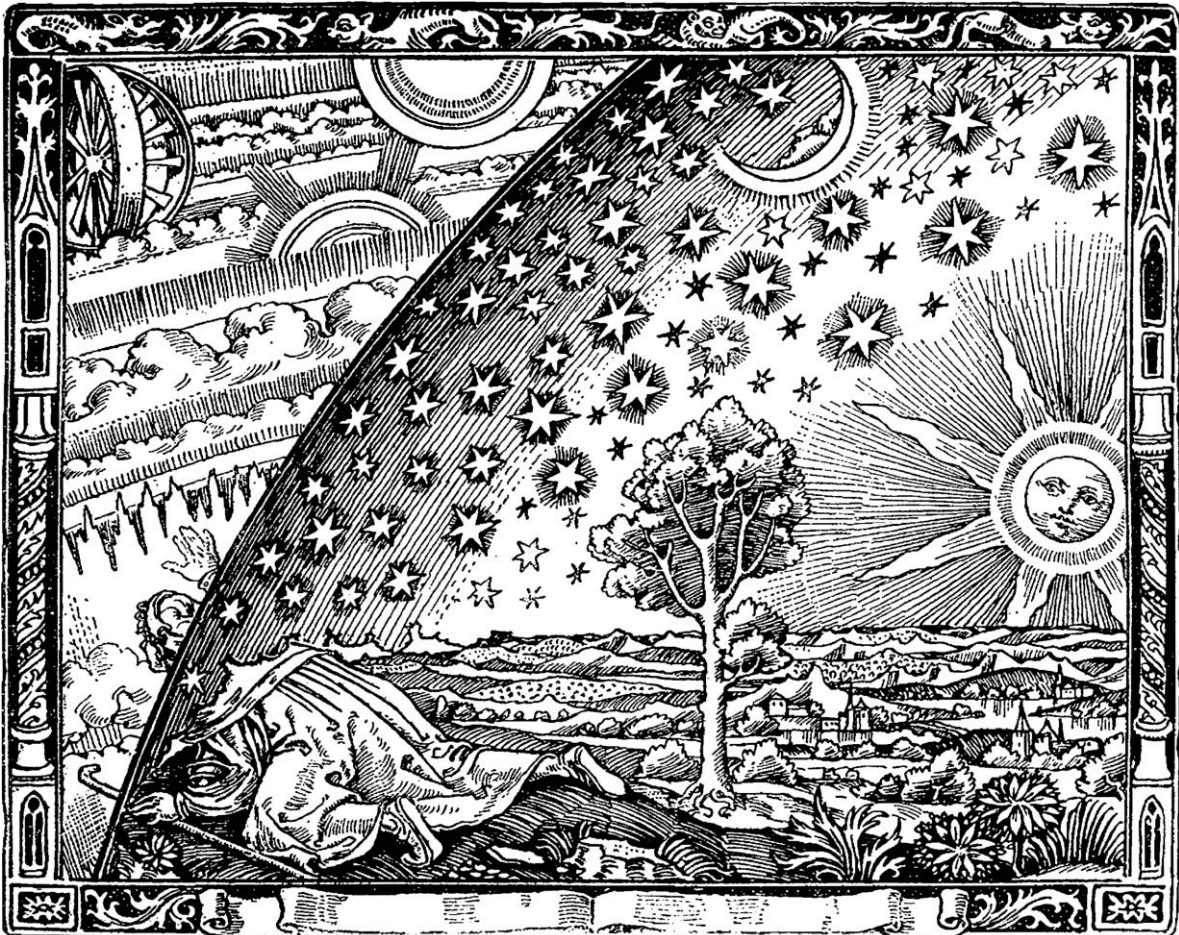


A Cycle of C-changes:

a working model for the literary epiphany



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1. Introduction

Change is a keyword in much of the world's literature, as human beings are hardly ever static and unchanging. Although there are instances in which hardly any change of character, or change of heart, or change of scene occurs in the course of a narrative – Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* comes to mind – more often the protagonist's progress is marked by significant changes. Hence, one of the most commonly discussed aspects when dealing with a work of literature is that of character development. Another key mechanism is that of rising and falling action. This is conventionally associated with drama, but equally applies to prose. Introduced in 1894 by the German critic and dramatist Gustav Freytag (Prince 36), the framework for plot analysis which became known as Freytag's Pyramid consists of an upright triangular shape depicting on the left-hand side of the triangle the notion of rising action or the increase of tension, the tip of the pyramid representing the climax or culmination of the action, and the right-hand side standing for falling action or the decrease of tension. This concept is mostly applied to the structure of a dramatic piece in five acts such as the typical Shakespearean play but is also applicable to prose fiction (Abrams 161). Aristotle first posited that a unified plot consists of a relevant sequence of events with a beginning, a middle part, and an end. After the introduction of one or more characters or a situation in the exposition, we move into a phase of complication in which the action rises and a conflict develops, leading to the climactic events which mark the high point of the plot. In *Hamlet*, for instance, this climax is reached at the moment when the play within a play is being staged, thus adding a metaphysical layer to the drama. At the climax, a crisis marks the turning point in which the protagonist's fate is determined. After

this, the dramatic tension gradually decreases in the falling action of events leading to the inevitable outcome known as the resolution or denouement.

This thesis attempts to link certain aspects of literary analysis, i.e. character development and rising/falling action, to the phenomenon of the literary epiphany. After providing a general definition of epiphany I will present various types of literary epiphany, before narrowing the scope down to one specific type: the epiphany which comes after a prolonged period of mounting tension culminating in a personal crisis. At this point, I will introduce my own model: a logical progression of states of mind or being, moving towards an epiphany which has a lasting effect on the character. Though the visionary moment may be spontaneous, it does not occur haphazardly but rather is the result of a series of consecutive events which lead up to the point of epiphany; it may be out of the ordinary, but it is not out of context. This progression can be perceived as an upward spiral representing a mental development towards a wider consciousness, a better understanding of the self and the other, and a greater degree of self-realization or self-actualization. Thus, the literary notions of rising and falling action and character development are tied in to the type of epiphany I am proposing in my model. In discussing the phenomenon of the epiphany, some indispensable links will be made to the field of psychology, without straying too far from the literary implications. This thesis intends to highlight the importance of the epiphany in the context of literary character development, as well as its contribution to the role of literature as a morally uplifting force. It will also be noted that epiphanies are not an end in themselves, but rather an inherent part of the transitions in life.

To corroborate my findings, I will compare the said stages in the progression toward epiphany with developments in two works of primary literature: James Joyce's *A Portrait of*

the Artist as a Young Man, and Jack Kerouac's *On the Road*. After discussing these two works in detail I will refer far more succinctly to three other novels (Kerouac's *The Dharma Bums*, Pirsig's *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance*, and Walker's *The Color Purple*), and indicate how key developments in these works relate to some of the said stages in my model. Naturally, I will emphasize the combination of stages as proposed in my model and go beyond merely unconnected and separate examples of the various states of being described in this model. In doing so, I will explore some of the theoretical background to the literary epiphany, as discussed by Morris Beja, Ashton Nichols, Robert Langbaum, Philipp Wolf, Christel van Boheemen-Saaf, and Wim Tigges. I will also attempt to counter Paul Maltby's postmodern critique and deconstruction of the epiphanic literary tradition. My response, and my thesis as a whole, will express a professed belief in the mental and moral evolution in man, based on a deep conviction that "truth will out" and that mankind is, in a moral sense, upwardly mobile. Character development is, in my model at least, a development for the better.

I have opted to focus on novels as the primary material for my thesis, rather than poetry or short stories. Through its longer literary format, the novel offers more scope for character development and thus serves better to illustrate the various phases of my proposed model. Poetry and short stories are dictated by their brevity; there is no time for long complications. The central character undergoes one single experience. Character is therefore revealed, but not developed as in a novel. Epiphanic poetry tends to describe the supreme moment of experience, but omits the stages which have led up to this; it merely highlights selected details which are relevant to the experience itself. As far as narrative structure is concerned, a short story may have the same stages as a novel. However, the

reader generally only learns something about the character's present state, and only for as far as it is relevant to the story itself. The story relates mostly to one event in the protagonist's life; the events leading up to the climax are often only slightly touched upon.

There is an anecdote about a Zen Master who is asked what comes before Enlightenment. His response is: "much chopping of wood". When asked what comes after Enlightenment, he replies: "more chopping of wood". What makes this a typical Zen story is the way in which it puts the listener off balance by proposing the unexpected: whoever supposes that after Enlightenment the hard graft is over will be sorely disappointed. This anecdote illustrates the cyclical nature of personal, psychological, and spiritual development: the mental growth of a human being usually does not proceed in a linear fashion, starting from a given point of departure and moving, perhaps in leaps and bounds, but more or less straight towards the goal of self-realisation. Rather, it moves in circles, revisiting points one has passed before, and reliving those same focal points from a new perspective, a different point of view. These circles are upwardly mobile, as the person accumulates experience throughout his life, and the expanding body of experience allows for a wider view, a higher vantage point every time his consciousness focuses on the same object, action, or situation. Although moments of doubt and brief periods of stagnation may momentarily slow down the process, eventually the only way is onward and upward, and thus man is destined to improve himself, and in doing so will improve the world around him.

2. Defining epiphany and associated notions

An epiphany is variously described as “a moment of sudden and great revelation or realization” (oxforddictionaries.com), “a flash of recognition in which someone or something is seen in a new light” (Nordquist, about.com), “momentary manifestations of significance in ordinary experience” (Nichols 1) or “a sudden sense of radiance and revelation that one may feel while perceiving a commonplace object. . . . the sudden flare into revelation of an ordinary object or scene” (Abrams 57). The term has been derived from the ancient Greek *epiphaneia*, meaning ‘manifestation, showing forth, striking appearance’ and is applied in science, literature, psychology, philosophy, and religion. Archimedes is supposed to have had his ‘eureka!’ moment when he took a bath and Newton may well have had an epiphany when he saw an apple fall from a tree. In literature, the term was first coined by Emerson in a lecture on 19 December 1838, though still very much with a religious connotation: “Day creeps after day, each full of facts, dull, strange, despised things. . . . presently the aroused intellect finds gold and gems in one of these scorned facts, then finds . . . that a fact is an Epiphany of God” (90). Joyce later re-introduces the word in *Stephen Hero*, as he describes the moment when the “soul of the commonest object ... seems to us radiant. The object achieves its epiphany” (213).

Joyce goes on to use the concept in *Dubliners* and in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. In *Lord Jim*, Conrad defines epiphany as “one of those rare moments of awakening [in which] everything [occurs] in a flash” (Langbaum 42). Woolf refers to it as “little daily miracles, illuminations, matches struck unexpectedly in the dark” (161).

Epiphanies are relatively rare occurrences, and they are usually associated with the result of

a process of significant labour, intensive study, or intense experience. Though the experience itself may appear to be a sudden, out-of-the-blue, flash of insight, it will more often than not happen at the end of a period of prolonged effort (Berkun 10). An epiphany is a rewarding experience precisely because we never know if and when it will happen, or whether we will be rewarded for our efforts; it is not the predictable and calculable result of a conscious process of reflection and consideration.

The word epiphany originally referred to insight through the divine (Berkun 5). It remains a widely-held conception that an epiphany comes to us from outside ourselves, as if it is a notion which is not produced by our own mind, but by some external, even supernatural, force. It is linked to the concepts of catharsis and kenosis in Ancient Greek drama, and these concepts also reflect states of mind which are produced at the end of a chain of events and after a period of mounting tension. Catharsis, from Ancient Greek *katharsis*, meaning 'cleansing, purging', can be described as 'release of emotional tension', 'emotional cleansing', 'purification or purging of emotions'. It denotes an extreme change in emotion, occurring as a result of experiencing strong feelings. Kenosis, from Ancient Greek *kenóō*, meaning 'to empty out', is the concept of the 'self-emptying' of one's own will and becoming entirely receptive to God and the divine will.

In Christianity, the Epiphany is the name of the feast celebrated twelve days after Christmas. It is the celebration of the appearance of Christ to the Magi. To be precise, it was the appearance of the Star of Bethlehem which 'showed forth' the way to the new-born incarnation of godhead. The image of the star is in effect a fitting representation of the epiphany in that it captures the elements of illumination, timelessness and boundlessness; the "sudden flare" (Abrams 57) of revelation may even be compared to a supernova (Tigges

26). In a wider religious sense, the word epiphany refers to the moment when a person's faith is realised or confirmed. In Buddhism, for instance, it might point to the moment when the Buddha attains Nirvana as he realizes the nature of the universe (Rhys Davids 362). As we shall see later, though, revelations of a religious nature are not to be equated with the literary epiphany.

From the perspective of psychology, one of the key notions which ties in to the idea of character development is that of self-actualisation or self-realisation, or the fulfilment by oneself of the possibilities of one's character or personality. Maslow defines self-actualization as: "the desire to become more and more what one is, to become everything that one is capable of becoming" (382). Based on this definition, self-actualisation is generally regarded as psychological growth, or the fruition of the latent potential within a human being. Maslow calls this "the desire for self-fulfilment . . . the tendency for him to become actualized in what he is potentially. . . . A musician must make music, an artist must paint, a poet must write, if he is to be ultimately happy. What a man *can* be, he *must* be" (382). Maslow distinguishes five sets of human needs: physiological, safety, belongingness, esteem, and self-actualisation. Self-actualisation is the final stage of psychological development and is only achieved after all other physical and mental needs are fulfilled. Some of the characteristics of those who have attained this phase of development are: acceptance of reality and of oneself and an extraverted rather than an introverted mindset. Analogous to this, Jung develops the idea of 'individuation', a life-long process in which the innate elements of one's personality, the different experiences of one's life and the different aspects and components of the psyche become integrated over time, to form a mature human being. "In general, it is the process by which individual beings are formed and

differentiated [from other human beings]; in particular, it is the development of the psychological individual as a being distinct from the general, collective psychology“ (par.757). Jung maintains that individuation has a holistic healing effect on the person, both mentally and physically.

As a first attempt at arriving at a comprehensive definition of the literary epiphany, this chapter has been necessarily succinct. The next chapter of this thesis will focus on an overview of existing sources and further explore the lines of thought of those who have tried to shed light on this elusive subject.

3. The literary epiphany - an overview of received knowledge and previous research

It was Joyce who popularized the term 'epiphany' in his novel *Stephen Hero* which was to become the basis of *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. However, the notion of a sudden revelation by way of exposure to a seemingly trivial object, event, or even image, had been around for much longer. Chekhov and Proust had earlier availed themselves of this literary notion, and within the English-speaking world Wordsworth had spoken of "spots of time" with "vivifying virtue" in *The Prelude* (478), Blake had seen "a World in a Grain of Sand" and held "Infinity in the palm of your hand / And Eternity in an hour" (431), and Shelley had defended poetry by invoking the inspiration of "evanescent visitations of thought and feeling . . . arising unforeseen and departing unbidden, but elevating and delightful" (504).

Another to emphasize the transitory nature of time with regards to personal insight was Ralph Waldo Emerson, who, in his essay "The Over-Soul" quoted Rev. David Emerson Grimm's words "crowd eternity in an hour, / Or stretch an hour to eternity" and added: "Before the revelations of the soul, Time, Space, and Nature shrink away" (162) and "the universe is represented in an atom, in a moment of time" (175). The fleeting nature, the momentariness of the epiphany, as well as its intensity, is voiced by many others: Browning speaks of "infinite moment", Yeats of "great moment", T.S. Eliot of "timeless moment", Wallace Stevens of "moment of awakening", Pater of "pauses in time", Henry James of "sublime instants", Conrad of "moment of vision" (qtd. in Tigges 24); and then of course there is the aptly chosen title of Tigges' anthology: "Moments of Moment".

Morris Beja mentions as the earliest example of a literary epiphany Sterne's novel *Tristram Shandy*, in which a fly is set free, causing the protagonist to experience a revelation which will stay with him forever – though it can be argued that this situation is simply to be interpreted as a regular memory which is recalled later. Most, if not all, scholars agree that the epiphany is to take place spontaneously, and often through a process of involuntary memory, rather than caused by an effort of will to remember a past event or by attempting to call up a heightened state of awareness.

Ashton Nichols makes a distinction between the "proleptic" epiphany, triggered by involuntary memory, in which "the mind transforms a past experience to produce a new sense of significance" (*Poetics* 74), and the "adelonic" epiphany, triggered by ordinary events as they happen, which "refers to a non-perceptual . . . manifestation produced immediately by a powerful perceptual experience" (75). Building on this subdivision, Tigges proposes a useful categorization of these two types of epiphanies. The proleptic epiphany can be subdivided in Beja's "retrospective" epiphany, "one in which an event arouses no special impression when it occurs, but produces a sudden sensation of new awareness when it is recalled at some future time" (Beja 15) which amounts to a "delayed epiphany" (60), and that of "the past recaptured" in which the revealed past event is not a revelatory experience in itself, but the significance of the present recapture of that past moment takes on an epiphanic character (60-61). Instances of the former occur in Joyce's work, whereas instances of the latter can be found in the work of Proust (15). Tigges then sub-divides the adelonic epiphany in five sub-types: the first is related to a place (e.g. a mountain top, a tower, a lighthouse, a ladder, a staircase); the second is related to an encounter with a person (often a young woman – the idea of the 'muse' comes to mind); the third is related to

an object (e.g. a star, a river, a sea, an animal, an urn); the fourth is related to verbal perception (for instance the overhearing of a conversation, as in *Portrait*, or by meditating on a single word, or by reading a 'fatal book'); and finally, the fifth is related to the "ultimate moment", the moment of dying, in which one witnesses a final review of one's past life (Tigges 28-30). Tigges further distinguishes between "subjective epiphany" which is experienced by the literary character, and "objective epiphany" which is transferred to the reader and/or recognized by the narrator (20). As Nichols remarks: "[i]n the literary epiphany, the isolated moment of one individual's immediate experience becomes a potential source of value in the minds of others" (*Poetics* 34). The epiphanees, the person experiencing an epiphany, can be the writer, the narrator, a character, the reader, or a combination of these. However, as Tigges notes, what creates an epiphany for one person can leave all others wholly unmoved; "epiphany, like beauty, remains very much in the eye of the beholder" (32).

The term 'epiphany' is not always associated with pleasurable inspired moments, however. Northrop Frye speaks of "demonic epiphanies", which Nichols defines as "manifestation of the reality of evil" (*Poetics* 2). This type of epiphany, also known as "tragic vision" or "anagnorisis", occurs when the protagonist, who is about to perish, sees his past, present, and future in a flash of insight. The protagonist realizes what could have been but must accept his mortal fate. This kind of epiphany would correspond to Tigges' fifth subtype, if its association with fear and pain had not ruled it out of this category. Beja even posits that this type of "discovery" is not an epiphany, since it is "rational, not 'spiritual'" (16). There is also the "false epiphany" in which the hero is unable to fathom his own motives and oversee the consequences of his actions. Convinced of the validity of his

deluded vision, he determines the usually fatal outcome of his destiny. The state of 'aporia' does not fit into this typology either, though it may be seen as a stage towards epiphany. Derived from ancient Greek and signifying 'without passage' the term suggests that, insofar it describes a feeling of genuine doubt rather than a rhetorical device, it denotes a mental block, a cul-de-sac, an impasse, a situation seemingly without an open end. The same goes for Sartre's 'nausea' which entails a crisis of despair that, although ultimately bringing the protagonist closer to himself, at the same time leads him to alienation from the world. Sartre may have said that "life begins on the other side of despair" (Carruth xi) and "genius is what a man invents when he is looking for a way out" (Carruth v – xiv), but in Sartre's philosophy it is man himself who is forced to re-invent and re-define himself rather than embracing the greater vision which is offered when the individual consciousness connects with what lies outside of its limited scope.

As a literary and psychological term, epiphany can be equated to intuition, illumination, enlightenment, and vision. It is, however, more than mere inspiration. Frye suggests that the defining difference between the two is the element of clarity which should accompany the experience:

I have never had the sort of experience the mystics talk about, never felt a revelation of reality through or beyond nature, never felt like Adam in Paradise, never felt, in direct experience, that the world is wholly other than it seems. I don't question the honesty, or even the factuality, of those who have recorded such experiences, but I have had to content myself with the blessing to those who have not seen & yet have believed—if one can attach the word "belief" to accepting statements as obviously true as the fact that I

have seen New York. The nearest I have come to such experiences are glimpses of my own creative powers . . . and these are moments or intervals of inspiration rather than vision. I'm not sure that I want it unless I can have clarity about other things with it. What are all the miracles and divine visions of Bernard of Clairvaux to me when I know that he preached vehemently in favor of crusades? (*Third Book* 60-1).

Though he maintains that he is not among those who have experienced one, this quote conveniently sums up some of the elements which do constitute an epiphany: mystical, yet not constricted to institutionalized religion; experience which transcends everyday reality, supernatural and natural at the same time; knowing ("direct experience") there is far more to be discovered about the universe and our place in it than what may first be apparent; and the requirement of a virtue of inherent 'goodness' which reaches beyond the confines of our own microcosm. As such, religious experiences can of course be verbalized as literary epiphanies. Robert Langbaum calls the epiphany "the Romantic substitute for religion [which] becomes the means of returning to and revalidating dogma as experience" (59).

In his ground-breaking book on the subject, Morris Beja quickly establishes that the epiphanic experience cannot be identified with mystical experience or with conversion, and that Joyce's use of the word 'spiritual' in this context must be interpreted as figurative (14-15). Beja notes that Joyce uses the term epiphany equally for the manifestation or the object itself, the moment it produces, and his description of it. Departing from Joyce's description of "a sudden spiritual manifestation, whether in the vulgarity of speech or of gesture or in a memorable phase of the mind itself", Beja arrives at his own definition: "a sudden spiritual

manifestation, whether from some object, scene, event, or memorable phase of the mind – the manifestation being out of proportion to the significance or strictly logical relevance of whatever produces it” (18). This latter definition emphasizes that great notions may be culled from apparently trivial occurrences, a point which Joyce had stressed earlier but which was not expressed in his own definition. The phrase “out of proportion” aptly underscores the overwhelming nature of the epiphany.

Beja makes a distinction between a mystic and a Romantic: the former externalizes his experience as if it is handed to him by “divine Grace”, the latter will attribute it to “the nature of the mind itself” (36). He defines mysticism as “abandoning the awareness of self” and clearly distinguishes the religious epiphany from the secular Romantic type, while acknowledging that in describing the Romantic epiphany much of the earlier ecclesiastical terminology is applied. Beja also devotes considerable thought to the relevance in discussing epiphany of the relativity and fluidity of time. The simple linear notion of time is ruled out in the experience of time transcended, whether it is in recapturing the past through involuntary memory or retrospectively through voluntary memory. After all, the way time is experienced is subjective: it can be equally interpreted as a continuum and a series of separate moments, or even as the coexistence of all moments in an eternal present. To what extent the past - and the future, for that matter - is a part of the present is a matter of (informed) opinion, and raises so many philosophical questions that, regrettably, definitive answers cannot be expected to be given in these pages.

In his seminal article “The Epiphanic Mode in Wordsworth and Modern Literature”, Robert Langbaum quotes Wordsworth’s contemporary Hazlitt as saying that Wordsworth had made poetry democratic, taking his cue from the French Revolution, using a

“vernacular” style and “delivering household truths”. He is concerned with “human hopes”, the “human heart” and the “human mind” (252-53). Langbaum posits that this is a new kind of poetry which “is not determined by external signs but by a kind of mental operation that Wordsworth and Coleridge called ‘imagination’. . . . It operates best on realistic material that requires transformation, and helps us believe that the transformation really takes place” (38). This “magic realism” aptly describes the literary epiphany under discussion here. Having originated as a theological term denoting the manifestation of the divine, as in the appearance of Christ to the Magi or the liturgical transubstantiation of the host into the body of Christ, the term is then ‘democratized’ and applied to the workings of the human mind. From theology, it has become psychology, and from psychology it has become applicable in literature.

Thus, Langbaum distinguishes “traditional vision” from “modern epiphany” (38). Unlike visions, which take place only in the mind, epiphanies are also associated with the senses. In addition to Beja’s criteria of Incongruity and Insignificance (“the epiphany is irrelevant to the [trivial] object or incident that triggers it”), Langbaum proposes the criteria of Psychological Association (“a psychological phenomenon arising from a real sensuous experience”), Momentaneousness (“lasts only a moment, but leaves an enduring effect”), Suddenness (“a sudden change in external conditions causes a shift in sensuous perception that sensitizes the observer”), and Fragmentation or the Epiphanic Leap (“the text never quite equals the epiphany; the poetry . . . consists in the reader’s leap”). Thus Langbaum stresses both the predisposition to be receptive for impressions and the involvement of the reader in the epiphanic process; the ultimate goal of the poet or writer is to convey his personal epiphany to the reader as in a “joint venture” (44-45). Referring to Wordsworth’s

lyrical ballad “Simon”, he states: “[t]he tale does not reside in the events but in the quality of the imagination that produced it and that receives it. The author does not *tell* the reader the story, but plays upon him as though he were a musical instrument – making him move through a series of associations that will produce the epiphany in *him*” (48).

Of the ideas discussed above, the one that is most applicable to the proposed model here is that of the ‘adelonic’ epiphany, as it set off by an actual sensory experience, causing an intense reaction in the mind of the epiphanee. For example, although there may be many instances of ‘retrospective’ epiphanies in Joyce’s work, the passage relating to the girl on the beach undoubtedly falls into the category of the ‘adelonic’ epiphany. Tigges’ distinction between ‘subjective’ and ‘objective’ epiphanies is also useful. Through language, meaning can communicate itself from the author to the reader. As Nichols remarks: “secular literary ‘revelation’ records the profoundly complex human mind-brain revealing itself to itself, and then to others, through the medium of language” (“Linguistic Moments” 469). “The concept of epiphany . . . is a paradigm of the way language does not merely *process* conscious activity; language is a *form* of conscious activity”(473). “Literary epiphanies . . . reveal the power of the human mind to make sense of the material world by way of human language, a product of consciousness” (480).

Paul Maltby, in his “postmodern critique” and deconstruction of the epiphanic literary tradition, chooses a rather divergent view to the authors discussed above. After surmising that “there are few among us who have not, at some time, believed in the possibility of the flash of insight that could deliver spiritually redeeming knowledge”, he goes on to assert that “[s]uch a belief persists like folklore” and “as a displaced expression of religious belief” (1). Referring to the essays collected in Tigges’ anthology, he states that the

postmodern viewpoint, which regards the visionary moment as “enmeshed in metaphysical and ideological assumptions”, is largely neglected. Maltby feels that these assumptions are “theoretically untenable” and mostly “irreconcilable with progressive political thinking”, by which he more specifically means Marxist critique. He objects to the “truth claims” of epiphanic notions to the acquisition of transcendent knowledge through insight, the phenomenon of instantaneousness, as well as the redemptive qualities of the visionary experience. Maltby links the literary epiphany directly to the “mystical experience in its general (nonliterary) forms”, illustrating this by referring, among others, to “New Age mysticism . . . shamanistic and millennial cults [and] a burgeoning belief in the supernatural” (3). Specifically, he posits that “[t]he visionary moment promotes the influential myth that there is a ‘higher’ order of knowledge that . . . is . . . permanent and universal” (5) and that “[t]he visionary moment invariably has the quality of ultimacy. . . . [T]he subject . . . has reached the ultimate stage of spiritual and moral development. The subject, as if in some divine state, can progress no further” (49). It is on this point that I must vehemently disagree with Maltby’s argumentation: the measure of personal truth experienced in one particular moment does not need be permanent or even universal. The moment of truth is just that: something can be very true and significant at one moment, and not be so at other times or in different circumstances, even to the same person. Maltby undermines his own argumentation here by referring to the passage in *Ulysses* when Stephen looks back mockingly at the epiphanies he found so important as a young man (13). I will explore this point further in the discussion of Joyce’s *Portrait*.

Maltby opposes “dissociating knowledge from public life and interiorizing it”; this would seem to amount to the assertion that the only acceptable knowledge is that which is

publicly shared, leaving no room for any truth experienced at a personal level. Clearly, the perspective of Marxist critique becomes apparent here. Again and again, Maltby stresses the social, cultural, political aspects and implications of knowledge, as when he states that “the visionary moment presupposes the ideal of a flawless channel of communication, free of culture’s ‘noise’ “ (6), completely bypassing the question whether or not information might be distorted on an individual level, or “any viable and *sustainable* regeneration of the individual – be it moral, intellectual, or *spiritual* – is contingent upon prior transformations at the social . . . level of existence” (8-9). Elsewhere, he speaks of the academic world “where educators work to connect learning to the process of social change . . . and where their curricula must reckon with a pervasive neoconservative hostility to ‘theory’ as a desecrating and disruptive force” (6). It is not quite clear whether he is referring here to members of a political movement such as the Tea Party or to adherents of “the convention of the visionary moment” (9) which he suggests are “fundamentalist” (7). He himself uses the term “desacralizing” (7) when listing the postmodernist strategies he employs “in the name of freedom from mystification and ideology” (6), prominent among which are denaturalization, delegitimation, defiguration, decentering, demystification and disenchantment – a series of negatives which are indicative of the deconstructive discourse of postmodernist thought. Maltby does not hide his political agenda; he is “animated by a commitment to uphold a political ideal of human change” (9); there would seem to be no room for personal, individual development in his worldview.

Maltby finds it remarkable that the literary convention of the epiphany has lasted more than two hundred years, but never asks himself why so many writers and critics have adhered to the idea all this time. It is evident that he has researched this particular field of

study in depth: he takes the reader through a comprehensive overview of the history of the epiphanic moment, from Wordsworth's "spots of time" and Joyce's secularization of the term epiphany, through the work of scholars such as Levin, Ellman, Nichols, and Beja. However, it quickly becomes apparent that Maltby has a philosophical axe to grind with those who profess a belief in the transcendent power of the epiphany.

When pointing out the distinction between literary and mystical illumination, Maltby suggests that the former is "effortlessly achieved" and the latter only "by way of arduous contemplation" (19). In discussing the gestation of Kerouac's *Road* I will show that this assumption is not necessarily correct. When he poses the question if visionary moments can be experienced in real life – "outside of literature" – he categorically states that "there are good reasons – postmodern and otherwise – to contest the notion that real-life insight could ever yield the equivalent in self-knowledge". However, he never makes it explicit what these reasons are, other than saying that "[t]he objections to the notion of a knowledge that fully defines 'the self' . . . require only nominal mention here" (20). He then quotes from the autobiographical account of an "ecospiritualist", to point out the difference between knowledge acquired in a visionary moment and the degree of after-the-fact interpretation that can blow up such an experience to the proportions of a cosmic consciousness. This example is so ludicrous in its derogatory depiction of over-the-top ecomysticism that it seems hardly appropriate in the context of a serious discourse such as this. Maltby goes on to say that it is a categorical misconception to "think of a 'real-life visionary moment' as a type of spiritual experience; rather, it is a way of understanding one" (24). This distinction seems hypothetical to me: if one accepts that such a thing as spiritual experience exists, why can epiphany not be one manifestation of this? When Maltby opines that "to believe in the

possibility of authentic visionary moments is to believe . . . that there is a presocial order of knowledge, which has always existed in some dimensionless realm" (24), one is tempted to counter: who is to say there is not?

Maltby highlights three sources for the belief in the legitimacy of the visionary moment: the conversion narrative in Western religious writing, the Romantic notion of a "nonrational cognitive faculty", and a bourgeois ideology which views "salvation as a personal, private matter" (31). In my view, with regard to the first, it would seem that "conversion" has everything to do with letting go, giving in, opening up to outside influences; in other words, being receptive to the possibility that man may have (moral) lessons to learn. The second would seem to represent a secularized form of religious belief, which is a point of view that is generally accepted. With regard to the last, it would seem that Maltby pre-supposes some bourgeois conspiracy, bent on monopolizing the "the terms in which [the visionary moment] is understood" (31). Maltby contends:

The convention of the visionary moment also finds a measure of legitimation in its capacity as an ideological construct. The terms in which visionary moments are typically represented in fiction can be understood as reinforcing the *doxa* that accommodate subjects to the needs of a class-based social system and that blind them to politically relevant understanding of that system. . . . [R]edemption . . . is represented only at the level of the individual; it is an 'interior', exclusively private affair, lacking any material institutional basis (36).

He regards personal salvation as a "false solution", since "the phenomenal enlargement of 'personal life' is a defining feature of capitalism" (37). He also protests against "the Romantic and high-modernist conception of the artist as visionary and genius" (40); the visionary

moment is a “literary practise through which the socially alienated writer may assert or promote him- or herself” and “[w]e believe in visionary moments because we believe in the idea of the visionary artist who experiences them” (41).

In his song “Ballad of a Thin Man”, Bob Dylan sang: “You’re very well read / It’s well known / Because something is happening here / But you don’t know what it is / Do you, Mister Jones?” (lines 48-52). To put it succinctly, Maltby speaks like someone who has never experienced a momentous epiphany himself. Those who have speak of “receiving” knowledge from a source outside themselves; of new insight, of relevant information, of cognitive clarity that adds to their comprehension of reality – a notion which includes a better understanding of their place in society, I might add. There is no political consideration, or changing philosophical trend, that will change anything in that respect; two centuries’ worth of writers, artists and thinkers can’t be that wrong. Obviously, it is impossible to prove the legitimacy of the epiphany, since it is a personal, interiorized event. It can only be experienced; it is in the experience that the validity is felt in such a way that the truth becomes self-evident to the epiphanees. The only prerequisite is that one should maintain a receptive attitude towards the possibility of such an occurrence. The validity of the epiphanic moment only becomes apparent through its effect – seeing is believing, or: the only proof is in the pudding.

To substantiate this, I want to finish by commenting on Maltby’s reading of a passage from Kerouac’s *On The Road*, in which Jack and Neal (Sal and Dean) discuss a visit to a jazz club to hear the musicians “blow” or improvise. The passage reads as follows:

“Now man that alto man last night had IT---he held it once he found---I’ve never seen a guy who could hold so long.” I wanted to know what “IT” meant.

“Ah well” laughed Neal “now you’re asking me im-pon-de-rables - -ahem!
 Here’s a guy and everybody’s there, right? Up to him to put down what’s on
 everybody’s mind. He starts the first chorus, he lines up his ideas, people
 yeah, yeah but get it, and then he rises to his fate and has to blow equal to it.
 All of a sudden somewhere in the middle of the chorus he GETS IT---
 everybody looks up and knows; they listen; he picks it up and carries. Time
 stops. He’s filling empty space with the substance of our lives. He has to blow
 across bridges and come back and do it with such infinite feeling for the tune
 of the moment that everybody knows it’s not the tune that counts but IT---“
 Neal could go no further; he was sweating telling about it. (304)

. . . [W]e know what IT is and we know TIME and we know that everything is
 really fine. (306)

Maltby refers to this passage in the context of his assertion that Kerouac’s “spontaneous
 prose” is a form of rhetoric rather than a method of writing: “Kerouac . . . makes a rhetorical
 appeal to the timescape of visionary knowledge. He conspicuously locates the knowledge in
 a (nonworldly) countertime: ‘All of a sudden,’ ‘Time stops,’ ‘we know TIME,’ and so on. . . .
 And this other time of the visionary knowledge seems to serve as a guarantee of its truth
 and value when the dominant time code – i.e., the managed time of capitalist production –
 is perceived as antipathetic to visionary experience” (107). To me, the admittedly exalted
 passage has nothing to do with “rhetoric”. Kerouac merely describes the experience as “IT”
 is; i.e., with the collectively shared recognition (“everybody knows”) that there is a knowable
 truth outside (or deep inside) the “dominant time code”. Maltby maintains that:

. . . for almost any writer to invoke the spontaneous is to appeal to the popular and culturally ingrained belief in what is colloquially known as ‘the truth of the moment.’ However, that truth is not self-sustaining: as with invocations of instantaneousness and eternity, the invocation of the spontaneous amounts to yet another rhetorical prop for visionary truth claims. (109)

The truth of the moment does not need to be self-sustaining, it suffices that there is truth in one particular moment, and this truth validates the truth of other moments. Maltby’s views seem rather static and motivated by political ideology; personal experience must yield to the demands and requirements of social environment and political agenda. However, everything in reality is in flux, and so is the truth – yet this does not make the truth less true. Maltby speaks of differing forms of time: the “managed time of capitalist production” as opposed to the “‘Zen lunatic’ time that cannot be . . . exploited by the ‘system’” (109). He fails to acknowledge, or even notice, the possibility of time condensed, or expanded, of flexible time; the kind of time Neal Cassady is able to create as he commutes between three lovers, leaving all three of them begging for more time. Now there is someone who knows about time.

4. Thesis Statement: A Cycle of C-Changes

The main thrust of what I am proposing in this thesis is that there is an analogy between character development in literary characters and psychological development in individuals. Moreover, as theorists such as Maslow, Jung, and Frye have suggested, man has an innate tendency to better himself, to move up in the world in a moral sense. These internal processes of psychological development tend to follow a logical, natural and cyclical progression. Based on the building blocks defined by 'nature' and 'nurture', this cycle has its beginnings on the physical, material plane and in the natural world and progresses towards the mental or spiritual plane, sometimes even appearing to venture into the supernatural, before once again returning to a more mundane level and everyday matters. In the process, however, a profound change has occurred and life is not the same it was at the beginning of the cycle. There is a sense of progress having been made, which is why we should see this process as an upward spiral rather than a closed circle. There is a constant interplay between internal and external forces in this progression, and similarly between mind and matter – the one does not go without the other. As Emerson insisted, the "best moments in life", the "delicious awakenings", can only be experienced if we are rooted in the material world. Epiphanies are by nature ephemeral, or we would be living in an eternal paradise, and after every mental climax there is the inevitable descent into the worldly valley of tears through which we have to move before once more being able to experience the delight of another momentary expansion of consciousness (Bluestein 150).

Another mechanism at play here is one which can be related to the rising and falling of dramatic action and the development of the plot in a work of literature. An epiphany is

more likely to occur after a considerable build-up of tension, like a dam that breaks, giving way to the pressure of a rising body of water. The flood of emotion which is released sweeps away many of the mental obstacles blocking the way forward, causing a profound and lasting change to take place, which in turn enables the individual – or, in literature, the character – to obtain a degree of self-actualisation. Of course, not all literary epiphanies occur by way of this exact trajectory: *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* would seem to feature types of epiphany which take place almost spontaneously and without being provoked by some form of personal crisis. However, on closer scrutiny they too are prompted by a degree of mounting tension leading up to the epiphany, followed first by a powerful release and then a decrease of tension.

As has been noted in the preceding chapter, the discussion of the literary epiphany has more often focused on the momentariness of the experience, yielding a rather static model in which epiphanic moments appear and disappear suddenly and randomly, and are seemingly unconnected to anything that has gone before. The model I am putting forward emphasizes instead the process which leads up to such a defining moment, as well as the consequences the experience engenders – suggesting that an epiphany never comes alone. In this sense, the model owes something of its conceptualisation to the narratology of the quest, examples of which are the Perceval-legends, the *Odyssey*, and novels such as Melville's *Moby Dick* and Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings*. This more dynamic model ties into the progressive narratives of self-improvement and spiritual development. Though the idea of a search for something specific or the attainment of a precise goal may not continually be in the foreground, the trajectory of character development is imbued with an intentionality that goes beyond the purely spontaneous: rather than a preconceived, explicit search for

epiphany, enlightenment, or salvation, the basic attitude is one which is conducive to growth and which leaves room for an open-endedness that is aware of the promise of the future and a willingness to embrace the possibilities of it.

When I first conceived a visual representation of the epiphanic model I had in mind, it rather resembled that of Freytag's Pyramid: a two-dimensional graphic illustration with a phase of rising tension on the left and falling tension on the right, the tip of the pyramid representing the climax or epiphany. An arrow along the base of the pyramid indicated that this was a cyclical model (see figure 1).

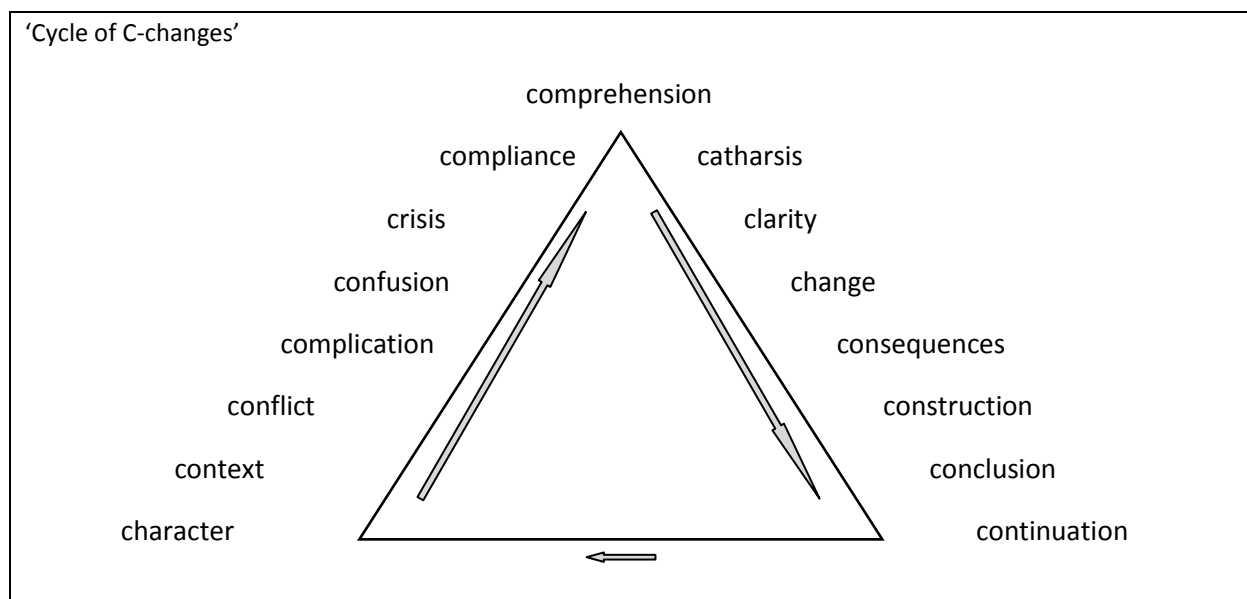


figure 1: original visual representation of model – Cycle of C-Changes

It was soon felt, however, that this model did not adequately demonstrate the notion that these cycles were marked by a forward or upward movement, and that throughout the process a gradual development of character was being realised. This prompted a second, revised schematic representation which illustrates better the progressive development in the model I am proposing (see figure 2). Movement to the right represents rising action;

movement to the left represents falling action. Upward movement stands for two parallel forms of evolution: psychological self-realization and literary character development. A banner spirals upward, representing the consecutive phases in this evolution: the movement of rising action starts with character and context, through conflict, complication, confusion, crisis and compliance to comprehension (marking the point of epiphany); the movement of falling action takes us from catharsis, through clarity, change, consequences, construction and conclusion to continuation; after which a new cycle starts again with character, context, and so on.

The decision to exclusively adopt words beginning with the letter 'c' may appear fanciful, but I have found it useful as an aid to memory, in the way alliteration and rhyme forms in general aid the process of memorization in poetry. Nevertheless, this decision demands further elucidation of the terms used and so I would like to expound on the above by providing a concise commentary which aims to tie together the ideas I have discussed so far. As I am of the opinion that this progression is applicable to all human beings, I am using the first person plural to narrate events:

Character – the point of departure is our basic, innate, personal psychological make-up as individuals; it is nature as opposed to nurture;

Context – the second building block is defined by our personal circumstances, our social environment, our relation to others, external forces such as the setting of time and place; it is nurture as opposed to nature;

Conflict – at this point the first difficulties are encountered and differences arise; this marks the beginning of the rising action; external pressure is exerted, causing internal tension; opposing and contrary forces are at play;

Complication – obstacles are faced, the tension mounts, the plot thickens, juxtapositions are taken in, the mental load becomes increasingly heavy to bear;

Confusion – life is bearing down on us; the pace becomes hectic, the feelings frantic; our minds have too much to handle; we become so overpowered by relevant and irrelevant information we can't see the trees from the wood; confusion reigns and chaos rules;

Crisis – our feelings and emotions become extreme; built-up tensions slowly come to the boil; we just cannot take any more, we are reaching the point of no return; this stage corresponds to the state of *aporia*, in the sense that a final impasse has been reached;

Compliance – at this penultimate point in the process of rising action, we enter a state of *kenosis*: after giving up all hope we drop our last defenses, surrendering to the situation, submitting to the overpowering forces tearing us apart inside; we finally let go, we accept our fate, we are ultimately prepared to die; this marks a switch in attitude which leads almost automatically to the next phase:

Comprehension – the climax of the rising action is marked by the epiphany: a sudden realization of the essence of self and/or meaning of the world we inhabit and our place in it; the pieces of the puzzle finally fall together and we see the larger picture; we are overcome by the sense of being an integrated part of the universe; we experience a personal insight: a flash of awareness of something which was not perceived until that moment; this "moment of

moment” is a brief but very intense experience that has a profound and lasting effect on our lives;

Catharsis – what follows is a rapid process of purification; our problems dissolve like melting snow, a heavy weight is taken off our shoulders, obstacles are swept out of our way; we have a sense of being reborn;

Clarity – in the wake of catharsis comes clarity: clear-mindedness replaces confusion, a way forward is perceived; decisions can be made; new possibilities and options are discovered; comprehension (epiphany), catharsis, and clarity follow each other in rapid succession, marking the beginning of the phase of falling action;

Change – change makes itself known as an external force; the epiphany we experience causes our lives to profoundly change for the better, and this mental revolution enables us to finally forge ahead;

Consequences – change can then be applied as an internal force; we experience a new-found faith and a growing self-confidence; we are at peace with ourselves and others; there is room in our lives for compassion and empathy; we go through a conversion to a new way of thinking; we are adopting a new way of life;

Construction – our characters are being re-constructed, our personalities are being renewed; our mental balance and psychological resilience is gradually restored; we are forming our new identities step by step, we are moving from strength to strength;

Conclusion – we have reached a defining point of self-actualisation: we are getting ever closer to our real selves; we have a better degree of self-knowledge; a crucial personal battle has been won and we are better prepared for the next;

Continuation – a new way of life brings new challenges; we are aiming for new goals, finding new directions; equipped with a higher level of awareness we are ready to explore new horizons.¹

The cyclical ebb and flow of this psychological mechanism of rising and falling tension represents only one cycle in a continuing series of cycles. Enlightenment is not the end of the road, as it is not an end in itself. Self-improvement necessarily leads to taking action and moving towards new goals. Man is upwardly mobile: each phase in the cycle is a step forward and upward, and as a consequence the cycle as a whole is similarly an upward movement, a spiral rather than a circle. It is a cycle of increasing consciousness in which we see and know a little more at every turn of the wheel, every step of the way. Perhaps even more significant, a cyclical movement such as described here is ultimately the only possible way to go. Once knowledge is acquired, once consciousness is gained, the way back to a lesser degree of understanding is effectively blocked; there may be a temporary relapse into a more confined point of view or way of thinking but this phase can never last. Knowledge of something tends to implementation of that knowledge; negation of something which has become self-evident is indeed nigh impossible. In the motion picture *Pleasantville* the

¹ A note on the progression of time in this cycle: the development from conflict, through complication and confusion, to crisis will necessarily take a certain amount of time for tension to build up. The transitions from compliance to comprehension and on to catharsis occur in a much more rapid succession. The phase of compliance seems to function as a trigger mechanism: once the psyche finally decides to 'let go', giving in to the outside pressures, the floodgates of emotion are opened and the way is cleared for the epiphany to take place. In its wake, catharsis will immediately follow to perform its cleansing action. Soon after, the effect of clarity will make itself felt. The phases of change, consequences, construction and conclusion will tend to spread their development over a relatively longer stretch of time.

protagonist observes that “people change”; his father, a man who is obsessively set in his ways, despondently asks: “Can they change back?” The son can only smile and say: “I think it’s harder.”

In view of the above, it will be clear that it is my firm conviction and outspoken belief that man is inexorably moving forward on a path of self-improvement; in other words, that man is inherently and fundamentally good, and perforce moved to be so. To ponder, conjecture, and discuss exactly which force it is that causes man to be so inclined will lead to questions which belong to the realm of philosophy and religion rather than literature and therefore this cannot be the place to ask those questions; interesting though they may be, finding possible answers to these questions is a task which must be left to other researchers and different fields of study. Having sprung from its religious origins, it could be said that the introduction of the term epiphany in Western thought and literature in itself marks a step in the evolution of man: moving from Christianity’s exclusivity of the divine nature of revelations, as in the biblical example of Paul on the road to Damascus and Augustine’s account in *Confessions*, the phenomenon of the epiphany is today no longer bound by the restrictions of orthodox religion, and serves a vital inspirational purpose in a world which is becoming ever more laicized and secularized but in which human beings are still asking the same fundamental questions they always have. The answers they find are no longer passively received from some external authority; they are generated at a very personal level, at those rare occasions when a new and meaningful connection is established between the reality without and the reality within, when the unexpected confrontation with an unforeseen situation, a stirring image, a striking object, or any resounding impression, triggers an acute sense of recognition and relevance deep inside the human psyche.

Cycle of C-Changes

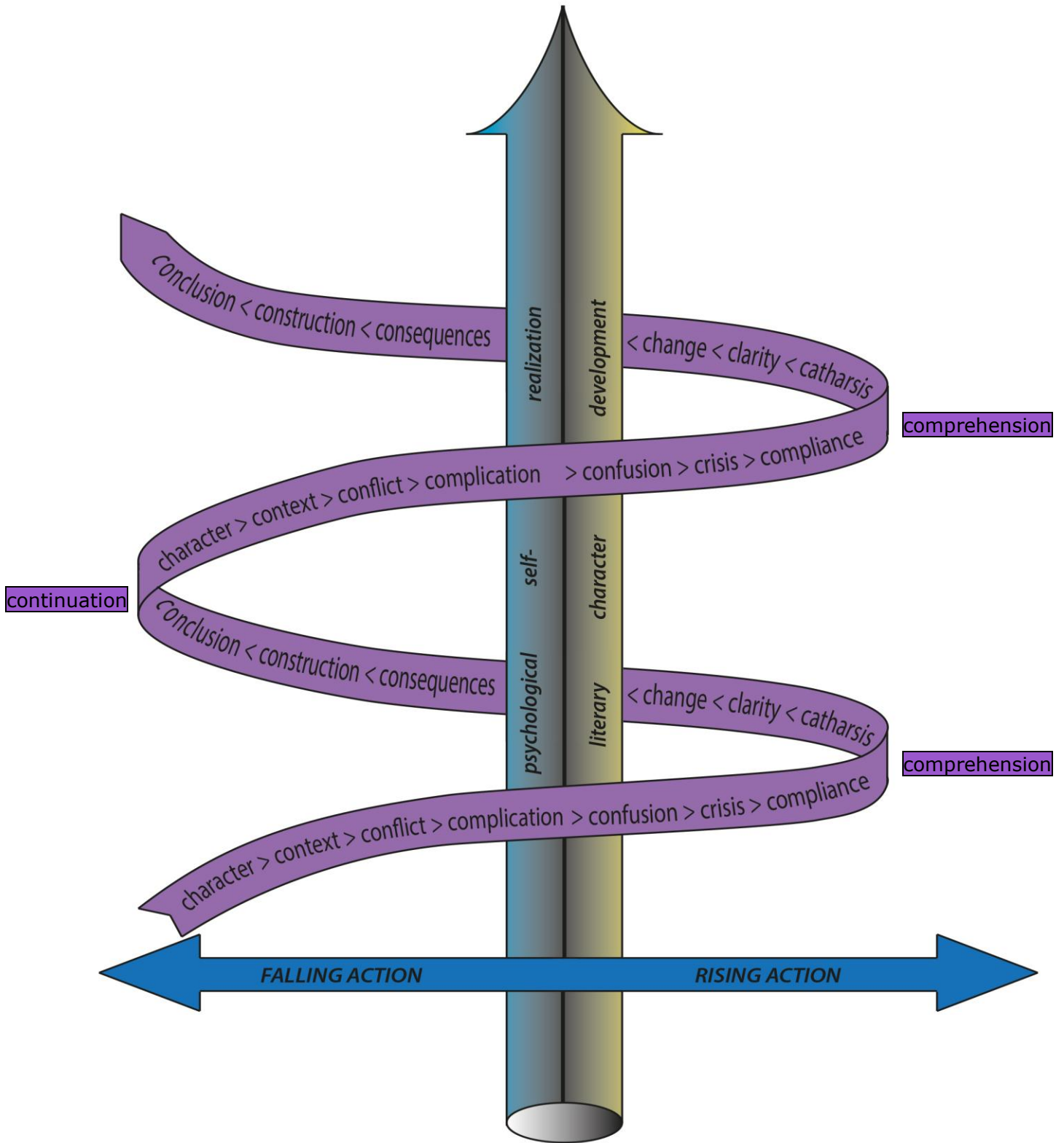


figure 2: revised visual representation of epiphanic model – Cycle of C-Changes

5. *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*: entering the world of the artist as he enters into the world

Since it was James Joyce who successfully re-introduced the term ‘epiphany’ and thus initiated the modern literary usage of this notion², I will go to some length in relating the model I am proposing to the developments of plot and character in his novel *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. In doing so, I am hoping to establish a pattern of comparative discussion which enables me to give a more succinct reading of the other primary material. The actual references to the stages in my model are represented as terms within square brackets, e.g. [compliance]. These references are interspersed throughout the text constituting my reading of the material and can thus be directly linked to what I am proposing at that particular point.

Joyce’s semi-autobiographical novel centring on the education and development of Stephen Dedalus is a clear example of a *bildungsroman*. As the title suggests, the protagonist is destined to become an artist as he comes into this world – it could even be said that he is born as an artist even though he may not yet be aware of it. The novel portrays a process of self-actualization, of becoming what one already is in essence. The novelty of Joyce’s prose is that this process is described in leaps and bounds, recounting only the most significant episodes and leaving out most of what comes in between these defining moments. Thus the narrative is made up of a sequence of mini-portraits depicting the artist at a particular stage in life, punctuated by a climax as he rounds another corner in the course towards emotional stability, intellectual prowess, and moral maturity. Whereas its forerunner *Stephen Hero* was filled out with lengthy prose narrating all the particulars of Stephen’s life, *Portrait* only

² Since Joyce’s coinage of the term ‘epiphany’ has already been well documented, I will not explore this further here. For references, see a.o. Beja’s *Epiphany in the Modern Novel* and Hendry’s article “Joyce’s Epiphanies”.

highlights the most crucial events and skips most of the less immediately relevant scenes. In doing so, Joyce employs the concept of the epiphany he announced in *Hero*: “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.” Joyce was in the habit of compiling lists, records of memorable experiences, often fleeting moments when overhearing snippets of conversation from passing strangers or observing street scenes. He collected these observations and used them in his work. Projecting his own method of acquiring raw material for his literary output on his alter ego Stephen, Joyce emphasizes his protagonist’s status as an artist – as well as himself professing to be one of course. Hence, besides providing a concise definition of what constitutes an epiphany, this passage also serves as a reminder of the ethics of the artist.

Joyce’s use of the word falls into Beja’s category of ‘retrospective’ epiphany: an event which “arouses no special impression when it occurs, but produces a sudden sensation of new awareness when it is recalled at some future time” (Beja 15). In this way, a particular event may acquire a whole new meaning when put into a different context; an observation made one day can shed light on a separate situation occurring another day. Chronology becomes less important as past, present, and future can be seen reflected in the same instant. We follow Stephen on his journey through life, starting out as a young boy earnestly working his way through elementary school; then being drawn towards literature and unsuccessfully trying to produce poetry; winning a cash prize in an essay competition and generously treating his family with gifts and food until the funds are spent; becoming sexually aware and starting to frequent prostitutes; renouncing these wicked ways, fighting

temptation and repenting his sins; becoming profoundly affected by a fire and brimstone sermon threatening him with eternal damnation; dedicating himself entirely to the service of God and considering the calling of priesthood; and finally finding his vocation as an artist when he observes a young woman bathing at the seaside. All these phases are marked by a mounting of tension, culminating in an epiphany of sorts. The exact chronology or the parameters of time are never explicit: for instance, it is never quite clear how old Stephen is when he has his first encounter with a prostitute – presumably, he must be around 15 years of age.

At a casual glance, the growing of consciousness seems to be a gradual process. However, when we focus more clearly on the actual moments of development, and zoom in more closely to the events as they unfold, they appear to arrive in leaps and bounds, in small quantum leaps, like single steps up a ladder, one at a time - or like an elevator rising from floor to floor, when the floors are more intensely observed as they sweep into view than the blind wall of the elevator shaft as it slides by unnoticed. Rather than a gradually rising movement, the acquisition of awareness manifests itself in bursts of realisations, each one representing a minor epiphany in itself. Thus progression in life is made up of a string of personal realisations, one after another. Only when viewed as a whole do these separate realisations add up to a significant and recognizable development of character. This is exemplified by the unfolding of events in Joyce's novel, as I will now proceed to illustrate.

From the opening pages, which quickly establish the narrative stance of a third person point of view from the actual first person perspective of a very young Stephen, some of the major themes of the novel are already introduced: politics are referenced by Dante's "two brushes" (7), sexuality is foreshadowed in Stephen's intention to "marry Eileen" (8),

and art is represented by the singing of songs (7-8). It is evident that Stephen is a bright child with a vivid mind and acute senses [character]. His early realisations are driven by the tension generated by his being away from the safe surroundings of his family home [context] and staying at the boarding school [context] where life is often dreary, demanding, and frightening [conflict]. At school, things first come to a head when he is feeling ill [complication] and sent to the infirmary [crisis], where he lies pining for home and imagining how it would be to die [compliance]; it occurs to him that “[y]ou could die just the same on a sunny day” (26) [comprehension].

He is almost moved to tears “but not for himself” (27) [catharsis] as he thinks of how the bells would toll at his own funeral and he vividly recalls [clarity] the words of a funeral song he was taught in which his soul is carried away by angels [change]. At home, too, there is tension even around the Christmas dinner table [conflict] when the dinner guests are divided in two camps over current topics in Irish politics and religion [complication]. Stephen is nonplussed as to which side to take [confusion]. The discussion ends in the slamming of doors [crisis]. Stephen is “terrorstricken” [compliance] but at that very moment he discovers that “his father’s eyes were full of tears” (44), which amounts to a realization [comprehension and catharsis] that the adults around him are intensely involved in the conflict of authority that rages in the country; he discovers [clarity] there is a world out there in which life is as emotionally challenging for adults as it is for children. This realization teaches Stephen [change] to dare question authority if necessary, something that helps him when he is falsely accused by Father Dolan of being a “lazy idle little loafer” (56). The fact that he musters up the courage [consequence] to plead his case with the rector, marks an important step in his personal development [construction]: he has grown more confident

[conclusion] and is better equipped for the challenges ahead of him [continuation]. After his schoolmates leave him, he feels “happy and free” and wishes to find a way to show Father Dolan that he is “not proud”. This is a clear indication of the progress that Stephen has made: psychologically, he has become a stronger character who is not afraid to stand on his own two feet; morally, he has grown in stature by not bearing a grudge against his accuser.

In the next section of the novel, the tension is created by two new developments: on the one hand there are the family’s financial difficulties, forcing Stephen to quit his school and eventually move to another, on the other hand there is Stephen’s gradual sexual awakening. The chapter starts with the depiction of Stephen’s rather dreary daily life: from the elation of vindication at the end of the first chapter [character] we are again firmly on solid ground, rooted in the routines of family relations. Stephen has come full circle and is back in reality, meeting the demands that life imposes on him [context]. The return to reality is a reminder that, however glorious a moment of spiritual awakening may appear, these moments are ephemeral and are bound to be seen in a more relative perspective in the cold light of the morning by the events that follow in their wake. The passage in which Mr Dedalus ridicules his son over dinner when he tells how Father Conmee and Father Dolan had had “a hearty laugh together” (82) over what Stephen felt was his moment of glory, is a witness of that. Dedalus senior is let down by the priest’s promise of a new job and the family’s fortunes take a further dive towards destitution [conflict]. Eventually they will be forced to sell much of their property [complication]. Stephen is aware of his father’s predicament: the “change[s] in his house . . . were so many slight shocks to his boyish conception of the world” [confusion]. He feels “the darkness of his soul” and “[a] dusk like that of the outer world obscured his mind” (72).

The only form of escape that is open to Stephen is his own imagination, and he certainly makes the most of that. Reading *The Count of Monte Cristo*, his increasing romantic inclinations make him go and look for the elusive Mercedes in the streets of Dublin. After he meets a girl at a children's party, Mercedes effortlessly turns into Emma C. – the alliteration of these two names is telling. Travelling on the last tram home, Stephen imagines that they are almost kissing; the next day, he makes his imagination come true in his first real attempt at poetry. Writing the poem appears to be more important than the actual product: the reader never gets to see the result, and nor does Emma. Stephen's conception of women is highly romanticized: they are literary archetypes rather than actual persons. He keenly feels that he is "different from others" and "a premonition which led him on told him that this image [of Mercedes] would, without any overt act of his, encounter him. They would meet quietly as if they had known each other . . . and then in a moment he would be transfigured. Weakness and timidity and inexperience would fall from him in that magic moment" (73). Interestingly, this passage clearly describes an epiphanic moment, albeit one which is merely imagined, foreshadowing the ending of this particular chapter.

It is indicative of his overly romanticized predisposition that, when there is talk of Emma attending the school play [suddenly mounting tension: complication], Stephen can only vaguely remember what she looks like [confusion], yet he is highly disappointed when it turns out she is not there [crisis] and runs away from the theatre "amid the tumult of suddenrisen vapours of wounded pride and fallen hope and baffled desire" (97) until he finally comes to a halt at the morgue [compliance]. "A power, akin to that which had often made anger or resentment fall from him, brought his steps to rest. . . . [He] breathed slowly the rank heavy air. – That is horse piss and rotted straw, he thought. It is a good odour to

breathe. It will calm my heart. My heart is quite calm now. I will go back.” (98). The sensory perception of the smell of horse piss is sufficient to put him right back in touch with reality. The “vapours of maddening incense” (97) caused by pride, hope and desire have turned into much more real and ultimately more palatable earthy vapours. The epiphany comes in the form of the realisation that as long as the experience is real, life is worth living [comprehension].

At this point in the narrative, the scene abruptly shifts to the railway carriage in which Dedalus senior and junior travel to Cork to sell some of the family property [character and context]. Stephen feels dejected about the prospect of the auction [conflict] and becomes ever more depressed at Queen’s College when he sees the initials of his father and other students carved into the wood of the desks [complication]. The carved word *Foetus* has an immediate and profound effect on the budding sexuality of his adolescent mind [confusion]. He is ashamed of the “brutish and individual malady of his own mind”, his “monstrous reveries” (102) and he loathes himself for “his own mad and filthy orgies” (103) [crisis]. Besides marking the stage of confusion in a larger epiphanic cycle, Stephen’s reaction to the word *Foetus* also represents an epiphany in itself: a single word provokes a flood of powerful thoughts, a vision even: “A vision of their life, which his father’s words had been powerless to evoke, sprang up before him out of the word cut in the desk” (101-102). This sudden release of emotion is only made possible because there is the underlying build-up of sexual tension as Stephen grows into adolescence, a tension which is countered by the suppression of his sexual being by Stephen’s catholic upbringing. Though it may arrive suddenly, the epiphany is never without introduction; it can never be seen as wholly apart from what came before.

Although his father tries to inspire him with a rousing educational speech, Stephen feels increasingly alienated from him, and this sentiment is not abated when Dedalus senior talks about the past to people he meets in the street and in the pub. Winning an appreciable sum of money in an essay competition, he feasts his parents and others in a “swift season of merrymaking” (110) until the funds dwindle. He feels foolish about squandering his money, having “tried to build a breakwater of order and elegance against the sordid tide of life” and it had all been “useless” (111) [compliance]. Feeling shame about the misfortunes of his family as well as the “mortal sin” of his sexual activities until “the morning pained him with its dim memory of dark orgiastic riot” (112), he starts to wander around the streets of Dublin, wanting “to sin with another of his kind, to force another being to sin with him and to exult with her in sin”. And so he loses his virginity with a young prostitute. His first sexual encounter is marked by passivity, as he leaves all the initiative to the girl [compliance in another sense]; the scene is strangely reminiscent of the earlier “premonition” about Mercedes. In this closing passage, the sexuality which was at first sublimated is finally consummated as “his inexperience ... fall[s] from him” [comprehension]. She has indeed, “without any overt act of his” [compliance, once again], encountered him, and “in a moment” he is “transfigured” [catharsis] (73).

Having established the cyclical movement with which Joyce has his protagonist go through the changes in his life, I will proceed to sketch the relation to my model of the events in the remaining chapters of his novel in a more rapid sequence. As the next chapter opens, it is clear we have begun another cycle: the exultation of sexual gratification has quickly turned into a mere bodily craving for food, in both a physical and a sexual sense, and Stephen is beyond caring: “The chaos in which his ardour extinguished itself was a cold

indifferent knowledge of himself" (117) [character]. He feels contempt towards his schoolmates, who he perceives as being as hypocritical as he is himself [context]. He is torn between his private preoccupations and his burning desires on the one hand, and on the other his sense of moral obligation towards God, church, school, fellow man, as well as his aspiration for goodness in general: "What did it avail to pray when he knew that his soul lusted after its own destruction?" (117) [conflict]. These feelings are exacerbated when the religious retreat is announced [complication]. Father Arnall's stern sermons on sin, judgement, hell and damnation profoundly shock Stephen and at the same time leave him feeling removed from the ecclesiastic doctrine. He is appalled by his own behaviour and convinced he can be punished for it by God at any time, while looking at his predicament as a sort of game: "It was strange too that he found an arid pleasure in following up to the end of rigid lines of the doctrines of the church . . . only to hear and feel the more deeply his own condemnation" (119) [confusion]. The priest's graphic descriptions of hell and purgatory prey on Stephen's mind however: "Every word of it was for him. . . . The preacher's knife had probed deeply into his disclosed conscience and he felt now that his soul was festering in sin" (130) [crisis]. The sermons gradually break down his defences and make him afraid of his fate in the afterlife. Finally, they pummel him into submission: "Now it was God's turn: and He was not to be hoodwinked or deceived" (127) [compliance]. At this point, another fleeting epiphany occurs as Stephen hears the laughter of a girl and is immediately reminded of Emma. He feels ashamed of "to what his mind had subjected her or how his brutelike lust had torn and trampled upon her innocence. Was that boyish love? Was that chivalry? Was that poetry? The sordid details of his orgies stank under his very nostrils. . . . Was it possible he had done these things?" (131) [comprehension]. In a somewhat childish reverie, he

imagines how Emma and he are both pardoned and joined in matrimony in a single redemptive act by the Virgin Mary [catharsis].

The moment for a complete turnaround has not yet come, however; the crisis still has to deepen - and so Stephen finds himself pondering the biblical flood as the priest resumes his fire and brimstone sermon. When he leaves the chapel, Stephen is physically shaken, "the scalp of his head trembling as though it had been touched by ghostly fingers" (141). His sensations amount to an out-of-body experience: "he feared that he had already died, that his soul had been wrenched forth of the sheath of his body, that he was plunging headlong through space (141-142)". The real breaking point comes after he returns to his desk:

Every word for him. It was true. God was almighty. God could call him now, call him as he sat at his desk, before he had time to be conscious of the summons. God had called him. Yes? What? Yes? His flesh shrank together as it felt the approach of the ravenous tongues of flames, dried up as it felt about it the swirl of stifling air. He had died. Yes. He was judged. A wave of fire swept through his body: the first. Again a wave. His brain began to glow. Another. His brain was simmering and bubbling within the cracking tenement of his skull. Flames burst forth from his skull like a corolla, shrieking like voices:

-Hell! Hell! Hell! Hell! Hell!

Voices spoke near him:

-On hell.

-I suppose he rubbed it into you well.

-You bet he did. He put us all into a blue funk.

-That's what you fellows want: and plenty of it to make you work.

He leaned back weakly in his desk. He had not died. God had spared him still.

He was still in the familiar world of the school. (142)

This revealing passage shows how Stephen experiences his epiphany: it is marked both by strong physical sensations and an overpowering mental component, and though the experience is ultimately cerebral, at no time is he out of touch with reality as his sensory perceptions continue. The voices in his head shrieking "Hell!" are at the same time actual voices speaking near him. He has moved from the possibility of hearing God's call to actually being called. He feels he has communed with God: "Yes? What? Yes?" and in doing so he has become a god-like creature: "Flames burst forth from his skull like a corolla". Receding from the vision, he feels he has been spared from a fate worse than death and that there is still time to repent and be forgiven. In one fell swoop he has moved from crisis, through compliance, to comprehension and catharsis. The priest has literally put the fear of God in him. In this respect, it is interesting to note that the preacher mentions that "[s]in, remember, is a two-fold enormity. . . . For this reason mortal sin is punished in hell by two different forms of punishment, physical and spiritual" (145). Stephen's revelation suggests that epiphany is likewise a two-fold experience.

Climbing the stairs to his room after dinner, Stephen is still in fear of his spirit being condemned as the tension is literally mounting again: "at every step his soul mounted with his feet, sighing in the ascent. . . . He halted on the landing before the door. . . . He waited still at the threshold as at the entrance to some dark cave. . . . He feared intensely in spirit and in flesh" (155). Alone in his room, he has a vision of his personal hell – if this constitutes

an epiphany, it surely falls into the category of anagnorisis, or Frye's demonic epiphanies.

After he rids himself of his demons by vomiting [catharsis], Stephen "made a covenant with his heart" (158) and goes out into the town to seek a place he can confess his sins. He is now able to think more clearly [clarity] on how temptation operates – which is surprisingly similar to one particular aspect of epiphany: "It could happen in an instant" (159). After he is given absolution by a priest in a chapel, he feels much relieved and his heart is "purified" [catharsis again]. His change of heart and mind is complete: he feels a new compassion with his fellow man, wishes to follow the example of Jesus, and vows to obey the teachings of the church. He is certain he has started a new life: "It was not a dream from which he would wake. The past was past" (167) [change and consequence].

The fourth chapter continues the progression towards a new cycle with a rapid decrease in tension, coming after the climax of epiphany and the changes that follow in its wake [construction and conclusion]. Stephen's life is at this point entirely dominated by rigid ritual and persistent prayer [continuation]. As in chapter three, it quickly becomes clear that Stephen's epiphanies soon lose their initial shine; in retrospect, they do not seem as important as when they are first experienced and sometimes they even appear to be delusional. What begins as a spiritual awakening quickly dwindles into a rather obsessive routine. The person he has now become has dedicated himself wholly to the work of the Church [character and context] – even to the degree that he imagines his good works to have an immediate impact on his credit in the afterlife, as he pictures in his mind "a great cash register" in heaven (168). For a brief period he feels that he has reached a final station in life: "as his soul was enriched with spiritual knowledge, he saw the whole world forming one vast symmetrical expression of God's power and love. . . . So entire and unquestionable

was this sense of the divine meaning in all nature granted to his soul that he could scarcely understand why it was in any way necessary that he should continue to live” (170). However, even young Stephen realises that coming full circle of course does not mean the end of time, and so the journey continues, as Stephen subjects himself to strenuous discipline and a conscious mortification of the senses, thus imposing fresh challenges on his endurance and putting himself under pressure anew [conflict]. He is only too aware of his own imperfections, as he is occasionally tempted by “the insistent voices of the flesh” (173). These all-too-human imperfections continue to play up when he visits the director of the College who is probing him for a possible future as a priest [complication]: “The names of articles of dress worn by women or of certain soft and delicate stuffs used in their making brought always to his mind a delicate and sinful perfume” (176). He even fantasizes about being an ordained priest and knowing “the sinful longings and sinful thoughts and sinful acts, of others, hearing them murmured into his ears in the confessional under the shame of a darkened chapel by the lips of women and of girls” while at the same time “(n)o touch of sins would linger upon the hands with which he would elevate and break the host; no touch of sin would linger on his lips in prayer to make him eat and drink damnation to himself not discerning the body of the Lord. He would hold his secret knowledge and secret power, being as sinless as the innocent” (181-182). Interestingly, the “sin of Simon Magus” and the “sin against the Holy Ghost for which there was no forgiveness” which are part of the “secret knowledge” Stephen is covertly longing for, are constituted respectively through the corruption of faith by the greed for power and riches (Acts 8.9-13) and the steadfast refusal to accept the truth after it has been revealed (Hebrews 6.4-8 and 10.26-29) – let me remind the reader at this point of what I mentioned earlier with regard to knowledge once acquired

not being deniable. Stephen's attitude is indicative of his underdeveloped sense of morality and youthful ignorance at this stage of his development; in terms of theology he is in danger of committing a mortal sin just as he is considering a career as a clergyman – and even as an evolving human being he still has a long way to go. The recurrent lapses of faith and his own sinful thoughts which he is all too aware of are underscored by this seemingly casual reference to unforgivable sin, and the director's final remark that "the sacrament of Holy Orders is one of those which can be received only once because it imprints on the soul an indelible spiritual mark which can never be effaced" is another reminder that after revelation there is no way back, after knowing there is no way of not knowing, and that man's evolution is onward and upward.

Whatever it is that shapes Stephen's decision, it appears to be made almost immediately as he steps out on to the platform outside the director's office and becomes "conscious of the caress of the mild evening air". He is suddenly overcome with sensory impressions, the first of which is a snippet of music from a concertina, and its effect is immediate: "The music passed in an instant, as the first bars of sudden music always did, over the fantastic fabrics of his mind, dissolving them painlessly and noiselessly as a sudden wave dissolves the sandbuilt turrets of children" (182). He imagines his prospective life as a priest and it comes to him in flashes of sensory perception: the smell of the corridors and baths, the sound of the gaslights, seeing himself go to early mass on an empty stomach. He becomes restless and his thoughts are confused: "(s)ome instinct . . . stronger than education or piety, quickened within him" [confusion]. The defining moment in his deepening crisis comes as he sees his title spelled out in front of his eyes: "The Reverend Stephen Dedalus, S.J." (183) and he sees an almost ghostly image of his face as a priest,

“eyeless and sourfaced and devout, shot with pink tinges of suffocated anger” [crisis]. As he passes a Jesuit house and he “wondered vaguely which window would be his if he ever joined the order”, the whole question seems to fall away from him: “Then he wondered at the vagueness of his wonder, at the remoteness of his own soul . . . when . . . (an) irrevocable act of his threatened to end forever . . . his freedom” [compliance]. The crucial realization of a new and independent identity comes as “he knew now” that “(h)is destiny was to be elusive of social or religious orders. . . . He was destined to learn his own wisdom apart from others or to learn the wisdom of others himself wandering among the snares of the world” [comprehension].

Freed from the restrictions that his faith had put upon him, it suddenly becomes unimportant if he should occasionally slip back into sin: “The snares of the world were its ways of sin. He would fall. He had not yet fallen but he would fall silently, in an instant. Not to fall was too hard, too hard” (184). A new consciousness has taken the place of the old and what was wrong in one context is now quite acceptable as the moral and mental perspective has shifted [catharsis]. Walking home, this new awareness manifests itself in a raising of spirit and successive bouts of laughter: he smiles at the earthy smells of rotten cabbage coming from the gardens, he laughs at the memory of a farmhand and a “second laugh, taking rise from the first after a pause, broke from him involuntarily” (185) – here again, we see evidence of the spontaneous nature of an awareness that grows in leaps and bounds, unhindered by limitations of (self)restraint, aware of itself, basking in its own light [clarity]. In the controlled chaos of the family home, Stephen sits down among his younger brothers and sisters and realises that as the eldest he has a privileged position; he is granted an education that the others will lack, and they may not be given the same chances in life. As he

joins them in singing, he feels a strong bond with his siblings and expresses a melancholy sense of what life is like, by quoting the words of Cardinal John Henry Newman: “that pain and weariness yet hope of better things which has been the experience of her children in every time” (Newman 75) . At the same time looking back at the past and anticipating the future, this moment represents yet another minor epiphany and heralds a new turn in the road ahead [change].

The most climactic of all the personal realizations described in the novel is the one which follows at the end of this chapter. Once more Stephen wanders through the city, heading towards the sea this time. His encounter with a group of Christian Brothers confirms his decision not to take Holy Orders. This can be interpreted as the aspect of consequence in the C-cycle just concluded, as well as establishing character and context in the next cycle. He seems to be almost in a trance-like state as he is deeply wrapped up in his own thoughts while still registering the sensory impressions of the world around him. He muses on an expression which springs to mind – “A day of dappled seaborne clouds” (189) – and his love for words, their rhythm and their colour. He wonders whether words are reflected by reality or vice versa [conflict]; and he is pre-occupied with his weak eyesight and his shyness [complication]. His emotional susceptibility is revealed as his mood rises and falls with the sights, sounds, and smells of the city’s sea front: “A faint click at his heart, a faint throb in his throat”; “Disheartened, he raised his eyes towards the slow-drifting clouds, dappled and seaborne” (190). The direction in which the clouds are drifting is a foreshadowing of his own destiny, as he stands on the Bull looking east across the Irish Sea towards Europe. He hears “confused music within him” [confusion] and is only called back to reality by the sound of his name being called by a group of his classmates, a scene reminiscent of the earlier one in

which he seemed to hear voices from hell. The pseudo-Latin deformations of his names which his friends jokingly call out make him think of Daedalus, father of Icarus. The mythological name and the powerful image of flight it suggests provokes an avalanche of thoughts:

Now, as never before, his strange name seemed to him a prophecy. . . . all ages were as one to him. . . . Now, at the name of the fabulous artificer, he seemed to hear the noise of dim waves and to see a winged form flying above the waves and slowly climbing the air. . . . a prophecy of the end he was born to serve and had been following through the mists of childhood and boyhood, a symbol of the artists forging anew in his workshop out of the sluggish matter of the earth a new soaring impalpable imperishable being? (192)

Daedalus and Icarus and the secret art of alchemy are all rolled into one mythological ball as Stephen is spiritually and even bodily launched into exaltation:

His heart trembled; his breath came faster and a wild spirit passed over his limbs as though he was soaring sunward. His heart trembled in an ecstasy of fear and his soul was in flight. His soul was soaring in an air beyond the world and the body he knew was purified in a breath and delivered of incertitude and made radiant and commingled with the element of the spirit. An ecstasy of flight made radiant his eyes and wild his breath and tremulous and wild and radiant his windswept limbs. (192-193)

Close upon the heels of his religious calling, he now has another calling of a wholly different nature. It is at this point that the artist in him is born:

This was the call of life to his soul. . . . An instant of wild flight had delivered him. . . . His soul had arisen from the grave of boyhood, spurning her graveclothes. Yes! Yes! Yes! He would create proudly out of the freedom and power of his soul, as the great artificer whose name he bore, a living thing, new and soaring and beautiful, impalpable, imperishable. . . . He felt his cheeks aflame and his throat throbbing with song. There was a lust of wandering in his feet that burned to set out for the ends of the earth. On! On! his heart seemed to cry. (193-194)

Almost delirious, he wanders off along the beach and then encounters the girl who is, like himself, wading in the water. Her appearance is like a vision to him, her angelic presence is a confirmation of his new-found destiny, and when she answers his gaze he feels he has found his muse, if only for a moment: "Her image had passed into his soul for ever and no word had broken the holy silence of his ecstasy. Her eyes had called him and his soul had leaped at the call. To live, to err, to fall, to triumph, to recreate life out of life!" (196) As he sits down on a sand dune to rest his "windswept limbs" and to "still the riot of his blood" he slips into a visionary dream from which he wakes some time later, a man reborn.

This crucial sequence of events, stretching out across only a few pages, is the culmination of the novel. The build-up of tension is very rapid indeed – we seem to move from a slight rise of tension straight into a seemingly unprovoked epiphany, without the preceding crisis. It should be kept in mind, though, that the preceding events have already established a considerable degree of tension. The passages in which Stephen converses with the director of the college are described in terms of a near-death experience, so that the

sense of liberation after this is only deepened. Stephen is ready to experience his life-defining epiphany, the one that will shape his identity and determine his destiny.

In terms of what is discussed here, the fifth chapter represents a general falling of action after the climactic events which precede it. It opens with a description of the drab realities of the family breakfast. We are firmly back in the real world after the elated state of revelation that ends the fourth chapter; it is clear that another circle has been rounded. Stephen's furtive exit from the house after breakfast foreshadows his eventual leaving of his family and his native country at the end of the narrative. The screaming nun in the madhouse is a reminder of his decision not to pursue a career as a priest. His mind is now firmly set on becoming an artist and he is in the process of developing his own theory of aesthetics, which he eagerly discusses with the dean of studies and some of his friends. It is also clear that he is not much interested in his studies as such. He sets himself apart from others more and more – a trend that has been apparent all through the novel. Unlike some of his Irish friends, and although he feels disdain for the English dean who uses words such as “funnel” rather than the (seemingly) more local “tundish”, Stephen is no nationalist: “The soul is born . . . first in those moments I told you of. It has a slow and dark birth, more mysterious than the birth of the body. When the soul of a man is born in this country there are nets flung at it to hold it back from flight. You talk to me of nationality, language, religion. I shall try to fly by those nets” (231). The conversations he has with his friends are more often monologues, lectures in which he is verbalizing his developing ideas on art, beauty, aesthetics, and the role of the artist himself: “The artist, like the God of creation, remains within or behind or beyond or above his handiwork, invisible, refined out of existence, indifferent, paring his fingernails” (245).

We are reminded that Emma still plays a part in his life as she is announced as his “beloved” (245) by Lynch, though their relationship seems distanced and almost estranged. Later, Stephen is inspired to write a villanelle dedicated to her; the creation of this poem, practically in front of the reader’s eye, is the first tangible evidence that Stephen is indeed becoming an artist. In a remarkable reversal of perspective, in view of his earlier rather lewd thoughts on hearing confessions as a priest, he is now irritated that his girlfriend is willing to “unveil her soul’s shy nakedness” (252) to a clergyman instead of her boyfriend. Joyce often uses religious imagery and terminology to express his secularized epiphanies. The word epiphany itself being of religious origin, it denotes a spiritual rather than a rational form of understanding. Langbaum notes that: “Stephen resents the fact that his girlfriend reveals her soul to a priest of the Church rather than to him, ‘a priest of eternal imagination, transmuting the daily bread of experience into the radiant body of everliving life’. . . . Joyce establishes art as a rival religion” (Langbaum 39). Like many Catholics who have turned their back on the mother church, he is too much shaped by the institution to ever fully leave it behind – the inclusion of the quotation of cardinal Newman’s words in the former chapter is a witness to that; Newman converted to Catholicism after half a lifetime as an Anglican. William Noon quotes Joyce as saying that “(h)is Trieste friend, Italo Svevo, remarked in 1927 that ‘Joyce still feels admiration and gratitude for the care of his educators; whilst his sinister Dedalus (his fictional counterpart in the novels) cannot find time to say so’ ” (qtd in Beebe, 250). However, it is not quite clear whether this is not an attempt to reclaim Joyce for the church by this Jesuit priest who always maintained that there is a strict and intentional difference between the author and his protagonist, highlighting the irony with which this novel’s narrator treats his subject (Beebe 250).

To provide answers to the questions raised by this discussion, it is best to turn to the text itself. When asked by Cranly whether he believes in the Eucharist, Stephen states: "I neither believe in it nor disbelieve in it" (272). Pressed for elucidation, he adds that he used to believe when he was still at school, but that he "was someone else then" (273) – a clear indication that he is a changed man, though not a total negation of himself as a believer. He finishes by saying: "I will not serve that in which I no longer believe, whether it call itself my home, my fatherland, or my church: and I will try to express myself in some mode of life or art as freely as I can and as wholly as I can, using for my defence the only arms I allow myself to use – silence, exile, and cunning" (281). This amounts to a declaration of his new self as an artist, while at the same time using terms which have religious connotations: silence is a requisite in certain religious orders rather than a vital requirement for an artist, and exile suggests a closing off from community rather than embracing the fellowship of man; both terms remind us of Stephen's "monkish" tendencies. The ironic subtext then, which is admittedly present throughout the novel, mostly serves to emphasize the distancing of Stephen from his subsequent former selves, rather than being a ploy to create a distance between the author/narrator and the protagonist; Joyce and Stephen remain more catholic than they are willing to admit.

The end of the novel announces itself in Stephen's thoughts even as he converses with Cranly: "Away then: it is time to go. A voice spoke softly to Stephen's lonely heart, bidding him go and telling him that his friendship was coming to an end. Yes; he would go" (279). The final pages of the novel consist of Stephen's diary entries as he prepares to leave for the continent. His love interest Emma appears to have shifted her attentions to his friend Cranly, but Stephen, too, has moved on: "Certainly she remembers the past. . . . Then she

remembers the time of her childhood – and mine, if I was ever a child. The past is consumed in the present and the present is living only because it brings forth the future” (286). He meets Emma by chance in the city and takes final leave of his boyhood girlfriend: “She asked me . . . was I writing poems? About whom? I asked her. This confused her more and I felt sorry and mean” (287). Then the road is calling him: “Away! Away!” (288).

The last two diary entries are consecrated to his mother and father. Mother reminds him of the importance of the heart in making choices in life: “. . . that I may learn in my own life and away from home and friends what the heart is and what it feels. Amen. So be it.” The “Amen” defines the end of a prayer and marks the beginning of a new cycle of development. Stephen is poised to find out what life has to offer him: “Welcome, O life! I go to encounter for the millionth time the reality of experience and to forge in the smithy of my soul the uncreated conscience of my race”. He is convinced his personal experiences are bound to become part of the collective consciousness of all mankind; once again we hear the voice of youthful presumptuousness and we cannot help but wonder if he is not overreaching himself. “Old father” is addressed as the person who took a similar course before him; the “old artificer” is seen as a fellow alchemist, a worker of material and immaterial substance. Stephen asks for his blessing for the long road ahead: “. . . stand me now and ever in good stead” (288). He is once again ready for a new round of experience, going out into the world, facing new challenges, and creating a whole new persona, fusing life and art in a mysterious inner process that is a conscious act of creation, as only artists can.

Christine van Boheemen-Saaf, quoting Joyce from a preparatory sketch for the novel (“A Portrait of the Artist”, 1904) has noted that each of the five separate chapters are constructed with the same “curve of an emotion”, and that each epiphany is “one in a series” (qtd. in Tigges, 197-198).

We have seen that each chapter of the novel constitutes a full cycle in the proposed model of C-changes, and that with each new chapter a new cycle is begun. At first glance, this might seem to suggest that Stephen begins anew with each cycle and that he has not progressed in a real sense. However, on closer scrutiny it becomes clear that any one cycle follows naturally upon the preceding and that each next phase is in fact impossible without having completed the last. Like wheels within wheels, we can then see the novel as a whole as one full cycle of C-changes: from the establishing of character and context in the opening chapter, moving through the conflicts and complications of growing up, leading to a confusion about morality and a crisis of faith, and culminating in the comprehension of self-realisation and the catharsis which clears the mind and clears the way for change, as Stephen discovers his true identity as an artist, accepts the consequences of having to move away from his roots, to construct his own life, build on his experiences, and keep evolving as a human being. Langbaum has noted that “(t)he fully developed epiphanies usually combine ‘the vulgarity of speech and of gesture’ with ‘a memorable phase of the mind’ – the former producing the latter” (Langbaum 40). As in an alchemical process, Joyce’s epiphanies represent a transfiguration of base elements into some spiritual substance; they constitute a “mental, moral, and spiritual uplift” (Stanislaus Joyce 103-4) and a gradual development of the soul. As far as the fate of Stephen Dedalus is concerned, as he sets out in his adult life, we can only hope that he does not reach too far and burn his wings – though that too, is ultimately part of the experience of growing up. Bearing in mind Tigges’ suggestion that “(t)he pattern created by epiphanic moments in life, which can be recorded and transmitted in art, demonstrates the uniqueness of each human being’s experience, as well as the simultaneous universality of this experience” (35), perhaps Stephen is right, after all, about his experiences becoming part of “the uncreated conscience of my race”. The lasting legacy of Joyce’s novel would certainly suggest so.

6. Vision and revision: the long road to realization in the development of Kerouac's *On the Road*

In this chapter I will argue that the epiphanic model proposed in this thesis applies to the gestation as a whole of Kerouac's seminal novel: from the first attempts, struggling with the form, almost giving up, the culmination of its creation in the scroll manuscript, followed by further important revisions which, by the time of its final publication as a 'finished product', requires continuation in the shape of a follow-up narrative, as the convictions of the author have profoundly changed in the course of time. Thus the gestation period of this novel becomes a cycle of C-changes in itself, and the concentrated effort which produced the scroll can be seen as its crowning epiphanic phase. To illustrate this, I will necessarily have to discuss some relevant biographical aspects of Kerouac's life. Naturally, I will also discuss the epiphanic aspects in the novel as such, and test my model in the development of the narrative. It will become clear that the four road trips described represent four consecutive epiphanic cycles.

Kerouac mentioned Joyce as one of his literary influences. There were obvious connections: like him, Kerouac kept compiling notes on everything he saw around him, filling stacks of notebooks with his observations of occurrences in daily life, grasping bits of conversations, noting people's appearances, and listing numbered "memories" (Maher 22). Kerouac possessed a formidable capacity for remembering details, and he was proud of the nickname "Memory Babe" which he was given in school (Charters 67). His notebooks were full of meticulous "word counts and progress reports" (Charters 100), a notion which is not in line with the general public's notion of him producing off-the-cuff prose. Kerouac identified with Joyce, who he saw as a kindred spirit, an artist struggling to be heard. Like

him, he was a Catholic who wrestled with his faith throughout his life, but never relinquished it. Like Joyce, as a young man he felt tempted by “the siren’s call of the beckoning finger of a prostitute” (Maher xviii) and then redirected his energies towards the nobler goal of becoming an artist. Torn between his Catholic upbringing and his urge to develop his art, he confided to be “a hoodlum and a saint” in his 1947 journal. To him, being a saint did not necessarily mean that a person was free of temptation and sin (Maher 58): “It seems to me that saints are the most imperfect, tortured, doubtful human beings in the world. . . . The thing about a saint is that he understands crime and sinning better than anyone else, from experience and long meditation. The only thing perfect about a saint is his doubt” (Journal, August 11, 1947, in *Windblown World*). The hoodlum and the saint would prove to be two conflicting - or complementary - sides to Kerouac’s personality as he struggled increasingly with his alcoholism, and these aspects were equally present and visible in the character of his friend Neal Cassady, portrayed as Dean Moriarty in the final version of *On the Road*. In his novel, Kerouac consciously strove to describe “the idealization of a truly flawed character possessing a spark of divinity” (Maher 164).

In spite of popular belief, *On the Road* went through a long gestation period towards development. It had various precursors in the shape of false starts, unfinished manuscripts, aborted rewritings, and proto-versions, before the seemingly immaculate conception of the mythical scroll. Afterwards, the scroll manuscript was considerably and significantly edited at least two times before its final appearance in the form most people know. After finally seeing *On the Road* published in 1957, Kerouac himself fostered the image of him having produced the novel in the course of three weeks in April 1951, using a 120-foot roll of teletype paper. Actually, the novel had been under construction since November 1948 and

had known various incarnations in the shape of short anecdotes and aborted beginnings. Beside his notebooks, Kerouac also kept journals as logbooks to mark the progress he was making and comment on the quality of his writing. The first sketches were made while Kerouac was still finishing his first novel *The Town and the City*, which was eventually published in February 1950. Throughout the fall of 1948 Kerouac worked on a manuscript he had titled *On the Road* that amounted to a total of more than 70,000 words, but which in the end had no bearing whatsoever on the novel that eventually became known to the world. In April 1949 he started a handwritten version which was accompanied by an “itinerary” which was to function as a scenario for the novel; in June he produced another 10,000 words and then stalled. In August he started anew, using a new scenario, only to become stuck again at the end of September. Kerouac had to admit he had reached a dead end: “For the first time in years I DON’T KNOW WHAT TO DO. I SIMPLY DO NOT HAVE A SINGLE REAL IDEA WHAT TO DO” (Maher 203). A fresh attempt was made in November, this time yielding a map on which Kerouac marked the various road trips he had made with Neil Cassady. After the excursion to Mexico in the summer of 1950, Kerouac produced yet another manuscript titled *Gone on the Road*, but he was still struggling with his writing style and had clearly not found the form he was looking for: “I want *deep* form, poetic form – the way the consciousness *really* digs everything that happens” (Charters 129).

Cassady had started writing as well, and the two started exchanging letters as well as manuscripts. In March 1951 Cassady sent Kerouac a long letter of 13,000 words, detailing his affair with a girl five years earlier. Kerouac was swept off his feet by the direct, fast and furious autobiographical style adopted by Cassady, the “muscular rush” of his writing style – it was exactly what Kerouac had been after for so long. Combining the direct, straight

narrative technique of Burroughs with the frankness of intimate personal detail in Cassady's prose, he had finally found his own voice. From Thomas Wolfe's style emulated in *The Town and the City* his writing developed towards the stream-of-consciousness spontaneous prose inspired by Cassady's long rambling letters. Practically everything Kerouac ever wrote was autobiographical; he merely changed the names of his characters to protect his friends (or, urged by his editors, to avoid cases of libel). He fictionalized his life into a dramatic fantasy, but it did not take much to do so, as his life was already so full of drama and action.

On April 2, 1951, Kerouac sat himself down at his desk in the loft of his then wife Joan Haverty's apartment in Manhattan and inserted the first of a number of sheets of large drawing paper he had cut to size to fit the carriage of his typewriter. Fuelled by black coffee (and not Benzedrine, as myth would have it) he spit out his novel in a frenzied bout of speed-typing. By his side were his journals, Cassady's letters, some character sketches he had previously drawn up and a list of items he planned to cover as he divided his chapters over the various stages of the trips he had made. Three weeks later the word count stood at 139,000 words and he had a roll of paper 120 feet long, held together by Scotch tape. Satisfied with the result and excited by the sheer act of completing the task, he took the scroll to his agent Robert Giroux's office and unrolled it across the floor, shouting "Here's your novel!" only to be greatly offended by Giroux's remark that it was impossible to make corrections on a manuscript in this form. He stormed out, vowing that not one word was to be edited from the document since it had been "dictated by the Holy Ghost" (Cunnell 32).

In fact, Kerouac took it upon himself almost immediately to retype the manuscript in separate pages and double spacing. He kept working on the second typescript until May 1952, a year since his three-week writing burst. During this time, he discovered what he

called his “writing soul at last” (Charters 146), prompted by the notions of spontaneous composition and sketching, as a painter does, though using words rather than paint. He was convinced that the idea of sketching originated in Yeats’ trance writing and he told Ginsberg that sketching was a way of writing “with 100% honesty” (Charters 147). His prose may have been spontaneous, but by sketching he reworked the material, filling out passages and adding images until he ended up with sentences that sometimes ran the length of a page. The subsequent third typescript had substantially more editing work done to it, as Kerouac gradually gave in to the demands of his editor for improved readability. Helped by his editor Malcolm Cowley and his assistants (presumably Helen Taylor and Keith Jennison), this rather more reader-friendly version found many of its drawn-out sentences cut into more digestible chunks, after considerably more punctuation had been applied to it. Despite the editing, the manuscript ran into 347 pages and 175,000 words, as opposed to the heavily revised 297-page, 158,000-word second draft from which Kerouac had willingly deleted numerous passages, most often descriptions of sexual activity or references to existing persons, as his Viking publishers were concerned with legal issues of libel and sexual content (Gewirtz 118-119). As it happened, most of what was deleted from the second typescript, plus new material Kerouac produced as he reworked his novel, found its way back into the third draft. Further revisions would continue until 1957.

Kerouac’s portrayal of Cassady in *On the Road* helped define the lifestyle of the generation that came of age in the 1960s and 70s. Cassady’s projection of the archetypical American hero jumps off the pages of the novel. It is the image of the nineteenth-century cowboy in a twentieth-century reincarnation: a frontier man continually pushing the limits, a pioneer daring to go where no man has gone before, exploring the extremes of mind and

body, road and landscape. As Cassady and his friends are racing to and fro from coast to coast, frantically crossing the continent in all directions, their maniacal travelling becomes a metaphor for life. Taking to the road is the only way to go, faster and faster until the vastness of the land becomes a blur in the speeding mind. Kerouac took it upon himself to document these fantastic and mind-bending journeys, visualizing the landscape in words, bringing the land to life, describing America from the inside out and the outside in, until it left him utterly exhausted and wasted by the wayside. The hedonistic lifestyle which emanates from the pages of *On the Road* was quickly seized upon by a new generation, keen to rid themselves of the constraints of society. The young readers latched on to the idea of the great American adventure, freedom and open spaces. However, most of them failed to discern the darker undercurrents in Kerouac's novel: the total lack of responsibility in behaviour, the egocentricity of most of the central characters, the negation of political awareness, and the realization that this vision of America was ultimately doomed. All of this did not deter millions of youngsters around the world to strap on their rucksacks and take to the road themselves, a "great rucksack revolution" as Kerouac had his hero Japhy Ryder prophesize in *The Dharma Bums* (73), the novel which is effectively the follow-up narrative to *On the Road*.

Kerouac's confessional style of writing had its origins in the confessional booths of the church. As Charters has remarked: "it was a sin to hold anything back" (148). Kerouac was born as a Catholic and died as a Catholic, but during the 'post-scroll' gestation period of *On the Road* he was also drawn toward Buddhism. He seriously studied Buddhist texts, translated sutras from French into English, and even produced a biography of the Buddha. His fascination with Buddhism is testimony of the deep religious feelings Kerouac fostered

throughout his life. He felt a particular affinity with the first law of Buddhism which states that “all life is suffering”. It was a notion he could identify with, as he spent years hoping for what he considered his most essential manuscript to be accepted for publication. Not that this discouraged him from producing more works: during these six years he wrote another twelve books, among which *The Subterraneans* which he produced in another frenzied effort lasting only three days. The majority of these twelve books, written in what Charters calls “The Middle Years” (370), cover the same period that *On the Road* does, as Kerouac described the various characters he encountered on his travels between 1947 and 1951: *Visions of Cody*, *Doctor Sax*, *October in the Railroad Earth*, *Maggie Cassidy*, *The Subterraneans*, *San Francisco Blues*, *Mexico City Blues*. Kerouac’s ideas about Buddhism also found their way into the post-scroll versions of *On the Road* and eventually found full expression in *The Dharma Bums*, which was written in November 1957, after the final version of *On the Road* had been published. *The Dharma Bums* has been credited with being among the first novels to promote the awareness of ecology. Its focus on pristine landscape, isolation from the crowds, meditation, mountain climbing and wholesome foods was a remarkable turnaround from the hectic goings-on in *On the Road*, and can in many ways be considered as its natural successor: the fast, masculine, road-driven force centring on people and motion giving way to a slower, more feminine pre-occupation with land and environment, one form of awareness shifting into another.

As he was rewriting *On the Road*, Kerouac was also working on a manuscript consecutively titled *Visions of Cody* and *Visions of Neal*. This novel, first published in a shortened version in 1960 and posthumously, in a complete version, in 1973, centred wholly on Neal Cassady and, as mentioned earlier, describes many of the same events covered in

On the Road. The method of sketching and using spontaneous prose is even more apparent here than in *On the Road*. To Kerouac, Cassady embodied both the idealistic promise of America and the sense that this dream had been corrupted and lost. By identifying with Cassady, he wrote about how he saw himself; and in Cassady, he found again the older brother he had lost when he was young: his sibling Gerard, about whom he wrote *Visions of Gerard*, was considered a somewhat saintly figure even during his life and had died of rheumatic fever at the age of 9. One of the life-long moral obligations which Kerouac felt he had towards his mother was to follow in the footsteps of his exemplary brother. It was one of the factors that kept Kerouac from losing himself completely in the debauched lifestyle many of his friends were drawn to, and to which the opening lines of Ginsberg's poem "Howl" was a testimony.

A recurrent motif in *Visions of Cody* are neon lights and redbrick buildings; the neon lights stands for America's shining promise of happiness, whereas the redbrick represents the harsh reality of life for the downtrodden, the poor, the beaten-down – a notion which found its way into the term 'beat generation'. The image of neon lights conveys at the same time the idea of glowing promise and empty meaninglessness, both "the joy of the downtown city night" and "the red neons of our frontward noticeable desperately advertised life" (Charters 151). As for the term 'beat', it was only later that Kerouac had an insight about it being related to the word 'beatific', as in the state of beatitude of St. Francis, expressing a joy for life. He voiced this interpretation of the word 'beat' in particular during the many interviews in which it was suggested that *On the Road* belonged to the culture of hoodlums, roughnecks, and violent rock 'n rollers, a misconception that at least partly stemmed from the fact that the novel had been published some ten years after the period in

which it was set, being the immediate post-war years. It can even be said that the origins of *On the Road* date back to the pre-war years, in which the working classes suffered under the Great Depression and some folks were forced to take to the railroad or the highway, in search for any opportunities that might come their way. It was these people Kerouac identified with first and foremost. Kerouac refused to be equated to the emerging rock 'n roll culture in the late fifties, as he refused to be identified with the hippie culture of the late sixties. When Cassady joined Ken Kesey's Merry Pranksters and became the driver at the wheel of their bus on their legendary cross-country trip in 1964, as recounted in Tom Wolfe's 'new journalist' novel *The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test*, Kerouac frowned on his former road companion's choice of friends and their LSD-fuelled quest for a "cool place" (Wolfe 153). Even in his own novels, he always kept a certain distance to his central characters; his own alter ego always remained an observer, as others took the lead in the various exploits recounted. Charters suggests that this was also prompted by his Catholic background and the enduring influence of his mother, to whom he always returned after yet another episode of adventure: "he was writing with his mother looking over his shoulder, minimizing his participation in the action, emphasizing his gullibility, never describing anything he knew she wouldn't forgive" (Charters 361). In this way, it was his mother who had taken over the role of the priest to whom he had confessed his sins as a boy.

Over the years, there has been some discussion as to the relation between Kerouac and Cassady having homosexual overtones or simply amounting to an accentuated form of male bonding. It is true that Cassady and Ginsberg were lovers for a short while, and Ginsberg always remained infatuated with Cassady, but his love was never really reciprocated, as Cassady, though being sexually highly charged, was clearly far more

interested in women than in men. Having spent long periods of his young life in reform schools, Cassady had a very detached approach to sex with men. Kerouac's sexuality was to an extent ambivalent as well: he was "occasionally drawn to men" (Gewirtz 29) and briefly experimented by going to the public baths with Ginsberg and Burroughs – but then again, experimentation was the name of the game, at that stage of the life of everyone concerned. The bond he felt with Cassady was ultimately far more emotional and spiritual than it was physical; they were "blood-brothers" (qtd. in Charters 117). The search for Neal's father which was one of the central themes in the narrative of *On the Road* was also a search for their own inner beings, and the beings they could potentially become. Jack or Sal; Neal or Dean; friends, lovers, brothers, or fathers; in the end all characters and roles became interchangeable in the "holy" quest for art, truth, life, and love.

The surprising conclusion, when we study the works and methods of Jack Kerouac, is that the amount of preparation and revision that went into the development of his novels, particularly *On the Road*, belies the popular perception of spontaneity that is associated with it. The Jack Kerouac Archives, a part of the Berg Collection of the New York Public Library since 2001, boast a staggering amount of journals, drafts, fragments, maps, charts, lists, all of them evidence that Kerouac planned his work meticulously (see figure 3 below). It also serves to bolster the belief that the epiphanic burst of creativity which yielded the 1951 scroll did not materialize out of the blue, but rather was the result of a process of preparation that took years to come to fruition. It was followed by an equally long period in which further changes had to be made and phases of construction needed to be negotiated, before the end result could be presented to the world. The development of Kerouac's best-known novel thus amounts to a cycle of C-changes spanning the better part of 10 years, in

which characters and context are established early on, conflict and complication arise when a fitting literary form is not found, confusion and crisis set in when repeated attempts at building a narrative are stranded, compliance is reached when the author is ready to give up on his efforts, before finally the epiphany announces itself in the shape of an inspired and prolonged moment of literary grace. Of course, the process does not stop there: it continues with the realization that further work is needed, revision to be done, reconstruction to be carried out, until the conclusion arrives with the publication of the work in its final form – after which another novel is waiting to be written. Or, how a three-week burst of creative energy turns out to be a ten-year plan and a project of prodigious proportions.

	1946	1947	1948	1949	1950	1951
Mrs. Martin	Leaves farm - West Haven - Ozone Park - work			To Denver - back to Richmond Hill		To South
Peter Martin	Still leaves farm - Mike makes - Village - work - some book - starts book	Writes - Denver - Calif. Hearst - Susquehanna -	Jimmy Bakker	Trip to Calif. & Butte - back - Book accepted - Denver - Calif. - Back to NY - Settles with Francis	Autograph Boston & Denver - Some - Mexico - Marries Laurie	Writes book - Still - Breakup Laurie - West
Francis Martin	Conversion - work - radio	Made editor		Accepts Peter's manuscript -	Publishes P's book - 1st trip to Europe (Comes to Denver)	Seed editor
Joe Martin	Pet leaves him - Shows holes in house - Vanishes				In Florida with Girl Friday	vanished
Ruth Martin Marlowe	Lives in South - marriage		Has baby -	Ozone Park & Denver	Kimston	Rocky Mt
Liz Martin Fudrick			Polio in Texas	Busted -		Shot by Deanson
Mickey Martin	Works in Calloway - Circus - Carl's - Factory - West Haven - Trip to work - back - Ozone	Walk, const. & lunch counter - Teenie - Denver (Walt Bill - Manda) - Army	Army	Goes to France with boys from Denver - G.I. Bill	Denver - JAC to Mexico with Peter & Dean - M.C. college -	Marries Ann. 9-1-48 Mexico - Settles down in L.A. - faggard - slanders
Will Deanson	Wife returns - troubles in NY - Livingston	Lives in Texas - buys - Dean, Francis, Louise - visit - Louie born -	Moves to new house - (Algeria) - Much has polio -	Busted - moves to Rio Grande - Allen Mexico with family	Mexico - writes "Junkie" - Peter visits with Mickey & Dean -	Further down to Peru - Yase - Tansier Green - Named Lunch
Dean Conway	First trip N.Y. with Marlowe - Fights -	In Denver - Marlowe, Carolyn, Leon - in Texas - drives Hill to NY - stays with Liz - (Jean Anderson) -	Frisco - divorce from Marlowe -	Trip to N.Y. (2) - Peter comes - Diane NY -	Frisco - Mexico - divorce -	Frisco, Carolyn - Saint - dreams - RR brakeman in California - Family man
Leon Lowinsky	His ma on 17th -	Denver holdups - Bayou Texas - Duke's holdups -	Harlem Holy Holdups -	Busted - hospital	Xmas at Pet's -	Empire State Bldg. - "Sparkie" - World Telegram - Chiapas - Mad loves
Junkey	In N.Y.	In Texas	In N.Y. - Fires of Hell - Confession -	Busted - Sing Sing -	Sing Sing	Out Xmas - Thief in NY
Kenny Wood	Copy-boy - "Leon - version" - Jeanne - Jeanne born -	works - BHale -	works, drinks -	Becomes big news - Pepperman -	Meets Francis, etc. - Seva Hills - Trip to Calif - Liz - trip to Mex. co. - Cops & accidents -	Marries Cecilia - Son Simon - Sad balling in - Sheridan Sq. - Society boy
Judie				Peter & Dean visit - Greet Scott - Cops -	Letter from Peter - Marries gold pro - Fat	
Uncle Stanley Martin	West Haven -			In Butte -	In Denver - St. Louis - clearboat -	
Shirley Jackson (+ Pil)		No. Carolina - Iowa - Times Sq. -	Times Square -	Blowing in Frisco (Bayou)		
Dr. Sak						

figure 3: table of characters, events and chronology, 1946-51, for a proto-version of the "Road" novel.

After having demonstrated that the novel in its entirety can be seen to represent one long epiphany when viewed in the context of its process of gestation, it is now time to explore the ways in which the proposed epiphanic cycle is evident in the text itself. Within the narrative frame it is possible to discern cycles of increasing and decreasing tension throughout the novel. Inside one epiphanic cycle are other cycles, like wheels within wheels.

I have decided to base my reading on the version of the original scroll manuscript. One reason for this is that the scroll version can be regarded as the essential, unadulterated core material of the novel. Another reason is that this version is in essence very close to the 'final' version which was published in 1957, with the advantage that none of the more daring material had yet been omitted; a disadvantage is that a few episodes are missing which were included in the 1957 version. One notable difference between the scroll manuscript and the 1957 version is that the latter is infused with the notions of Zen Buddhism that Kerouac developed in the 1950s; I will expound on this later.

One of the ideas that are central to the development of the narrative is what Kerouac called the "circle of despair", which amounts to the belief that life is experienced as a "regular series of deflections" from one's goals. With each deflection, a new goal is established, but before reaching this new goal, one will again be deflected. Instead of moving forward, one makes a continuing series of right-hand turns, until a full circle is completed – a circle that runs around the unknowable "IT" that is "central to . . . existence" and which can only be known through experience. It is useless to try to take a straight course in life, as "the straight line will take you only to death" (qtd. in Kupetz 89). This underlying idea explains much of the divergences in the described travel itineraries as well as the discontinuous plot. Thus, as Kerouac sets out for the first time to cross the continent and

opts for the direct passage of Route 6, he quickly finds out that there is no through traffic to carry him westward, so that he is forced to return to New York and start again by an alternative route.

Not all of the insights Jack gains, as he crosses the continent in four fast-paced journeys, can be categorized as 'spiritual' in a positive sense. The circle of despair often takes him to places and states of mind that can more readily be defined in terms of Frye's "demonic epiphanies". For instance, when he wakes up in Des Moines and his mind is reduced to a blank slate:

I was far away from home haunted and tired with travel, in a cheap hotel room I'd never seen . . . and I looked at the cracked high ceiling and really didn't know who I was for about fifteen strange seconds. I wasn't scared, I was just somebody else, some stranger, and my whole life was a haunted life, the life of a ghost... I was halfway across America, at the dividing line between the East of my youth and the West of my future, and maybe that's why it happened right there and then that strange red afternoon. (120)

There are many occasions when the circle of despair takes him to places of despair, such as when he walks on New York's Times Square and is hit by the sudden realization that he is in fact an embodied spirit with a limited life span.

The original scroll manuscript is divided into five "BOOKS", four of which describe a separate journey across the American continent. Each of these journeys is marked with both glorious climaxes and depths of despair; usually, the narrative starts with an optimistic outlook but ends on a note of disillusion. At first appearance, this structure may seem not to correspond to the epiphanic model proposed here; however, when we observe the plot

more closely it becomes clear that within the narrative structure the model is validated by the way tension is built up towards each climax or mental realization, and the way the decreasing tension gives rise to consequences leading to the next development. Viewed as a whole, the novel clearly shows a development of character which leaves the protagonist a wiser person in the end. The circle of despair thus becomes a cycle of change for the better.

Jack is introduced to Neal Cassady by one of his acquaintances from New York, where Jack has befriended a loosely knit group of budding writers (character and context). Jack and Neal become fast friends almost overnight, and Neal decides to stay the winter in New York with his teenage bride Louanne. In spring, Neal returns to Denver without Louanne, and Jack decides to follow him there against the advice of his mother (conflict). Some of the New York crew have also moved to Denver, and Jack moves in with Ed White; it turns out there has appeared some sort of rift between two factions, Neal Cassady and Allen Ginsberg being ostracized by the rest of the group (complication). Neal is maintaining a very complicated ménage-a-quatre, hustling between his new girlfriend Carolyn and Louanne and Allen who have both followed him from New York. Neal divides his time (or rather, multiplies his time) between his lovers, according to a very tight and yet extremely well-timed schedule:

“It is now” (looking at his watch) “exactly one-fourteen----I shall be back at exactly THREE fourteen, for our hour of revery together, real sweet revery darling, and then as you know, as I told you and as we agreed, I have to go and see Brierly about those papers---in the middle of the night strange as it seems and as I to-roughly explained”--(this was a coverup for his rendez-vous with Allen who was still hiding)---“so now in this exact minute I must dress,

put on my pants, go back to life, that is to outside life, streets and whatnot, as we agreed, it is now one-FIFTEEN and time's running, running.." (146-7)

Jack always remains the semi-objective observer, both partaking in the frenetic activities and staying on the periphery to report the proceedings. Watching Neal and Allen rap all night long about life's essential questions, he finally remarks, as the first birds begin to sing: "If you keep this up you'll both go crazy but let me know what happens as you go along" (152).

After a while, Jack becomes tired of the booze-drenched parties, the wild behaviour of his friends and their restless running around; he is also frustrated with his love life, often being alone when all his friends are in some kind of relationship (confusion). He hits the road again and moves to San Francisco, where his friend Henri Cru has lined up a job for him as a security officer in a barracks housing transient construction workers. The job entails intimidating the workers and Jack soon hates his work. Living with Henri and his girlfriend Diane proves to be difficult as well, as the two are constantly rowing and Jack finds it impossible to write (crisis). He decides to move out again and travel to Los Angeles; sitting on a hill overlooking Frisco, Jack muses on the differences between the east and west coast and accepts his lonely fate: "Oh where is the girl I love? I thought, and looked everywhere, as I had looked everywhere in the little world below. . . . Now it was time to pursue my moon along" (181) (compliance). Jack's luck improves considerably when he meets a Mexican-American girl called Bea on the bus to Los Angeles. This episode was published as a separate short story well before the novel was published and in it, Kerouac describes in warm tones his brief affair with the girl and the time they spent living in a tent in the fields near her parents' home in Selma: "Ah it was a fine night, warm night, a wine-drinking night, a moony

night, and a night to hug your girl and talk and spit and be heavengoing. This we did" (191) (comprehension).

The two of them arrive in L.A. and find the town is teeming with tourists and shady characters; they are taken aback by the phony Hollywood atmosphere: "Fat women ran across the Boulevard to get in line for the quiz shows. . . . Bea and I ate in a cafeteria downtown which was decorated to look like a grotto. All the cops in L.A. looked like handsome gigolos; obviously, they'd come to L.A. to make the movies. Everybody had come to make the movies, even me" (188) (catharsis). They move on to Terry's hometown Selma, where Jack meets Bea's brother Freddy and his friend Ponzo. Jack enjoys the company of these down-to-earth and honest people and appreciates the simple life the couple lead, living in a tent, picking cotton for a couple of dollars a day: "I was a man of the earth precisely as I had dreamed I would be" (198) (clarity). The happy interlude is short-lived, though, and when autumn announces itself Jack realizes he cannot provide for his girl and her child (change). He leaves her with her parents and takes to the road again, bussing and hitchhiking back east (consequences), finally making it back to his mother's place in Queens, New York, where he recuperates from his exhausting travels (construction and conclusion).

At the start of the second part of the novel ("BOOK TWO" as it is called in the middle of a line in the scroll manuscript, without any further introduction), Jack and his family are celebrating Christmas with relatives in Virginia (character and context). Neal shows up unexpectedly and leaves the family members bewildered with his antics (conflict). He takes Jack to New York where a number of wild parties ensue. Neal's behaviour is even more outrageous than before; he is completely hyped up, talks incessantly, and drives like a maniac, getting stopped for speeding more than once (complication). Jack is wondering how

Neal is able to keep up this fast pace of life; on the one hand he seems poised to destroy the lives of himself and all those who travel with him, on the other hand he oozes with self-confidence and manages to do three things at once, with relative success (confusion). Jack expresses a wish for a more quiet life and mentions a recurring dream he has, about being followed by a "Shrouded Stranger" (225); his friends interpret this as a fear of death (crisis). After going to a concert to see pianist George Shearing play, they smoke some marijuana and Jack has a moment of insight: "It made me think that everything was about to arrive--- the moment when you know all and everything is decided forever" (229) (compliance and comprehension).

In another telling passage which sheds some light on the attitude Kerouac adopts among his friends, Dean asks Jack to make love with Louanne while he is watching. When it comes to it, Jack is unable to perform: the bed they are using is the bed his father has died in, and Jack is awkwardly aware of Neal's presence in the room. He asks Neal to take his place and soon Neal and Louanne are in the throes of passion:

Only a guy who's spent five years in jail can go to such maniacal helpless extremes; beseeching at the very portals of the womb with a completely physical realization of the sources of life-bliss; trying to get back in there once and for all, while living, and adding to it the living sexual frenzy and rhythm. This is the result of years looking at dirty pictures behind bars; looking at the legs of women in magazines; evaluating the hardness of the steel halls and the softness of the woman who is not there. Jail is where you promise yourself the right to live. Neal had never seen his mother's face. Every new girl, every new wife, every new child was an addition to his bleak

impoverishment. Where was his father---old bum Neal Cassady the Barber, riding freights, working as a scullion in railroad cookshacks, stumbling, down-crashing in wino alley nights, expiring on coal piles, dropping his yellowed teeth one by one in the gutters of the West. Neal had every right to die the sweet deaths of complete love of his Louanne. Her own father was a cop in L.A. who had made many an incestuous hint. She showed me a picture; a little mustache, slick hair, cruel eyes, polished belt and gun. *I didn't want to interfere, I just wanted to follow.* (232-3) (my italics)

Jack joins Neal and Louanne for their return trip to California. Everybody is elated to be on the road again: "Neal . . . was only concerned with locking the trunk and putting the proper things in the compartment and sweeping the floor and getting all ready for the purity of the road again...the purity of moving and getting somewhere, no matter where, and as fast as possible and with as much excitement and digging of all things as possible" (234) (catharsis). Neal puts into words what everyone is thinking: "' . . . we all must admit that everything is fine and there's no need in the world to worry, and in fact we should realize what it would mean to us to UNDERSTAND and that we're not REALLY worried about ANYTHING. Am I right?' We all agreed" (clarity). He turns the page on the failed attempt at a threesome: "'Here we go, we're all together...what did we do in New York...let's forgive. . . . That's behind us, merely by miles and inclinations" (235) (change). They first drive down to New Orleans where writer William Burroughs lives with his wife Joan. The couple is very much strung out on drugs, and soon Jack, Neal, and Louanne continue on their way to San Francisco (consequences). Jack is impressed by Neal's endless stamina and athletic ability and is ever more willing to follow him anywhere (construction). He is soon disappointed

though, when they arrive in San Francisco and Neal leaves Jack and Louanne stranded as he is off to seek out Carolyn (conclusion). BOOK TWO ends with another rather anagnoristic epiphany as Jack wanders aimlessly and penniless through the dark streets:

And just for a moment I had reached the point of ecstasy that I always wanted to reach and which was the complete step across chronological time into timeless shadows, and wonderment in the bleakness of the mortal realm, and the sensation of death kicking at my heels to move on, with a phantom dogging at its own heels, and myself hurrying to a plank where all the Angels dove off and flew into infinity. This was the state of my mind. I thought I was going to die the very next moment. (274)

Having reached the western shores of the country and arriving at a dead end, Jack is ready to turn back east again, go home and lick his wounds (continuation). Curiously enough, the same passage in the final version of the novel reads quite differently, being heavily laden with Buddhist imagery and philosophy:

And for just a moment I had reached the point of ecstasy that I always wanted to reach and which was the complete step across chronological time into timeless shadows . . . , and myself hurrying to a plank where all the Angels dove off and flew into the holy void of uncreated emptiness, the potent and inconceivable radiances shining in bright Mind Essence, innumerable lotus-lands falling open in the magic mothswarm of heaven. . . . I realized that I had died and been reborn numberless times but just didn't remember especially because the transitions from life to death and back to life are so ghostly easy,

a magical action for naught . . . I realized it was only because of the stability of the intrinsic Mind that these ripples of birth and death took place. (173)

Here, the demonic aspects of the epiphany have been turned into a celebration of Buddhist illumination. Certain death has become glorious reincarnation, the Shrouded Stranger is no longer snapping at his heels, and the void is no longer bleak but holy and radiant instead. In Paul Maltby's words, a "catastrophic" moment has been turned into a "redemptive" moment (Maltby 19).

BOOK THREE picks up the story one year later. Jack's chances take a turn for the better when he receives a payment of \$1,000 after the publication of his first novel and invests in a house for his mother, sister, brother-in-law and himself in Denver (character and context). But the family cannot get settled there, so the whole plan falls through and Jack's money has evaporated (conflict). He makes new plans to go and see Neal in San Francisco. On his way there, he has a vision of seeing "God in the sky in the form of huge sunburning clouds above the desert" (282). Arriving in San Francisco, it is Jack's turn to disturb Neal's relatively quiet home life. The two are immediately thrown out by Carolyn (complication), and after carousing in the bars, they head off back east again for another adventure. Passing through Denver, Neal sets out to look for his missing father, but none of the people he asks know anything about his whereabouts (confusion). Dean launches into a wild rampage, stealing cars, chasing women, and eyeing teenage girls, until it is time to make a hasty retreat (crisis). They manage to get another car from a Travel Bureau and pledge to drive it safely to Chicago. Only a few miles out of Denver, Neal drives the car so fast that the speed gauge breaks: "Well no speedometer, I won't know how fast I'm going, I'll just ball that jack to Chicago and tell by time" (compliance) (324). In Chicago, they visit some jazz clubs and

listen to a group of young, inspired musicians. Unexpectedly, the great George Shearing shows up as well and plays an impromptu set of music. Then the other jazzmen strike up again and give it their best shot:

“They sought to find new phrases after Shearing’s explorations; they tried hard. They writhed and twisted and blew. Every now and then a clear harmonic cry gave new suggestions of a tune that would someday be the only tune in the world and which would raise men’s souls to joy. They found it, they lost, they wrestled for it, they found it again, they laughed, they moaned----and Neal sweated at the table and told them to go, go, go” (comprehension) (339).

The experience of listening to experimental jazz and bop seamlessly goes together with their improvisational lifestyle, the ever-changing music and the interplay between the musicians becoming a metaphor for their fast-paced lives. After this ecstatic intermezzo, they pay a brief visit to Jack’s ex-wife Edie who lives in Detroit. She has made a new life for herself and Jack soon realizes that something has come between them: “That something was the years apart---she had changed, changed friends, ways of spending evenings, interests, all that and had let herself fall into complete self-indulgence and uncare” (343-4). Neal observes:

“People change, man, that’s what you gotta know” – “I hope you and I’ll never change” – “We know, we know” (345) (catharsis, clarity, change).

They eventually make it to New York and stay with Jack’s mother. Later that night, they walk towards the ocean in Long Island: “. . . there was no more land, just the Atlantic Ocean and we could only go so far. We clasped hands and agreed to be friends forever” (349). Five days later, at a party, Neal is introduced to a girl called Diane and immediately moves in with her,

soon filing for divorce from his second wife Carolyn who is about to give birth to their second child. A few months later, Diane is pregnant as well and another of Neal's children is to be born (consequences, construction, conclusion).

BOOK FOUR continues in the spring of the next year. This time it is Jack who takes the initiative to set out on the road again (character). He goes to Denver and is presently followed by Neal, who has soon become tired of being a responsible husband to Diane and sending child support money to Carolyn: "What's your road, man---holyboy road, madman road, rainbow road, guppy road, any road. It's an anywhere road for anybody anyhow. Where body how?" (352) (context). Neal also mentions going to Seattle to look for his missing father and take him back to New York, but the idea never materializes. The objective of the journey this time is Mexico: "We saw a vision of the entire Western Hemisphere rockribbing clear down to Tierra del Fuego and us flying down the curve of the world into other tropics and other worlds. 'Man this will finally take us to IT!' said Neal with definite faith" (366). A young man called Frank joins them on their trip, in spite of his grandfather pleading with him not to go (conflict). When they are only three miles out of Denver, Frank is bitten in his arm by some insect and his arm is swelling up dangerously (complication). Having crossed the border in Laredo, they are excited to be on foreign soil. In a town called Victoria they meet a young Mexican who scores marijuana for them. They get high and "[f]or a mad moment I thought Neal was understanding everything he said by sheer wild insight and sudden revelatory genius inspired by his supreme and glowing happiness" (384). Later they visit a brothel and get roaring drunk and have sex with several women; Jack is vaguely aware of the unfortunate circumstances that force the women to do this kind of work, but he goes ahead anyway (confusion).

Moving further south, they run into car trouble and are forced to spend the night in the jungle, where they are bitten by hundreds of mosquitoes and other bugs (crisis). As Jack lies awake in the heat of the night a white horse appears, like an apparition, and trots right by them. At dawn they move on, followed by huge swarms of bugs, their clothes reeking of sweat and caked blood – nobody minds (compliance). Climbing out of the clammy jungle and into the cool mountain air to an altitude of 5,000 feet, their troubles are soon forgotten and the mood lifts with the rising road. They meet a group of young girls who try to sell crystals to them, and Neal exchanges a wristwatch for one specimen. The Americans are touched by the purity of these girls who are not yet spoilt by civilization. As they pass more Mexican Indians on the road, Jack muses that “they never dreamed the sadness and the poor broken delusion of it. They didn’t know that a bomb had come that could crack all our bridges and banks and reduce them to jumbles like the avalanche heap, and we would be as poor as them someday and stretching out our hands in the samesame way” (398). They cross a plateau bathing in golden light, with shepherd and flocks of sheep; the pastoral scene looks like biblical tableau. The trek through the mountains marks the high point of the trip (comprehension, catharsis, clarity).

By contrast, Mexico City is a hectic, noisy place with “frantic traffic” that looks like a freak show with “thousands of hipsters in floppy strawhats and longlapeled jackets over bare chests” (403) (change). Before long, Jack becomes ill with dysentery and Neal leaves him in Frank’s care as he announces that his divorce papers have come through and that he returns to his newfound girlfriend in New York. Jack feels deserted, but he accepts Neal’s decision as a natural consequence of his character (consequences).

BOOK FIVE is the epilogue of the narrative. Right after marrying Diane in New York, Neal catches a bus the very same night to once again cross the old continent and seek out his now divorced wife and their two young children in San Francisco. He is “thrice-married, twice-divorced, and living with his second wife” (404) (change, consequences). In New York, Jack meets his future wife Joan and moves in with her (change, consequences). They plan to move to San Francisco and inform Neal of their plans (construction). Neal offers to come and pick them up with a removal truck in six weeks, but he arrives one week later already, in a rather incoherent state of mind. Neal is thrown out by Diane who is pregnant and leaves for the west coast again. The last time Jack sees Neal is when his friends refuse to give the restless traveller a ride to the railway station. Looking back through the car window, Jack sees Neal round a corner, “eyes on the street ahead, and bent to it again . . . ragged in a motheaten overcoat” (408) (conclusion).

While he was working on the early drafts of *On the Road*, Kerouac was also reading and writing poetry. As a result, he noticed that his prose had become different, richer in texture. He wanted his book to be “a novel like poetry, or rather, a narrative poem, an epos in mosaic” (qtd. in Kupetz 87). Walt Whitman strongly influenced Kerouac’s writing. Especially his “*Song of the Open Road*” made a great impression on Kerouac. Whitman’s identification with the oppressed resounded with Kerouac’s empathy for the poor and down-trodden in his own era: “None but are accepted, none but shall be dear to me” (qtd. in Maher 6). Whitman’s use of vernacular language is echoed in the slang we hear from the mouths of the various characters in *On the Road*, as is his pre-occupation with America as an almost mythical country, in which the land itself is imbued with a divine spirit – a theme that

is further explored in *The Dharma Bums* and which is at least partially responsible for the rise in ecological consciousness a decade later.

Other American literary influences can be discovered in this 'great American novel'. The exploration of the open road through the heartland of America also reflects the journey of Huck and Jim in *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, whose flight towards freedom is a literary precursor of Jack's attempts at liberation from conventional morality. Similarly, we can discern the influence of Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye* which appeared in 1951, as Kerouac was working on his typescript from the scroll. Holden Caulfield's disdain for the "phoniness" he encounters in society, as well as his artistic inclinations, are mirrored in Kerouac's urge to escape from the drab realities of life and his romantic search for a better life and a different way to live it. The landscapes (and cityscapes) he travels through are reminiscent of those described by Steinbeck in *Grapes of Wrath* ten years earlier. Unchanged by the passing of World War 2, this is the America Kerouac discovers as he heads west towards California. Last but not least, there is more than a trace of Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* in the depiction of the corrupted American Dream and the language used to describe this, particularly in the final passage of the novel, as Kerouac sits on a pier (only the green light across the water is missing) in New York, facing west overlooking the Hudson River, pondering the fate of Cassidy, himself and all of the people across the vast continent:

. . . all that raw land that rolls in one unbelievable huge bulge over to the West Coast, all that road going, all the people dreaming in the immensity of it, and in Iowa I know by now the evening star must be drooping and shedding her sparkler dims on the prairie, which is just before the coming of complete night that blesses the earth, darkens all rivers, cups the peaks in the west and

folds the last and final shore in, and nobody, just nobody knows what's going to happen to anybody besides the forlorn rags of growing old, I think of Neal Cassady, I even think of Old Neal Cassady the father we never found, I think of Neal Cassady, I think of Neal Cassady. (408)

In *Vanity of Duluoaz*, Jack Kerouac noted "I decided to become a great writer, write a huge novel explaining everything to everybody, try to keep my father alive and happy". If the child is the father of the man, then perhaps the search for a missing father can be seen as the search for oneself, and the wish to keep a father alive can be interpreted as a wish for self-preservation. Whether Kerouac succeeded in the latter is a matter of opinion, but he certainly came a long way in realizing the former.

7. Conclusion

In the preceding chapters, I have at length discussed the epiphanic aspects in Joyce's *Portrait* and Kerouac's *Road*. The scope and length of this thesis forbid me to explore other literary works to the same extent, and I am therefore compelled to limit my discussion of other texts to a minimum. Further exploration of this field of study will have to be done in the course of future research. English literature abounds with examples of epiphanies: George Eliot's *Middlemarch*, Virginia Woolf's *To the Lighthouse*, Saul Bellow's *Seize the Day*, John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath*, John Williams' *Stoner*. In the context of this paper, I have had to make choices as to which works were most eligible for analysis.

In order to demonstrate convincingly the validity of my dynamic epiphanic model I do feel, however, that it is necessary to give further evidence by briefly referring to a few other texts that in my view fit this model and which could well have been the subject of closer scrutiny and a more detailed reading. I will attempt to do so by providing a schematic overview of how plot elements from these texts correspond to the various phases of the proposed epiphanic model (see figure 4). In particular, I want to apply this method to Jack Kerouac's *The Dharma Bums*, Robert Pirsig's *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance*, and Alice Walker's *The Color Purple*. The columns in the grid show key events and plot elements from the books discussed in this paper; in the case of *Portrait* I have added a second column to illustrate that certain cycles run semi-parallel to each other. The rows in the grid show how the various events and elements correspond to the stages of the model. At the top of the grid an indication is given of the total number of completed epiphanic cycles in the novel. The wordings of the references to *Portrait* and *Road* have been taken

from my own readings, to facilitate identification in the text. In the case of *The Dharma Bums*, *Zen and the Art*, and *The Color Purple*, I have provided keywords and phrases summarizing the relevant developments in the narrative, or direct quotes from the text accompanied with page references.

The Dharma Bums is an interesting candidate for further study as it is the natural successor to *On the Road* - its focus on spirituality and the landscape a distinctive shift away from drink, drugs, cars and cities, and yet a narrative permeated with epiphanic experiences. The development of the central character has notable similarities with that of *Portrait*, in that the reader becomes well aware of the limited life span and briefly lasting effect of many of the epiphanies, which are prone to fade quickly with the swinging of moods, the shifting of awareness, and the passing of time.

Zen and the Art has several connections with Kerouac's work: its subject matter of the road trip, its pre-occupation with forms of mysticism, and its relevance to the generation that grew up in the 60s and 70s. Without going into a comparative study of the way Zen Buddhism is treated by both authors, it is nevertheless obvious that many of the notions in Zen Buddhism relate directly to the epiphanic experience: it is, after all, only a few steps from Satori and Enlightenment to Epiphany. As Tigges has noted:

Referring to D.T. Suzuki's *Zen Buddhism* . . . [Beja] enumerates the eight characteristics of Satori or Enlightenment, which are: irrationality, intuitive insight, authority (that is, irrefutable by logic), momentariness, affirmation, absoluteness, impersonality, and exaltation. These qualities correspond closely to what is essential (the first four items) or optional in the literary epiphany (Tigges 13).

Another interesting parallel between *Zen and the Art* and *The Dharma Bums* is the inclusion of a mountain hike in which the top is not quite reached, and yet an epiphany does manifest itself. Just as Ray gives up following Japhy although he has the top within sight, the narrator of *Zen and the Art* decides to abandon the climb to the peak as he is worried that the lack of trust in his own sanity might jeopardize his son's safety.

I have added Alice Walker's *The Color Purple* as it is another fitting illustration of my epiphanic model. This novel clearly shows a significant development of character, as the protagonist reaches a new level of understanding after going through a long series of trials and tribulations. Once again, character development runs parallel to psychological self-realization.

For a complete overview of how these five novels correspond to the stages in the epiphanic model, I refer the reader to the schematic representation on the following page.

	Portrait chapter one	Portrait chapter one	Road BOOK ONE	Bums chapters 1-14	Zen	Color
# of complete cycles in novel	at least 5 / whole novel: 1	semi-parallel cycle in chapter	at least 4	3	1	1
character	Stephen as a bright child		Jack meets Neal	"Dharma Bum ... religious wanderer" (2)	narrator is (not) the same person as Phaedrus	Celie is a poor, uneducated, black girl
context	family home and boarding school		circle of writer friends in NYC	studying Buddhism and partying	motorcycle trip with son Chris, John and Sylvia	living in black community in rural Georgia
conflict	frightening surroundings	tension around dinner table	going against mother's advice	mountain hike, Morley forgets sleeping bag	disagreements about motorcycle maintenance	physically and sexually abused by her father
complication	feeling ill	division over politics and religion	rift between factions in Denver	Morley returns to drain motor, Ray irritated	haunted by recollections of Phaedrus' past	giving birth to two children, taken from her
confusion		not knowing which side to take	frustrated with his love life	"Oh why did I ever let myself into this?" (62)	concerns that Chris may be mentally unstable	married to Mr. , being attracted to Shug
crisis	sent to infirmary	slamming the door	finding it impossible to write	"I'm staying right here. It's too high!" (62)	Chris' behaviour becomes more and more erratic	Celie frequently beaten by Mr. , Sofia jailed
compliance	imagining dying	being "terrorstricken"	accepting his lonely fate	"I suddenly got up" (64)	decision to abandon the ascent of the top	Celie accepts her fate, Sofia mayor's maid
comprehension	realising he could die on a sunny day	realizing father is emotionally vulnerable	with Bea: "be heavingoing" / <i>novel as a whole represents one long epiphany</i>	"you can't fall off a mountain" (64)	"Zen is the 'spirit of the valley', not the mountaintop" (249)	aided by Shug, Celie discovers Nettie's letters in locked trunk
catharsis	being moved to tears		taken aback by the phony L.A. atmosphere	"I really felt proud" (65)	"Quality is the ... source of all subjects and objects" (251)	realizing the level of abuse she has been suffering
clarity	recalling a funeral song	discovering life is challenging	leading the simple life	dancing from boulder to boulder (67)	first indication Phaedrus was in fact not mad	learning the truth about her relatives
change	being virtually carried away by angels	learning to dare question authority	Jack cannot provide for his girl and her child	blood clots have gone from the veins in his feet	past watershed, heading towards the ocean	moving to Memphis with Shug to start a new life
consequences		mustering up courage to plead with rector	leaving Bea and moving back east again	"a world full of rucksack wanderers" (73)	realizing Chris must know of mental make-up	becoming economically independent
construction		pleading his case	Jack recuperates from his travels	"thoughts not electrified to the Master Switch" (79)	developing idea of 'gumption', work on relation with Chris	developing relationships: Shug, Albert, new companion
conclusion		growing more confident	back at his mother's place	buying a kit of wandering equipment	reconciliation of Phaedrus/narrator, and son/father	Nettie's return from Africa with Celie's children
continuation		better equipped for challenges ahead	end of BOOK ONE, start of BOOK TWO	preparing to take to the road again	resuming trip, heading towards San Francisco	finding a better life with her new family
character	the elation of vindication		celebrating Xmas with relatives			
context	meeting the demands of life		family life in Virginia			
conflict	decline of the family's fortunes		Neal shows up unexpectedly			
complication	forced to sell family property		Neal repeatedly getting stopped for speeding			
and so on...						

figure 4: schematic grid showing phases within epiphanic cycles as featured in the novels discussed

The Zen anecdote on the chopping of wood (and chopping more wood afterwards) referred to in the opening pages of this thesis exemplifies what we have seen in the novels under review here. “When you get to the top of a mountain keep climbing”, Kerouac has his character Japhy Ryder say in *The Dharma Bums* (64). An epiphany is never an end in itself; it is a doorway through which we move into a new reality only to meet new challenges.

Epiphanies mark the essential moments in which we learn about ourselves and our place in the world. Pieces of the puzzle fall together and we see a part of the larger picture. Nichols has noted that “[t]he epiphanic imagination reveals at once the world and the mind’s ability to make sense of the world” (*Poetics* 143), and “[i]n a sense, epiphany records the act of the mind noticing its own activity” (“Linguistic Moments” 468). It can even be said that awareness during epiphany includes the awareness that one is having an epiphany!

It has also become apparent that epiphanies are not only mental phenomena; they have a physical component as well. Emotions will translate themselves to various parts of the body and can involve any of the different senses. The epiphany will not limit itself to the interior aspects of the experience, it tends to reach outward; it is expansive, not introspective. It tries to encompass all that comes into its scope of consciousness. It is not a narrowing down of awareness; it is a widening of the field of vision. It builds on the consciousness given, adding a new layer of information. It is always more than the sum of its parts. It is an acute form of self-awareness that makes us grow as sentient human beings. “Epiphany helps to build a self” (Nichols *Poetics* 47).

By superimposing my epiphanic model on developments in Joyce’s *Portrait*, I have tried to demonstrate that the novel as a whole represents a full cycle of C-changes, while the separate chapters also constitute complete cycles, logically following up on one another. The

story of Stephen's coming-of-age makes the reader witness to a process of self-actualization in which the protagonist grows into what, in essence, he is already.

I have argued that *On the Road* in its entirety can be seen to represent one long epiphany and that its long period of gestation can be interpreted as a cycle of C-changes. The four cross-country trips that Kerouac makes with his companions are equally four complete epiphanic cycles. Within the structure of the narrative, marked by moments of wild ecstasy and deep despair, we discern further cycles of rising and falling action, like eddies in a stream. It has also become apparent that the depiction of the hectic scenes and the frantic forward flight in *On the Road* was almost organically succeeded by the start of another epiphanic cycle in the creation of *The Dharma Bums*, leading the way into a new level of awareness for both author and reader.

The life of a human being is a continuing process of self-development, ever forward and upward, inexorably moving towards a higher state of consciousness. Tellingly, we have noted that both the novels discussed are semi-autobiographical. In *On the Road*, personal epiphanies compelled the protagonist to confide his experiences to paper so the reader can partake of them. Both Joyce and Kerouac kept extensive journals and drew up lists of memorable events or interesting observations for future reference. It was Virginia Woolf who wrote that it is the art of the novelist to "reconstruct ... in words" the moment when "a whole vision ... seemed contained in that moment" (in Tigges 42). It is at these moments that life is at its most intense, concentrated and compressed, the way prose is condensed into poetry, as words flow spontaneously into the mind and stark notions appear, brightly backlit by the light of revelation. It is thus that man finds out who he is, as it is by this process that literature is created, showing the way forward. And the journey never ends...

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Illustration on front page: 16th century wood engraving by anonymous artist, featured in

L'Atmosphere: Météorologie Populaire by Camille Flammarion, Paris, 1888. The caption translates as: "a medieval missionary tells that he has found the point where heaven and earth meet".

figure 1: original visual representation of model – Cycle of C-Changes

figure 2: revised visual representation of model – Cycle of C-Changes

figure 3: table of characters, events and chronology, 1946-51, for a proto-version of the

"Road" novel. In: Gewirtz, Isaac. *Beatific Soul: Jack Kerouac on the Road*.

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figure 4: schematic grid showing phases within epiphanic cycles featured in novels discussed