

Joyce on Epiphany & Paralysis

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 w/ extreme care, seeing that they themselves are the most delicate and evanescent of moments. (Joyce *Stephen Hero*)

First we recognize that the object is one integral thing, then we recognize that it is an organized composite structure, a thing in fact: finally, when the relationship 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. (Joyce *Stephen Hero* 58)

It is, then, a sudden realization of thing in all its full and unique significance, "an explosion out of darkness ... a kind of mystical experience when a part of the veil shrouding the mystery of the world was suddenly drawn aside so that the true nature of things seemed revealed."

My intention was to write a chapter of the moral history of my country and I chose Dublin for the scene because that city seemed to me the centre of paralysis. I have tried to present it to the indifferent public under four of its aspects: childhood, adolescence, maturity and public life. The stories are arranged in this order. I have written it for the most part in a style of scrupulous meanness and with the conviction that he is a very bold man who dares to alter in the presentment, still more to deform, whatever he has seen and heard. (Letter, May 5, 1906, to Grant Richards)

"I call the series Dubliners to betray the soul of that hemiplegia or paralysis which many consider a city." (August 1904 letter to Constantine Curran)

The order of the stories is as follows. "The Sisters," "An Encounter" and another story ["Araby"] which are stories of my childhood: "The Boarding House," "After the Race" and "Eveline," which are stories of adolescence: "The Clay," "Counterparts," and "A Painful Case" which are stories of mature life: "Ivy Day in the Committee Room," "A Mother" and the last story of the book ["Grace"] which are stories of public life in Dublin. (September 1905 Stanislaus Joyce)
