The relation between Joyce and language has always been approached with regard to his remarkable craftsmanship in rhetoric. The reader who has ever taken a look into *Finnegans Wake* or *Ulysses* (which includes in it an episode, "The Oxen of the Sun," where "the theme of embryonic growth is reflected in a series of often brilliant parodies or pastiches of English prose style from Anglo-Saxon days to the twentieth century."\(^{(1)}\)) probably remembers being overwhelmed by the encyclopaedical way Joyce manipulates and exhausts every kind of vocabulary and of rhetorical figure. Indeed one can never be sure of counting up the number and variety of them. As a result of the fact, however, that most of our attention has been confined to his rhetoric and terminology, a more important aspect of Joycean literature remains almost unheeded: a fundamental relation between Joyce and language itself. By "fundamental," I mean not to regard language as mere vehicle for literary expression. It can best be defined by an analogy with pictorial art. The

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*NOTE ON REFERENCES*

Quotations from Joyce's own writings are referred to the following editions.


analogy is drawn as simply as that a colour is to a painter what language is to a literary artist. This can, however, hold so long as all the implications it entails as corollary are borne in mind. The critical point where it becomes most misleading for literary application is in our association with a painter who tries every possible colour to externalize on his canvas the beauty which has been inspired into him. This is the wrong, or at least inaccurate, way for us to take. For the conclusion to be reached at the end of this way is nothing more than that language is mere vehicle for literary expression as colours are for pictorial one. The fault is due to the fact that the colour we are thinking of here is a material one, namely pigments. It is not until we see that colours are, to a painter, the “ineluctable modality of the visible” for his inspiration as well as the means for his expression that the fundamental relation of a literary artist with language will reveal itself in the whole aspect. A painter is not only provided with the means of his expression by colours, but the inspiration itself has come to him only through colour. In short, colour is the source as well as the medium of his inspiration. So with language. To a literary artist, language is not only the means to express his literary inspiration with, but the very thing that bestows a literary inspiration upon him. Joyce seems to have brought upon himself the misfortune to have this important aspect of his relations with language overlooked on account of his unequalled flourish of literary styles and rhetorical figures. We have paid attention only to the question what command Joyce had of language, neglecting to ask what command language had of Joyce. A short study to be carried on here along the line of Stephen’s spiritual progress is meant to be a little attempt to cast a light upon this aspect of Joycean literature, by following the growing maturity of Stephen’s attitude toward language.

In the fourth chapter of A Portrait, an “epiphany” happens to Stephen

(2) Ulysses, p. 42.
himself. "By an epiphany," a passage in *Stephen Hero* of which *A Portrait* is a finished version reads, "he meant a sudden spiritual manifestation." If Stephen calls the moment an "epiphany" when a familiar object reveals itself "all at once" as "what it is," the moment when a banter is thrown upon him from his fellow students who make fun of strange correspondence between Stephen's name and that of a famous legendary artificer, Daedalus, is the occasion of his own epiphany. What Stephen finds behind "the clock of the Ballast Office," he now finds in himself. For, although the banter was "not new to him," it has now suddenly manifested to his spirit "what he is." "Their banter was not new to him and now it flattered his mild proud sovereignty. Now, as never before, his strange name seemed to him a prophecy." Despite the suddenness of an epiphanical moment, one should not speak of it as one speaks of something like thunder and lightning. An inspirational stroke of an epiphany requires some readiness on the part of those who are to be struck, while a thunderbolt makes no choice of its target. It has, therefore, less in common with a thunderbolt than with the intuitional recognition of God's presence which is only possible with those who are most ready to believe. Stephen's epiphany should be understood to include all of these implications. Just as the God's presence can never be realized by a blank mind alien to religious enthusiasm, so the realization of "whatness" is never actualized by the mind which is not sufficiently ready to expect the revelation by an epiphany. The fact that epiphany which is the key-word to Stephen's aesthetics in *Stephen Hero* is withdrawn in *A Portrait* has been provocative various inferences from critics. The truth is, however, that Stephen Dedalus introduces into his aesthetics the more general and secular turn of expression, the soul's "luminous silent stasis" to be-

(3) *Stephen Hero*, p. 216.
(4) *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, p. 173.
attained at the last stage of the apprehension of beauty. No need to say that it is intended to substitute for an "epiphany." In this case, too, the final stasis of the soul can not be reached without treading preparatory stages, an analytical apprehension of integratas and a synthetic apprehension of consonantia. It is not until these stages of analysis and synthesis have been passed that "that supreme quality of beauty, the clear radiance of the esthetic image, is apprehended." The point above can be restated by saying that an epiphany is not like a thunderbolt which strikes the least expectant, but like the moment when a theosophist is pierced through his person by some divine revelation, in that the latter must be spiritually ready so as to expect the instant. The moment at which Stephen suddenly wakes to his destined vocation of an artist through the name of a fabulous artificer would be nothing if it were not an epiphany which happened to himself. If so, as I have already said, nor would his epiphany have called on him without expectation on his part. That is, his epiphany might not be possible either if his mind were not ready for it. That the epiphanical moment has come to him as it should is proved by a phrase which he breathes in an almost unconcerned manner. "A day of dappled seaborne clouds."

The divine tidings told through the epiphany convinces him that his vocation is an artist who "forges an imperishable being." In the case of Stephen, art means literary art. And literary art could have no other means to create the "imperishable being" than language. Thus, in order to be ready for the moment of the epiphany which will tell him to be a literary artist, he is required to have attained to the complete recognition of language. In short, only after full recognition of language has been accomplished by Stephen, the epiphany becomes possible. If we follow the course of this syllogism to its end, we can gain the conclusion that Stephen has done it

(5) Ibid., p. 217.
before the epiphany visits him. The following passage is quoted from the part which goes just ahead of the epiphany scene. Stephen reaches the last stage of the recognition of language in the following manner.

——A day of dappled seaborne clouds.

The phrase and the day and the scene harmonised in a chord. Words. Was it their colours? He allowed them to glow and fade, hue after hue: sunrise gold, the russet and green of apple orchards, azure of waves, the greyfringed fleece of clouds. No, it was not their colours: it was the poise and balance of the period itself. Did he then love the rhythmic rise and fall of words better than their associations of legend and colour? Or was it that, being as weak of sight as he was shy of mind, he drew less pleasure from the reflection of the glowing sensible world through the prism of a language manycoloured and richly storied than from the contemplation of an inner world of individual emotions mirrored perfectly in a lucid supple periodic prose?

Although the aura of the phrase, as Stephen asserts, lies in "the poise and balance of the period," his own recognition of language comes to the conclusion only in the wobbling form of an interrogative sentence, as contrasted with a periodic sentence. One should not, however, take it as a proof of his indecision. On the contrary, it is nothing but this undetermined alternative that shows the most important phase in his recognition of language. For his interrogation is not of the kind that asks for a specific answer, but of the kind that is satisfied with asking in itself. According to his observation, language is like a prism which reflects the reality of an outer world and at the same time it is also like a mirror on which the images of his individual emotions are shown. But the essential quality of language would evade one's recognition, if one were to try the alternative of one or the other. The reality of an objective world, language, and individual emotions—the
relation consisting in these three terms is not so simple as to be poised in a propositional period. It can only be preserved in terms of complex interaction, or in terms of paradox. Stephen's final recognition of language proposed in the self-questioning interrogation reflects this fact.

As for paradox I will enlarge upon it later in reference to Joycean symbolism. Here, therefore, it seems more than enough to observe that Stephen's spiritual progress is advanced along the line of development of his language-awareness. In general, as Robert Scholes rightly suggests, a biographical novel depends upon accumulation of episodes for development of its plot, or for characterization of a protagonist. It follows that success in this narrative style depends on the organic, not mechanic, construction of succeeding episodes. The various episodes through which Stephen finds his way can be integrated only when his progress is seen from the viewpoint which regards it as leading to the full recognition of language. How has it been reached and what does his paradoxical proposition mean? Led by these lights, to follow Stephen's growth of language-awareness and, through it, attempt a tentative approach to the fundamental relation of Joyce with language is the purpose of my present essay.

II

What does it mean to recognize language as it is? It is a matter of course that one must understand what language is per se—that is, take it not as a mere auditory sensation—before one sets about formulating any idea of language. It is true that literary pieces which are works of art should not be treated with the aid of any method which belongs to a scientific sphere. On the present occasion, however, it is also true that in setting the starting

point for the growth of his hero’s attitude toward language Joyce paid so high an esteem to a scientific accuracy that we can hardly forbid ourselves to apply some linguistic approach to it. For Stephen’s language-awareness sets off from such a critical moment when language is on the verge of passing from mere phonetic effect into something like a symbol which depends upon a complicated relation between meaning and sound. The first page of this novel finds Stephen being on the stage where one is conscious enough to distinguish language from other natural sounds, but not so much as to understand the complex function of language as symbol. This is testified by the fact that he identifies himself with “baby tuckoo” in father’s tale and makes his song read “O, the green woothe bothe.”

To understand language per se is to see that language is dependent on its symbolic quality for conveying a meaning, and that the symbolic relation between a word and a thing it stands for is not intrinsic, but “imputed.” But this does not always mean that one must recognize this essential quality of language on the intellectual level or in terms of logic. As most of us have already known through our own experiences, it is recognized partly transcendentally and partly empirically. In their collaborated work, The Meaning of Meaning, Ogden and Richards observe that the present confusion of the concepts of meaning has been brought about by indifference to the essential quality of language as symbol, especially to the indirectness of the relation between a word and its referent. They put forward by way of illustration of their argument a figure of a triangle which consists of three apexes such as symbol and reference and referent. According to them, re-establishment of the concepts of meaning in a symbolic soil is the only way to explore a new possibility of the agglutinated language. And to do so, “the imputed relation” of the base of the triangle (i.e. between symbol

(8) A Portrait, p. 7.
and referent) must be understood, they say.

Between a thought and a symbol causal relations hold. When we speak, the symbolism we employ is caused partly by the reference we are making and partly by social and psychological factors.....

Between the Thought and the Referent there is also a relation; a more or less direct (as when we think about or attend to a coloured surface we see), or indirect (as when we ‘think of’ or ‘refer to’ Napoleon),....

Between the symbol and the referent there is no relevant relation other than the indirect one, which consists in its being used by someone to stand for a referent. Symbol and Referent, that is to say, are not connected directly (and when, for grammatical reasons, we imply such a relation, it will merely be an imputed, as opposed to a real relation) but only indirectly round the two sides of the triangle.

To put it in a simpler way, there is no direct relation between “dog’ the word” and “certain common objects in our street,” and the symbol-function of the word entirely depends upon the act of reference. To acknowledge language per se means to realize this fact.

How one’s awareness of language grows to this recognition is better illustrated when seen in comparison with one’s perception of colour. As is the case with most of the consciousnesses just waken, colour precedes language in functioning as symbol. While language requires a more or less intellectual effort such as Interpretation so that it may function as symbol, colour can do it only through visual sensation. To a rudimentary consciousness colour speaks more than language does: “sound and shape and colour which are the prison gates of our soul.” One whose symbol-awareness is on this stage,

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(10) Loc. cit.
(11) A Portrait, p. 211.
as is Stephen's, is likely to think of colour and sound as related to the thing they refer to more directly than language is. That *suck* [the word really means someone like a flatterer or a henchman instead of slops or dirty water is the fact hard for Stephen to understand, because the auditory sensation of the word associates him more with the sound of drainage in the lavatory than with Simon Moonan.

Suck was a queer word. The fellow called Simon Moonan that name because Simon Moonan used to tie the prefect's false sleeves behind his back and the prefect used to let on to be angry. But the sound was ugly. Once he had washed his hands in the lavatory of the Wicklow Hotel and his father pulled the stopper up by the chain after and the dirty water went down through the hole in the basin. And when it had all gone down slowly the hole in the basin had made a sound like that: suck. Only louder.

In order that language can work as a medium to communicate some meaning, the relation between sound and meaning which is "imputed" or, not infrequently, incongruous with sensory impression must be apprehended. In short, language must be Interpreted while colour and sound have only to be Perceived. This is why green the colour has referred to Parnell to Stephen before *suck* the word means someone like a flatterer. Green is connected in Stephen with Parnell through sensory impression while a word must await Stephen's recognition of language *per se* to signify a specific thing. "Fleming had a box of crayons and one night during free study he had coloured the earth green and the clouds maroon. That was like the two brushes in Dante's press, the brush with the green velvet back for Parnell and the brush with

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(12) Frank Budgen is one of those who point out the importance of this passage in the sense that it reveals Joyce's inherent interest in language. See *James Joyce and the Making of 'Ulysses'* (London: Oxford University Press, 1972), p. 58.

(13) *A Portrait*, p. 11.

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the maroon velvet back for Michael Davitt."^{(14)}

Mrs. Riordan, called innocently "Dante" by Stephen, is an old lady living with the Stephen's family as governess to Stephen. In this novel, as is implied in her appropriate alias, she later turns into a symbolic figure of futility of religious enthusiasm. The reference of green to Parnell arises from the green velvet which she attached on the back of her brush. But when he who had been once a national hero was deserted by Irish people, especially by those faithful to the Christian creeds, she removed it. Stephen's attitude toward religion and politics is being moulded under such circumstances. What is relevant here, however, is the fact that green is more easily understood by Stephen to stand for Parnell than the suck is to stand for a flatterer.

It is in his attitude toward Parnell that we find Joyce coming nearest to Stephen. It is by no means rare that we hear the author's hurray of encouragement when Stephen declares his admiration for Parnell. "Ivy Day in the Committee Room" in Dubliners and a Christmas dinner scene in A Portrait are memorial tributes dedicated to him by Joyce. Seen from the literary point of view, Joyce's interest in Parnell is reflected in the theme of "betrayal." This is one of the most important themes in Joyce's fiction, in that it offers a linkage to recurring leit-motifs. In A Portrait, for instance, this theme is present in the Count of Monte Cristo whose adventures absorb an adolescent Stephen as well as in God's betrayer, Lucifer, with whom Stephen identifies himself after he determined to abandon the religious office. The eye sensitive enough can also detect its variation in his friendship through the haze of Stephen's self-conscious confessions effused in the collection of his fragmentary notes in the conclusive part of this novel. There it is, only too evanescently, hinted that Stephen is betrayed by Cranly, his only friend, about a girl. But it is in Ulysses that this theme constitutes

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(14) Ibid., p. 15.
the important integral part in characterization. "Agenbite of inwit__(15)___"—Stephen's goading conscience due to his betrayal of his mother in her death-bed—becomes an axis around which the action of the Stephen in *Ulysses* revolves. Though critics do not approve it without some reservation in spite of the zeal on the part of the author with which he tried to proclaim himself as a disciple of Ibsen, his only play, *Exiles*, also depends upon this "betrayal" theme for the resource of its dramatic actions. Richard Rowan, hero or anti-hero, no matter how you may call him, deliberately condones, rather instigates, his wife as she is flirting with an old friend of his, Robert Hand. The forces to move the dramatic actions onward are generated by the strained situations involving Richard who, like the Stephen in *Ulysses*, has betrayed his mother and, now in his turn, expects or rather anticipates his wife to betray him. According to Richard Ellmann who compiled the biography of James Joyce with much more facts and informations than any other work, Joyce himself was obsessed with this idea and was fond of thinking of himself betrayed or victimatized. Whether it is relevant or not to relate it to any sexual inclination such as masochism, I am not so sure as is Darcy O'Brien. But one would hopelessly miss the point if one were not to notice the theme as it underlies Joyce's view of human relations.

Let me return to the chief concern of my discussion. Colour and language alike work as symbol. In the case of language, the act of reference ought to be performed in intellectual sphere—that is, it is like deciphering which requires intellectual activities such as Memory and Interpretation—while a particular colour as symbol is *directly* connected with the entity it refers to, because its act of reference is done through sensation instead of intelli—

__(15) *Ulysses*, p. 22 et passim.
gence. This can be simply restated by saying that the stage where red the
colour is understood to refer to a dangerous situation is reached earlier than
that where danger the word is. Stephen's attitude toward language is made
frequent use of through the novel by way of an index to his spiritual progress.
So that in the earlier part of the first chapter, Joyce puts Stephen on the
transitory stage where the indirectness between a word and the thing it refers
to, as contrasted with colour's directness, is seen to irritate Stephen's rudimentary consciousness. "What did that mean, to kiss?" "Tower of Ivory, they used to say, House of Gold! How could a woman be a tower of ivory or a house of gold?" "Smuggling. All the fellows were silent: and Athy said: And that's why.... What did that mean about the smuggling in the square?"
So long as one abides on the stage where language as symbol is understood
to be in direct relation with the referent, one thinks it unreasonable that
the auditory impression of the word does not correspond to the meaning it
really signifies. So does Stephen, to whom it seems more natural that suck
the word should mean slops. Then how and when does one attain to the
point where the consciousness preoccupied with the directness between a
symbol and its referent becomes capable of apprehending the real quality of
language? It must await the moment when the mediums, which an immature
language-awareness has been considering as likelier to transmit a specific
meaning than language, fail in performing its symbol-function. It is through
this failure that will make the real character of language realized. Let me
take the case of the sense of touch. In that the act of reference is done
through sensation, instead of intellectual activity, the sense of touch works
as symbol no less than colour and sound do. A particular feeling of touch
carries a particular meaning without the need to be intellectually interpreted.

(18) A Portrait, p. 15.
(19) Ibid., p. 37.
(20) Ibid., p. 43.
It is through the failure of the sense of touch to function as symbol that Stephen’s language-awareness is to be prompted forward. Stephen, who had his spectacles accidentally broken into pieces by one of his fellows, is exempt from work. Father Doran, prefect of studies, however, ignores his plea by saying it is a mere trick and strikes him with a pandy-bat in punishment. Joyce describes Father Doran as follows as he examines the fingers of his victim in a sadistic manner before hitting them.

He felt the touch of the prefect’s fingers as they had steadied his hand and at first he had thought he was going to shake hands with him because the fingers were soft and firm: but then in an instant he had heard the swish of the soutane sleeve and the crash.

Prefect’s pandy-bat gives Stephen both mental and physical pains. His pride as well as his hands is wounded. But at the same time this violent performance has given to him the occasion for real recognition of language: the occasion for Stephen to find that the symbolic mediums such as colour, sound, and touch are not what he has been thinking they were. For Stephen has been thinking that they were directly connected with what they stood for. Cold, a sense of touch, for instance, was directly referring to something to avert. In this sense the touch had been a kind of symbol. Similarly the touches such as ‘soft’ or ‘firm’ had been established as symbol so that each touch had its own meaning. As for ‘soft’, the referent that the touch stood for was anything but cruel. It always referred to something ‘gentle’. In other words, ‘soft’ which was originally a modality of sensory response was serving as symbol and was maintaining for its referent the meaning of ‘gentle.’ The equation of ‘soft’ with ‘gentle,’ based on sensory impression, had to, of course, be confirmed by experience in order that the touch might always mean a particular meaning. Experience which had that equation endorsed was pro-

vided by the touch of Eileen's fingers. "Eileen had long white hands. One evening when playing tig she had put her hands over his eyes: long and white and thin and cold and soft. That was ivory; a cold white thing. That was the meaning of Tower of Ivory." As was cited before, Stephen could not understand why the phrase meant a woman. But, as you see here, the sensation of the fingers' touch makes it possible for him to understand what language failed to convince him of. This is another case where language with circuitous reference was preceded by the mediums with sensory reference. Through words, Stephen could not understand why "Tower of Ivory" should refer to a woman, but through the touch of Eileen's hands he could. Thus 'soft' the touch came to mean 'gentle' to him. "The white fattish hands were not cruel but gentle." Stephen may have been surprised a great deal at the prefect's pandy-bat, because the soft touch of the prefect's finger should have meant 'gentle.' Whatever the touch referred to must be far from cruel. So he thought for a moment the prefect was going to shake hands with him. A single stroke of the pandy-bat is enough to make his concept of the direct relation between the touch and the referent come to nothing. Now 'soft' the touch has become unable to work as the symbol referring to 'gentle.' Stephen has found that sensory impression can not be relied upon for reference. This surprise, or disappointment as you might say, is the gate to the recognition of language *per se*. The failure of the touch to maintain the direct relation, which was the cause of his surprise' prompts him to notice the essential quality of language whose symbol-function depends upon nothing but the indirect relation between a symbol and its referent. Stephen owes his recognition of language to a single stroke of the pandy-bat.


III

The language-awareness which has advanced so far as to recognize language per se is now going on to its new aspect: language as prism which reflects the reality of an outer world as distinguished from one’s inner world of individual emotions. This is the step to its destination of his symbolistic outlook toward language.

To begin with, however, what is it that is called reality? We have been so accustomed to such a familiar expression as “a stern reality” that we sometimes find ourselves thinking as if what we call reality were as solid as anything we can put our hand on. Really the concept of reality has been as ambiguous as ever. To define the concept in abstract terms is, however, what a philosopher has to undertake. Suffice it, here, to show how reality presents itself to Stephen.

The second chapter reveals Stephen indulging himself in reading every book within his reach. He is as yet too immature, though sensitive enough for his age, to understand what reality is. So the fictional worlds in his books are more immediate to him than the realities of an outer world. As is the case with Joe Dillon and the boy of the first person singular in an episode of “An Encounter” in Dubliners, the world in which Mercedes or Napoleon lives appears to Stephen more real than “the dull phenomenon of Dublin” surrounding him. But they are not allowed to abide in the world of their phantasies, for an outer world intrudes more and more into it. They can not prevent it from entangling them in its net. And that world never comes without inflicting disillusion on them. As, in the case of the boys in “An Encounter,” their attempt of escape to seek for “real adventures” ended in such an anticlimax as an encounter with “a queer old josser,” so the realities

(24) Ibid., p. 80.
of the outer world always notify themselves to Stephen as disillusion to his phantasy. "He felt the world give the lie rudely to his phantasy." His adventure in search of Mercedes also ends in an encounter with a prostitute. So it is through disillusion that he comes to know there exists the world other than the one familiar to him through the books he read. What is peculiar to the Stephen's case is in the twofold activities of language to help him understand what the reality is. In the first place, he becomes aware of the presence of the real world through its disparity from the fictitious world built of language. Secondly it is likewise on language that he relies to know the real world. "Words which he did not understand he said over and over to himself till he had learnt them by heart: and through them he had glimpses of the real world about him." (27)

"Sad human ineffectualness"—this is the reality reflected to him through the prism of language. The glimpses which he had of the real world through words are not much more than the futility of human lives.

The second chapter begins its overture with an episode of two old men and closes with that of Stephen in the arms of a prostitute. Senility of the old men embodies the theme of the end of a human life and Stephen's initiation into sex that of its beginning. Constructed on such a contrasting opposition, the main subject of this chapter—sad human ineffectualness—comes up conspicuously. Though they may seem desultory at first, the succeeding episodes will turn out to be connected with each other by thematic linkage when you read it over. You may well say that the opening episode about Uncle Charles and the following one about Mike Flynn who trains Stephen in running are only linked together with so slight an expedient as tobacco.

(26) A Portrait, p. 90.
(27) Ibid., p. 64.
(28) Ibid., p. 99.
“Uncle Charles smoked such black twist.... (29) But this is only the result that your eye has been detained by the facts on the surface. The undertone running through these episodes will evade us, if we only attend to the superficial linkage.

Stephen often glanced with mistrust at his trainer's flabby stubble-covered face, as it bent over the long stained fingers through which he rolled his cigarette, and with pity at the mild lustreless blue eyes which would look up suddenly from the task and gaze vaguely into the blue distance while the long swollen fingers ceased their rolling and grains- and fibres of tobacco fell back into the pouch.

In sharp contrast with the sermon on Hell delivered by the dean in which "grains" are referred to so that the boys may imagine how preposterous an idea of eternity is, here the grains fallen through the fingers are, by way of the old man's paralytic conditions bordering on death, a symbol of ephemerality of a human life. Moreover, the old man's name, Mike Flynn, reminds us of the late Reverend Flynn in "The Sisters", the first story in Dubliners. Collocation of them evinces that the author's scheme lies in depicting an immature soul as it is confounded at the reality of death. We need not ask ourselves whether the late "Rev. James Flynn" in the short story can be identified with Mike Flynn in the novel. Whether the late priest and Stephen's trainer were modelled on the same person or not, it is true that they are playing the same rôle in confronting the immature understanding with the most difficult fact in life, namely death. "Even as he raised his large-trembling hand to his nose little clouds of smoke dribbled through his fingers

(29) Ibid., p. 61.
(30) Ibid., p. 62.
(31) Loc. cit.
(32) cf. "For ever! For all eternity! Not for a year or for an age but for ever. Try to imagine the awful meaning of this. You have often seen the sand on the seashore How fine are its tiny grains!" (my italics) Ibid., p. 135.
over the front of his coat." "The Sisters' is a story about a boy who meets for the first time in his life the death of a person familiar to him. As Stephen tries to have glimpses of the real world by saying words over and over, he draws on a word, "paralysis," to understand what death means. "Every night as I gazed up at the window I said softly to myself the word paralysis." At first, as the word sounds strange to him like "the word simony in the Catechism," so a fact of death is incomprehensible for him. In this sense the incomprehensibility of the word reflects the mysteriousness of death. Afterwards, in the room where the sisters are keeping vigils, he meets the priest lying in a coffin whose face is now "very truculent, grey and massive." This is the moment when his concept of death formed by language is brought face to face with the reality of death. One would, however, make a mistake if one were to think that his understanding of death through the word would come to nothing when he saw the dead with his own eyes. The recognition of reality through a word is not of the kind that compromises with experience. A concept of some fact gained through a word is not corrected by experience. The reverse is the case, here at least. One's experience is not registered as a criterion of judgment unless it falls within the frame of the concept provided in advance through a word. The boy's concept of death through the word paralysis, therefore, still holds true even after he met the dead. For, death in the room hovers over the coffin no longer, but over the sisters in whom paralysis abides while the deceased is now free from it. Death has no interest in the dead. Death lurks only in life. And paralysis is nothing but death in life. (to be continued)

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(33) Dubliners, p. 10.
(34) Ibid., p. 7.