valeria. 1999. 'Epiphany in Gothic Fiction', in *Moments of Moment. Aspects of the Literary Epiphany*, ed. by Wim Tigges (Amsterdam: Rodopi), pp. 101–13

Tolron, Francine. 1989. 'Fauna and Flora in Katherine Mansfield's Short Stories', in *The Fine Instrument: Essays on Katherine Mansfield*, ed. by Paulette Michel-Michot and Michel Dupuis (Sydney; Coventry: Dangaroo Press), pp. 166–72

Tonelli, Luigi. 1927. 'Narratori italiani d'oggi', *Italica*, 4.3: 57–60 <https://doi.org/10.2307/476072>

Tortora, Massimiliano. 2006. 'L'ordinamento cronologico delle novelle di Federigo Tozzi', *L'Ellisse*, I: 125–59

———. 2009. 'Introduzione', in *Edizione critica delle opere di Federigo Tozzi. Vol. 1-2: Novelle postume* (Ospedaletto, Pisa: Pacini)

———. 2012. 'Tracciato del modernismo italiano', in *Sul modernismo italiano*, ed. by Romano Luperini and Massimiliano Tortora (Napoli: Liguori)

——— (ed.). 2014. *La punta di diamante di tutta la sua opera: Sulla novellistica di Federigo Tozzi. Atti del Convegno di Perugia, 14-15 novembre 2012*, Testi e studi di letteratura italiana 0009 (Perugia: Morlacchi)

Tozzi, Federica. 2015. 'Emozioni e temporalità: lettura matteblanchiana di una novella di Tozzi', *Moderna: semestrale di teoria e critica della letteratura*, 17.2: 65–77

Trotter, David. 2013. 'Modernism Reloaded: The Fiction of Katherine Mansfield', *Affirmations*, 1.1

Ureni, Paola. 2000. 'Tozzi e la *Révue Philosophique*', in *Il rabdomante consapevole: ricerche su Tozzi*, Quaderni di Aldo Palazzeschi, 14, ed. by Marco Marchi (Firenze: Le lettere), pp. 217–44

Valesio, Paolo. 2004. 'Foreword: After the Conquest of the Stars', in *Italian Modernism. Italian Culture between Decadentism and Avant-Garde*, ed. by Luca Somigli and Mauro Moroni (Toronto: University of Toronto Press), pp. ix–xxiii

Vaughan, Michael. 2007. 'Introduction: Henri Bergson's Creative Evolution', *SubStance*, 36.3: 7–24 <https://doi.org/10.1353/sub.2007.0051>

Vesala-Varttala, Tanja. 2017. 'Joyce's Dubliners and Conversational Narrative', in *Joyce's Dubliners: Lectures Critiques - Critical Approaches*, GRAAT, ed. by Claudine Raynaud (Tours: Presses universitaires François-Rabelais), pp. 101–15 <http://books.openedition.org/pufr/4526> [accessed 7 February 2018]

Vicentini, Claudio. 1985. *L'estetica di Pirandello*, Saggi di estetica e di poetica n. 11, 2a ed. aggiornata (Milano: Mursia)

Wadsworth, Celina. 1969. 'Symbolism in the Short Stories of Katherine Mansfield: An Epiphany of Her Sensitivity to Suffering' (ProQuest Dissertations Publishing) <http://search.proquest.com/docview/866298933/> [accessed 28 May 2017]

Walzl, Florence L. 1965. 'The Liturgy of the Epiphany Season and the Epiphanies of Joyce', *PMLA*, 80.4: 436 <https://doi.org/10.2307/460937>

———. 1973. 'Joyce's" The Sisters": A Development', *James Joyce Quarterly*, 10.4: 375–421

———. 1983. 'Joyce's "Clay": Fact and Fiction', *Renascence*, 35.2: 119–38

Warde, William B. 1976. 'The Short Story: Structure of a New Genre', *The South Central Bulletin*, 36.4: 155 <https://doi.org/10.2307/3188318>

Wattie, Nelson. 1989. 'Katherine Mansfield as a Noble Savage: The Cry Against Corruption', in *The Fine Instrument: Essays on Katherine Mansfield*, ed. by Paulette Michel-Michot and Michel Dupuis (Sydney; Coventry: Dangaroo Press), pp. 149–56

Weir, David. 1976. 'Meditation Structure in "A Little Cloud"', *James Joyce Quarterly*: 84–87

Wheeler, Kathleen M. 1994. 'Dramatic Art in Katherine Mansfield's "Bliss"', in *'Modernist' Women Writers and Narrative Art* (New York: New York University Press), pp. 121–40

Woods, Joanna. 2007. 'Katherine Mansfield (1888-1923)', *Kōtare*, 7.1: 63–98

Wright, David G. 2017. '"A Very Fine Piece of Writing": Endings in Dubliners', in *Joyce's Dubliners: Lectures Critiques - Critical Approaches*, GRAAT, ed. by Claudine Raynaud (Tours: Presses universitaires François-Rabelais), pp. 143–48 <http://books.openedition.org/pufr/4534> [accessed 7 February 2018]

Zammataro, Alessandro. 2013. 'Introduzione', in *Il canto della Vergine: storia mistica e immagini del medioevo nella poesia di Federigo Tozzi*, I edizione (Roma: Aracne editrice)

Zangrilli, Franco. 1981. 'La fortuna critica del Pirandello novelliere', *Italica*, 58.4: 281 <https://doi.org/10.2307/479223>

Zaniello, Thomas. 1967. 'The Epiphany and the Object-Image Distinction', *James Joyce Quarterly*, 4: 286–288

Zatti, Sergio, and Arrigo Stara (eds.). 2010. 'Un genere senza qualità. Il racconto italiano nell'età della short story', *Moderna: semestrale di teoria e critica della letteratura*, XII.2 <http://www.libraweb.net/articoli.php?chiave=201001902&rivista=19> [accessed 12 May 2015]

Zingrone, Frank. 1979. 'Joyce and D'Annunzio: The Marriage of Fire and Water', *James Joyce Quarterly*, 16.3: 253–265

Ziolkowski, Theodore. 2014. '"Tolle Lege": Epiphanies of the Book', *The Modern Language Review*, 109.1: 1–14 <https://doi.org/10.5699/modelangrevi.109.1.0001>