No discussion of literature and poetry in connection with the problem of authenticity can fail to evoke their epochal shadow. The shadow of suspicion, namely, that they may serve as a notorious example of the non-authentic. This suspicion goes back, as we know, to Plato's Republic, book 10 in particular, where questions raised in book 3 regarding the inauthenticity of the mimetic arts are taken up again, but now in the form of a dogged interrogation that seeks a decisive verdict against poetry, which would consequently be banned from the state. What unfolds in the dialogues of the 10th book of the Republic could be called, in terms of content, the first debate in Western philosophy on the question of authenticity as it relates to literature and poetry.

It would be worthwhile then to examine the matter more closely. For with this "Platonic" prelude we do not simply add a dimension of philosophical-historical depth to the inquiry. It is rather that, in both the content of the discussion in the Republic and the way it develops, we can already see the formal, rhetorical and typological structures of argumentation that have defined the discourse on authenticity and the position of poetry and literature within it down to the present day. It may not be too far-fetched to sharpen the thesis and argue that all serious reflection on the nature and function of poetry since Plato must eventually address this shadow as well: the question, that is, of whether poetry is something authentic in itself – or can even merely approach such a state – and if so, what constitutes its characteristic features and poetical-
rhetorical resources. In short: what might enable poetry and literature to overleap Plato's shadow. One of these resources – and this is my second thesis, which I hope will find favor in the course of the argument – is what James Joyce called *epiphany*, a poetic device for overriding the differences or closing the gap between poetry and the "authentic" world.

By focusing initially on this earliest debate on the subject of authenticity in – or of – literature, I also shift the emphasis of my paper: The fundamental question of a poetics of the authentic upstages any treatment of the historical and cultural-psychological aspects of the Fin-de-siècle, and the investigation of the epiphanies in Joyce and Hofmannsthal takes on a more pronouncedly exemplary character. This shifting of emphasis toward the poetological issue is further justified by the fact that the historical and psychological aspects of both authors' work have already been amply investigated in the scholarly literature.

I. THE PLATONIC SHADOW: THE INAUTHENTIC OF POETRY

The starting point for the debate in Plato's *Republic* is of course the question of whether poetry should have a place in a state that is governed by reason. To answer this question, the conversation begins with a comprehensive preliminary investigation into the nature and character of mimetic representation in general. "Would you be able to tell me in general what imitation is? You see I myself don't fully understand what it is supposed to mean."¹ In his sarcastic-ironic way Socrates initially suggests a *subito* technique of instantaneous imitation: simply to walk around with a mirror in one's hand.² After this "velociferic" imitation of the world, to use Goethe's term, Socrates launches an earnest systematic and analytic investigation of the question, using the example of the making of a bed to elaborate three different types of creator-producer and corresponding forms of creation, and so to develop a threefold hierarchical model of primary creation on the one hand and secondary and tertiary mimetic creations on the other.

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¹ Plato, *Republic*, Books 6-10, edited and translated by Chris Emlyn-Jones and William Preddy (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press [Loeb Classical Library], 2013), 392-93. μίμησιν ὅλως ἔχοις ἄν μοι εἰπεῖν ὅτι ποτ' ἐστίν; οὐδὲ γάρ τοι αὐτὸς πάντα τι συννοῶ τι βούλεται εἶναι." (595c) [Translator's note: After much comparison I have chosen the new Loeb translation, because its liabilities are no greater than any other, and it has the special virtue of combining the Greek and English texts in a single volume. I have, however, taken the liberty of eliminating the unnecessary and distracting use of quotation marks within quotation marks. The Greek text is based on the Oxford critical text of S. Slings, *Platonis Respublca* (Oxford, 2003), which itself relies principally on J. Burnet's critical text (Oxford, 1900).]

² Plato, *Republic*, 286-87. "Not difficult, I said: one that can be done quickly and anywhere. The quickest perhaps is to take a mirror, if you like, and carry it round with you everywhere. In no time you will make a sun and the heavenly bodies, the earth, yourself, and all the other living creatures, objects and plants, and everything we've just been talking about. – Things we can perceive, yes, he said, but not, I think, the things that are real in the true sense." [...] τὰ γὰρ δεῖ ποιεῖν αὐτὸν τὸν κατοπτρον πανταχῆ: τοκεῖον ἐν τῷ ὅλῳ ποιήσεις καὶ τὰ τὸν ὅλῳ ποιήσεις, τοκεῖον ἐν τῇ γῇ, τοκεῖον δὲ σαυτόν τε καὶ τὰλη ζῶα καὶ σκέτα καὶ φυτά καὶ πάντα ὅσα νυνίσθεν ἔλεγετο. – ναι, ἔρη, φαινόμενα, οὐ μέντοι ὄντα γέ που τῇ ἀληθείᾳ." (596c)
This is already an important step for our subject: For with the focus on the production process and what it is to be an originator, the question of the character of μίμησις merges with the question of "authenticity" in the original sense of the word; indeed the dialogue inquires after the actual, the genuine, the true originator of all being and all things, i.e., the αὐθέντης (authentēs). Admittedly the term αὐθέντης itself does not appear in the text. It does exist of course (in Herodotus, Euripides, Thucydides, et al.) and designates a kind of "originator", though primarily in the criminological sense of a "perpetrator" (murderer, suicide).³ The verb αὐθεντέω means "to exercise full power or authority over something or someone," also "to commit a murder"⁴ – both words, by the way, occurring very rarely in classical Greek: the online Thesaurus Linguae Graecae of the Perseus-Tufts/Liddell-Scott gives for the substantive only forty-one occurrences out of 13,763,145 words, and for the verb a mere thirty-five.⁵

The first two, φυτουργός und δημιουργός, are already used in a transferred sense in Plato and so give translators trouble, prompting them to interpretative expressions. Schleiermacher uses Wesensbildner ("fashioner of essences/natures") for φυτουργός; the Lambert Schneider edition uses Urschöpfer ("original creator") and an earlier English translation "true and natural begetter."⁶ According to Wilhelm Pape's Altgriechisches Wörterbuch the word has the much simpler everyday sense of "Gewächse bearbeitend, pflegend, bes. Gartenwachw. u. Bäume, der Gärtner, auch Winzer" (working with or cultivating plants, especially garden plants and trees, gardener, also vintner)⁷ – in Republic then it means a generator or fashioner of natural things. In modern language we might speak of a

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⁴ LSJ: "αὐθεντ-έω: A. to have full power or authority over, τινός I Ep.Ti.2.12; πρός τινα BGU/1208.37 (i B. C.): c. inf., Lyd.Mag.3.42. 2. commit a murder, Sch. A.Eu.42."

⁵ http://stephanus.tlg.uci.edu/Iris/demo/stat.jsp (2022-04-03)

⁶ Plato in Twelve Volumes, vols. 5 & 6 translated by Paul Shorey (Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press [the previous Loeb edition]; London, William Heinemann Ltd. 1969). [Translator: The Emlyn-Jones/Predy translation is simply "natural creator." Other venerable English translations are "natural author or maker" (Benjamin Jowett, 1893), "author of the true nature of bed" (Francis MacDonald Cornford, 1941)]

producer of the uniquely existing "blueprint" or prototype of all natural things. The second term Schleiermacher translates as "Werkbildner" (fashioner of works), Lambert Schneider has "Werkmeister" (master workman), while the English [of Emlyn-Jones/Preddy] is simply "craftsman". [Other English renderings are Shorey "creator," Jowett "maker," Cornford "manufacturer." ] According to Pape's dictionary the meaning of δημιουργός is again more everyday: "einer der öffentliche, dem ganzen Volke nützliche Geschäfte treibt ... Handwerker, bei den Peloponnesiern und Doriern auch die höchste obrigkeitliche Person" (one who conducts public affairs useful to the whole populace [...] workman, also among the Peloponnesians and Doriens the person in the highest governmental position). 8 Мимети̇ς finally is less problematic: Schleiermacher calls him "Nachbildner" (imitative fashioner), Lambert Schneider "Nachahmer" (imiter), the English is "an imitator of what the others manufacture," while Pape's dictionary speaks likewise of "Nachahmer" (imiter). 9 [Shorey and Jowett likewise use "imitator," while Cornford opts for "artist who represents the things which the other two make."]

Besides the semantic distinctions between the different types of creator and creation, the important thing for our deliberations are the conditions, structures and attributions of value that position and hierarchize them. These constitute a nexus of argumentation that I would like to call a "configuration of authentic" or "configuration of the authentic." I prefer the term configuration to construction, 10 which is more usual in the scholarship, in order to highlight the constitutive significance of the rhetorical in the category of the "authentic." When, for example, Susanne Knaller characterizes "authenticity" according to the modern, non-normative understanding of the term as the "result of an accreditation process occurring at a certain time and place," 11 we know we are close to a rhetoric of persuasion. For the sake of brevity, I systematically arrange the Platonic configuration of the authentic and its counterpart the

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11 Knaller and Müller, Authentizität, 32-33.
inauthentic under seven headings, which I argue comprise the essential constitutive characteristics of "authenticity" that still prevail today.

**II. The Configuration of Authenticity / Inauthenticity**

1. **Gradualism**

The idea of a gradualistic order governing the whole system stands in first position. In Plato this is a threefold hierarchization that constantly emphasizes the third rank position of the *mimētēs* vs. the second rank *dēmiourgos* and the first and unique *phytourgos*. This gradualism or thinking in terms of stages seems to me to be fundamental for any discussion of authenticity. The very idea of authenticity orders the surrounding world through relation to itself in terms of greater or lesser degrees of participation – in Platonic terms, a μέθεξις (*methexis*) – or a relationship of similarity or contiguity. The authentic itself, however, is always the One, the Unique, the Prototype. This thinking in terms of stages deriving from an origin or nucleus is still evident in – of all people, we might say – Theodor W. Adorno. Not only does a statistical survey of his vocabulary reveal him as a genuine philosopher of authenticity in disguise – the word or a derivation of it appears 406 times in his digitalized *Collected Writings*, edited by Rolf Tiedemann and Gretel Adorno – but it occurs 40 times in "Stravinsky and the Restoration" alone, surprising for someone who wrote a sharply critical book on the *Jargon of Authenticity* in Heidegger. It even appears – and this gives the strongest testimony to the gradualistic conception in Adorno – in the heightened forms of the comparative (12x) and superlative (14x) degrees of the adjective. The superlative "most authentic" is not only hyperbolic rhetoric, but Platonic gradualism pure and simple. Further characteristics are connected with this fundamental gradualistic idea as is shown in what follows.

2. **Spatial Ordering: Distance – Proximity**

Plato repeatedly expresses the relationship between the three types of creativity or authorship in terms of the spatial ordering of distance and proximity. In the Greek of the second citation

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below, for instance, it is strongly emphasized by the twice repeated word πόρρω (porrō: English "far"): "Then I think that imitation is at a far remove from reality, and it seems it succeeds in creating everything because it latches on to some small aspect of each object and this is an image."\(^\text{14}\) And: "that the art of painting and imitation as a whole accomplish what is their function far from the truth, while as companion and friend it associates itself with that part in us which is far from the intellect and has no healthy nor even true purpose."\(^\text{15}\) These spatial attributions I also take as constitutive of ideas of authenticity in all their diverse shadings. The authentic implies proximity and spatial immediacy.

3. **Temporality: Fleeting / Quick – Lasting / Constant**

I have already noted in the introduction that Plato's modelling of authentic and inauthentic modes of creation inhabits a temporal moment: the lightning-quick reproduction of the world in a mirror which makes it all the more fleeting and illusory is offset by more enduring and temporally constant forms of creation. This temporal aspect of the quickly achieved but fleeting (ταχύ [tachu] in Greek) must of course be distinguished from the startling abruptness that, in an entirely opposite way, characterizes the experience of epiphany and, eo ipso, the authentic in Joyce and Hofmannsthal.

4. **Ontological Difference: Being - Seeming**

The antithesis between fullness of being and the lack of being that characterizes the illusory is of course central to Socrates' argumentation. We can observe here too the thinking in gradational transitions, as in the above cited passage: "Then I think that imitation is at a far remove from reality, and it seems it succeeds in creating everything because it latches on to some small aspect of each object and this is an image."\(^\text{16}\) Σμικρόν (smikron) und εἴδωλον (eidōlon) – the Greek words for "small" and "image" – are both used as trivializing pejoratives: σμικρός, an old Attic form of μικρός, describes something of negligible significance, and εἴδωλον, the diminutive of εἶδος, here translated simply as "image," signifies among other

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\(^{14}\) Plato, *Republic*, 402-05: "πόρρω ἄρα που τού ἀληθοῦς ἡ μιμητική ἐστιν καί, ὡς εἰδεκαν, διὰ τοῦτο πάντα ἀπεργάζεται, ὅτι σμικρόν τι ἐκάστου ἐφάπαξται, καὶ τούτο εἴδωλον." (598b)

\(^{15}\) Plato, *Republic*, p. 422-23.: "ὅτι ἡ γραφικὴ καὶ ὅλως ἡ μιμητικὴ πόρρω μὲν τῆς ἀληθείας ὑπὲρ τὸ αὑτῆς ἔργον ἀπεργάζεται, πόρρω δ' αὖ φρονήσεως ὄντι τῷ ἐν ἡμῖν προσομιλεῖ τε καὶ έπτειρα καὶ φύλη ἐστὶν ἐπ᾽ οὐδένι ύπερνοι ᾧν ἀληθεῖ." (603b)

\(^{16}\) See footnote 15. [Translator's note: The word that Emlyn-Jones and Preddy translate here as "reality" is in Greek the substantival adjective "the true" (τοῦ ἀληθοῦς).]
things the insubstantial phantom image of the dead; not a "superficiality," therefore, but stages of reality depletion, gradations of loss of being, emptiness of being.

5. COGNITIVE DIFFERENCE: UNTRUTH – TRUTH

Analogous to the ontological opposition between being and seeming, and so immediately and essentially connected with it that for Socrates the relationship needs no further explanation, is the epistemological opposition between truth and falsehood: "Then I think that imitation is at a far remove from reality ["the true": see footnotes 17,15]."

6. GENEALOGICAL DIFFERENCE: DERIVED – ORIGINAL

It is evident that a genealogical dimension of earlier and later, original and derived is also inscribed within the Platonic model of poetics. The mimētēs with his third-rank status not only fashions an object of less worth and reality, but his production presumes the prior creations of the phytourgos and the dēmiourgos. In German he is a Nach-nach-schöpfer ("post-post-creator"), an imitator of one who imitates the primary creator, and in this sense a creature dependent upon predecessor-creators. This genealogical idea of the derived and descendant tertiary has an especially close connection to the conception of the authentic / inauthentic.

7. EMPHATIC RHETORIC OF PATHOS

Under this heading I wish to circumscribe a matter which in my opinion is constitutive of any thinking on authenticity and its corresponding discourse, but which receives little attention in the debate.\footnote{It seems to be strongly implied by the proximity to the "religious code immanent / transcendent" that Harro Müller has found applicable to Adorno’s idea of authenticity. Müller, “Theodor W. Adornos Theorie des authentischen Kunstwerks. Rekonstruktion und Diskussion des Authentizitätsbegriffs,” in Knaller and Müller, Authentizität, 66.} It comes very clearly to light in Plato, but is easier to see in the original Greek than in many translations; it is a rhetorical style of iterative insistence, redundant cumulation and hyperbolic amplification that can be traced into the very phonetics of the phrasing: οὐκοῦν εἰ μὴ ἐστὶ ποιεῖ [ὁ κλινοποιός, MB], οὐκ ἂν τὸ ὄν ποιοῖ, ἄλλα τι τοιοῦτον οἷον τὸ ὀν, ὃν ὃν δὲ ὁῦ [...] [italics MB]. "So that means unless he [the maker of beds] makes something that really exists, he's not making the real thing, but something that's like it, but not actually it."\footnote{Plato, Republic, 396-97. (597a)} This is analogous to the key terms for distance from being "πόρρω" and fleeting quickness "ταχύ, / τάχιστα" with their many repetitions, which are intended to add emphasis to what is meant. On
the semantic level, it involves verbal formulas that strengthen meaning through repetition like τὸ ὄντωϛ ὄν, "the really existing", "the truly true," "the truly essential," or, on the other side, "the very tenuous being," etc. All in all, we can speak of a rhetorical charging process by which the category of the authentic becomes an actual "figure of pathos." Conceptually it is largely a matter of reduplicating or enhancing terms that express value: "the truly real," "the really valid," etc., a procedure that we still find in contemporary assertions of authenticity right up to Adorno's hyperbolic superlative "most authentic." Since, however, universal concepts of value have only limited determinable content beyond the sense of distinction they bestowed, we have to question whether "authenticity" is not ultimately "deconstruction-resistant" or, going a step further, whether its quintessence might not actually reside in this resistance to de- and perhaps even to re-construction – a category therefore that eludes comprehension or can only be approached through its negation, the in- or non-authentic. Again, we can already see the same rhetoric of emphatic charge and analytical evasion being used by Adorno in his apologetical essay "Words from Abroad" concerning his use of foreign words in a radio broadcast, which aroused protest from listeners:

"Certainly one cannot expect all these complex considerations and critical reflections to be condensed into the word Authentizität. But in the hesitation the word gives rise to, all the concepts it calls to mind and nevertheless avoids flash by. [...] It is not too far-fetched to hope that the intention will be carried out because the word Authentizität is not an isolated spot of ink on the page; the context throws much light on that magic word."21

So much for the Platonic prelude. With Adorno's assembly of catchwords – "hesitation," "flash," "much light" [actually vielfältig gebrochenes Licht ("diversely scattered light") in German], "magic word" – we are halfway to the subject of epiphany: his "magic word" authenticity practically is one in itself.

III. HUGO VON HOFMANNSTHAL – JAMES JOYCE

Hermann Broch and, relying on Broch's work, Theodore Ziolkowski were the first to establish what we might call a chiastic relationship between Hugo von Hofmannsthal and James Joyce. Hermann Broch assumes, in Poetry and Knowing, "that Joyce too probably had his own

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20 This also seems to be implied by Harro's "immanent / transcendent" code (see note 18).
Chandos experience, for the destruction of expression that he undertook in his prose work in order to create, from its sentence fragments and word particles, a new and more genuine expression of reality points to a positively wild anger and contempt, to a disgust with traditional and impoverished language, with its clichés, petrified in both vocabulary and syntax. On the other hand, Ziolkowski, in an essay on "James Joyce's Epiphany and the Overcoming of the Empirical World in Modern German Prose" (1961), finds Joyce's poetic concept of epiphany fruitful for understanding Hofmannsthal and his famous "Letter from Lord Chandos to Francis Bacon." Ziolkowski likewise sees the epiphany as one of the more common literary techniques of modern literature in other early 20th century authors like Rilke and Musil: "As a reaction against empiricism in science and naturalism in literature, and out of a conviction that words are incapable of expressing a thing's nature or essence, certain writers in the first decade of our century developed a technique to awaken in prose an impression of unmediated reality, of essential life."

Thus Ziolkowski connects the much discussed crisis of language in Hofmannsthal – those famous sentences: "For words have pushed themselves in front of things. Hearsay has swallowed the world" or "the abstract terms of which the tongue must avail itself as a matter of course to voice a judgment [...] crumbled in my mouth like moldy fungi – to the triumphal march of the contemporary sciences (physics, sociology, psychology). Gotthart Wunberg takes a different perspective on the "Chandos Letter," associating it with its fictively historical recipient Francis Bacon and his teaching on preconceived ideas – the four idola (idols of the tribe, idols of the mirror, idols of the marketplace, idols of the theatre) – and interpreting the letter as the expression of a profound crisis of consciousness or ego rather than simply a crisis of language. Under the seemingly paradoxical heading "rational epiphany" Wunberg states: "A correct evaluation of Bacon reveals an obvious cause of Chandos' impotence with language. That language is no longer effective then becomes a conclusion arrived at by

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26 Ziolkowski, "James Joyce's Epiphany", 599.
reflective consciousness, making the crisis of language secondary to a crisis of consciousness."\textsuperscript{27} It can be shown, Wunberg says, "how thoroughly Hofmannsthal's 'heroes' are ciphers for an ego whose depersonalized condition either derives from reflection or is intimately connected with it. It is clear from the "Chandos Letter" that the crisis of language cannot be separated either genetically or systematically from that of the ego and consciousness."\textsuperscript{28}

But as I indicated earlier, these historical or culture-psychological contextualizations are not the framework within which I wish to discuss the question of the epiphany and what is authentic in literature. On the contrary, I see the discourse on the epiphany in James Joyce and the form it takes in his and Hofmannsthal's work as literary expressions of what I have called the \textit{configuration of authenticity / the authentic} based on the seven characteristics noted in connection with Plato. Thus I regard the epiphany as a literary-rhetorical mise-en-scène that produces an appearance which is felt to be authentic or which presents the appearance of authenticity. In this, admittedly, I create a paradox, namely that the \textit{staged} should be the \textit{authentic}.

IV. EPIPHANY AS STAGING OF AUTHENTICITY

Joyce lets us know what an epiphany is by means of a small episode, "a trivial incident," and a conversation connected with it in \textit{Stephen Hero}, the earlier draft of \textit{Portrait of the Artist}. Walking lost in thought on a foggy evening in Eccles St., Stephen Daedalus witnesses a scene that he himself twice expressly characterizes as a triviality, but which is the trigger for what he calls "epiphanies":

A young lady was standing on the steps of one of those brown brick houses which seem the very incarnation of Irish paralysis. A young gentleman was leaning on the rusty railings of the area. Stephen as he passed on his quest heard the following fragment of colloquy out of which he received an impression keen enough to afflict his sensitiveness very severely.

\begin{quote}
\textbf{The Young Lady} - (drawling discreetly) ... O, yes ... I was ... at the ... cha ... pel ...
\textbf{The Young Gentleman} - (inaudibly) ... I ... (again inaudibly) ... I ...
\textbf{The Young Lady} - (softly) ... O ... but you're ... ve ... ry ... wick ... ed ...
\end{quote}

This triviality made him think of collecting many such moments together in a book of epiphanies. By an epiphany he meant a sudden spiritual manifestation, whether in the vulgarity of speech or of gesture or in a memorable phase of the mind itself. He believed


\textsuperscript{28} Ibid.
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.29

A highlighted evening scene on a foggy Dublin street, fragmentary perceptions of a timeless, eternally recurring moment of love encounter in its halting beginnings, hardly heard shreds of words with the young lady's suggestive "O ... but you're ... ve ... ry ... wic ... ed" – and this the moment of the "sudden spiritual manifestation" that Joyce calls epiphany. Declaring it the task of the "man of letters" to record these "with extreme care," these "most delicate and evanescent of moments." Thus far, the epiphany can still perfectly well be connected to a religious or parareligious experience of illumination: the sudden and spontaneous penetration of an everyday moment by spiritual content, here of course with erotic coloring.

Precisely the same configuration can be observed in Hofmannsthal's "Letter," but there the language is much more genuinely religious:

I cannot expect you to understand me without examples, and I must plead your indulgence for their absurdity [compare Joyce's "triviality," MB]. A pitcher, a harrow abandoned in a field, a dog in the sun, a neglected cemetery, a cripple, a peasant's hut – all these can become the vessel of my revelation. Each of these objects and a thousand others similar, over which the eye usually glides with a natural indifference, can suddenly, at any moment (which I am utterly powerless to evoke), assume for me a character so exalted and moving that words seem too poor to describe it.30

As we read further in James Joyce, however, we realize that for him no pentecostal spirit falls from heaven (Hofmannsthal: "which I am utterly powerless to evoke" – "a character so exalted and moving that words seem too poor to describe it" – "the vessel of my revelation"). His epiphany is rather a consciously willed charging of an everyday incident through repeated encounter, allusion and reference, until it finally reaches the emphatic moment of pathos that enhances its reality and allows the fullness of its being to pour forth from itself as if spontaneously in a revelation of truth. Stephen Hero explains to his fellow university student Cranly as they saunter past the Balast Office in Dublin that the unprepossessing clock on its façade could undergo an epiphany:

He told Cranly that the clock of the Ballast Office was capable of an epiphany. Cranly questioned the inscrutable dial of the Ballast Office with his no less inscrutable countenance: — Yes, said Stephen. I will pass it time after time, allude to it, refer to it, catch a glimpse of it. It is only an item in the catalogue of Dublin's street furniture. Then all at once I see it and I know at once what it is: epiphany. — What? — Imagine my glimpses at that clock as the gropings of a spiritual eye which seeks to adjust its vision

29 James Joyce: Stephen Hero [1904/06], ed. from the Manuscript in the Harvard College Library by Theodore Spencer, New York: New Directions, 1944, 1963), 211.
to an exact focus. The moment the focus is reached the object is epiphanised. It is just in this epiphany that I find the third, the supreme quality of beauty.  

Epiphany here becomes the final – though not to be assumed – phase of an ongoing quest, a constantly repeated groping toward the object ("pass it time after time, allude to it, refer to it, catch a glimpse of it"), summarized in the ingenious image of an eye struggling to reach exact focus – all the more memorable in view of Joyce's severe myopia. The moment of successful adjustment is a transformation or transfiguration of the eye's mere vision into an Appearance, a Vision ("is epiphanised"). Epiphany is accordingly no randomly occurring event, but a repeated process of approximation and charge – precipitated and helped along by the subject – directed at a consciously sought change in the perception of the object. It happens when the searching gaze has fully brought its object into focus: "The moment the focus is reached the object is epiphanised." The spatial antithesis of closeness and distance that we have identified as an element in the configuration of authenticity in Plato is here expressed in the optometrical metaphor of focusing.

Again, we can observe in Hofmannsthal the same rhetorical technique of emphatic charge through iterative cumulation and hyperbolic amplification, though expressed here in a more clearly passive disposition of receptivity – "these [...] creatures rise toward me":

In these moments an insignificant creature – a dog, a rat, a beetle, a crippled appletree, a lane winding over the hill, a moss-covered stone – mean more to me than the most beautiful, surrendering lover of the happiest night. These mute and, on occasion, inanimate creatures rise toward me with such an abundance, such a presence of love, that my enchanted eye can find nothing in sight void of life. Everything appears to me–everything that exists, everything I can remember, everything touched upon by my confused thoughts – to be something.  

The concluding turn of expression "Everything appears to me [everything...everything...everything...] to be something" – is in its syntax and its prosodic flow a highly unusual sentence. Our initial impression is that the first phrase "Everything appears to me" is a summary definition of the preceding enumeration, namely in the sense of an apparitio, an "appearance" or manifestation, affecting or indeed flowing in on the subject, of all the mentioned things that appear to him as the first person narrator. But then, after the repeated enumeration alles, alles, alles ("everything, everything, everything"), we are forced to reverse,

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31 Joyce, Stephen Hero, 211.
32 Hofmannsthal: "Ein Brief", 29; "Letter," 137-38. [Translator: I have altered the last sentence to reflect the actual German wording and italicized be in order to convey the rhetorical force of sein which is the final word of the German sentence: Es erscheint mir alles, alles, was es gibt, alles, dessen ich mich entsinne, alles, was meine verworrensten Gedanken berühren, etwas zu sein.]
as it were, the syntactic order, so that the verb *es erscheint* ("appears") – though unusually for this verb – becomes the equivalent of the auxiliary verb *es scheint* ("seems"), whereby the statement is now directed at the focusing of the enumerated "everything[s]" on the "one thing" of Being. In this way the recognizant perception of the first person speaker also "epiphanises" the things in the Joycean sense – by recognizing all of them in their individual uniqueness as, each one, Something, and by recognizing that they *are* this Something. Thus the sentence both semantically and syntactically accomplishes in itself the transformation of *appearing* into *being*, and prosodically, the whole sentence functions as a coda with *etwas zu sein* ("to be something") as the final chord, into which the emphatically evoked diversity of the repeated "everything" flows and in which it finds its repose.

V. CONFIGURATION OF EPIPHANY'S AUTHENTICITY

Thus far epiphany is still the phenomenon of perceiving an object in its individual uniqueness, whereby it merges with the experience of authenticity. The "ephanised" object in the sense of Joyce's verbal formulation is the authentic object; in the sense of Hofmannsthal's a-grammatical sentence, it *"appears to be something."* 33 Emphatic charge, iterative suggestion of proximity, emotive evocation of what has genuine being: all are instances of the rhetoric of authenticity as we have found it in Plato, but they are not the final word in the configuration of authenticity with regard to the medium of the epiphany in Joyce and Hofmannsthal. Let us go back to Joyce: "It is just in this epiphany that I find the third, the supreme quality of beauty," the narrator has Stephen Hero instruct his interlocutor Cranly. With this link between the epiphany experience and a "third" and "supreme" quality of beauty a systemic context is introduced which contains the suggestion of a set of gradualistic stages that will evidently take the discourse on epiphanies to its point of culmination. This discourse is part of what we might call a peripatetic dialogue between Stephen and his friend Cranly – in *Portrait of the Artist* it will be Lynch – on their walk through the streets of Dublin. In *Stephen Hero* Cranly is only half listening to Stephen's eagerly pontificating chatter, whereas with Lynch in *Portrait* something reminiscent of a Platonic dialogue takes place. What Stephen alludes to in the above quoted sentence concerning "the third, the supreme quality of beauty" is Thomas Aquinas's definition of beauty. Stephen reformulates this as he lectures, interprets, and explicates the matter to Cranly or Lynch,

33 From this point we may trace a way back to Goethe's famous couplet, which Friedrich Hegel incorporated almost word for word into the introduction to his *Aesthetic Lectures* and made the basis of his concept of beauty: "Appearance, what is it, lacking essence? / And were there essence, did it not appear?" ("Der Schein, was ist er, dem das Wesen fehlt? / Das Wesen, wär' es, wenn es nicht erschiene?" – verse 1066-67 of *Die natürliche Tochter* [The Natural Daughter].)
converting it into something that the narrator in another passage of *Stephen Hero* and *Portrait of the Artist* calls "applied Aquinas."³⁴

In his essay "Joyce and D'Annunzio: Sources of the Epiphany Idea," Umberto Eco, taking a fastidiously philological approach, has shown that Joyce's "applied Aquinas" is true only in a certain sense, for it is "beyond question that the idea [of epiphany] stems from the Décadent tradition [Gabriele D'Annunzio, Walter Pater et al.] and that the young student of Jesuits cleverly maneuvers the citations to give the idea a scholastic appearance, to make it seem to derive from Aquinas's *claritas.*"³⁵ Eco then concludes, "That the young Joyce connected his idea of epiphany to the scholastic categories of Thomas Aquinas is of little significance for our purposes."³⁶ For my argument, however, it is precisely the crucial point. The fact that, in terms of influence and effect, the epiphany's connection – whether as an idea or an experience – to Aquinas's aesthetic has only a limited philological justification means that it has a rhetorical, a poetical function. And this function I prefer to view within the framework of the configuration of authenticity. For with the ascription of the epiphany idea, however hypothetical, to the Thomistic aesthetic we have an authentication of its authenticity in the seminal authority of Thomas Aquinas. The master of scholastic philosophy thereby takes on the role of the *αὐθέντης* as well as the Platonic *φυτουργός,* the primary guarantor of Joyce's epiphany aesthetic, in a single figure, a role that contemporary figures like Gabriele D'Annunzio or Walter Pater – who according to Umberto Eco can be philologically proven to be his actual mentors – could obviously never assume to the same degree. With his appeal to Thomas Aquinas Joyce implements the "accreditation process" that Susanne Knaller has characterized as constitutive of what we understand as authenticity.³⁷ There is a chain of filiation that extends from the *authentēs* and *phytourgос* Thomas Aquinas to Stephen Hero and James Joyce himself, and if the latter self-ironically describes his epiphany aesthetic as "applied Aquinas," he thereby places himself, in the framework of the Platonic configuration of authenticity, in the position

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³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ See footnote 12.
of the dēmiourgos, one who translate the original idea into a practicable everyday aesthetic that suits the very streets of Dublin. 38

Hofmannsthal displays a completely analogous configuration in the "Chandos Letter." Of course the narrative situation seems to run counter to that of Stephen Hero or Portrait inasmuch as the fictional character of the Letter is obvious and with the fictional figure of Philip Lord Chandos his addressee Francis Bacon also becomes a fictionalized figure. But Gotthard Wunberg has shown that the Letter can be very plausibly, and with demonstrable details, be connected with Francis Bacon's "idolatry" doctrine, that Lord Chandos' thought, in other words, feeds on Francis Bacon's doctrine. Thus the latter occupies the same position as Thomas Aquinas in Joyce. He is the guarantor and authenticator whose philosophical authority attests the ideational authenticity of what Lord Chandos has experienced.

This tells us something remarkable about the connection between epiphany and authenticity. On the one hand we see that epiphany for both Joyce and Hofmannsthal is an extraordinarily enhanced experience of immediacy in the perception of reality, and it is this that assures the subject of its authenticity. But then on the other hand it is "authenticated" – the English term shows the direct etymological connection – by the accreditation it receives from the ideas of a philosophical authority or tradition, Thomas Aquinas and Scholasticism in the case of Joyce and Bacon's idolatry doctrine for Hofmannsthal. This "connecting-back" to an older tradition likewise entails a genealogical filiation that – and here the authenticity configuration is again quasi Platonic – links thinking and being in the epiphany itself.

With the epiphany's twofold filiation in the authenticity of being and the authentication derived from the intellectual tradition, two further aspects, again in the case of both writers, must be mentioned in closing: the series of graduated steps and the mediality of the writer. For Joyce the point of departure in the gradus ad parnassum is Thomas Aquinas's definition of beauty: "Ad pulcritudinem tria requiruntur, integritas, consonantia, claritas. I translate it so: Three things are needed for beauty, wholeness, harmony and radiance." 39 What in Aquinas is a very static, cumulative listing of the characteristics of beauty Joyce makes into a development of phases in a dynamic process of perception and cognition ("necessary phases of artistic

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38 That the scientific accreditation process, in the intellectual sciences especially, has always made use of very similar procedures to authenticate theses, arguments, and ideas via derivational ties to and historical confirmations by "authorities" – without generating epiphanies – I mention only in passing.

39 Portrait of the Artist, 479.
apprehension"^40) wherein the object gradually discloses itself as beautiful and finally reaches its epiphany. The hero of Stephen Hero describes it so:

First we recognise that the object is one integral thing, then we recognise that it is an organised composite structure, a thing in fact: finally, when the relation of the parts is exquisite, when the parts are adjusted to the special point, we recognise that it is that thing which it is. Its soul, its whatness, leaps to us from the vestment of its appearance. The soul of the commonest object, the structure of which is so adjusted, seems to us radiant. The object achieves its epiphany.^41

In Hofmannsthal's "Chandos Letter," the gradualistic conception seems to be missing at first. But this is a false impression, because processual thinking in terms of stages is the architectural principle of the whole text and thoroughly determines its narrative structure. The gradualism shows itself in the three phases of life Lord Chandos describes as he tells Francis Bacon his personal story, a story that can be interpreted narratologically as a secularized salvation history in the form of an account that details an individual psychic illness and subsequent recovery. The initial stage is that of an original, almost paradisical or arcadian unity, in which the self perceives itself to be in perfect harmony with the surrounding world, feeling at one with and flourishing in it:

In those days I, in a continual state of intoxication, conceived the whole of existence as one great unit: the spiritual and physical worlds seemed to form no contrast, as little as did courtly and bestial conduct, art and barbarism, solitude and society; in everything I felt the presence of Nature, in the aberrations of insanity as much as in the utmost refinement of the Spanish ceremonial; in the boorishness of young peasants no less than in the most delicate of allegories; and in all expressions of Nature I felt myself. [...]

Next follows the status corruptionis of self and world: disintegration of consciousness and language, loss of identity and spiritual emptiness:

I have lost completely the ability to think or to speak of anything coherently. [...] For me everything disintegrated into parts, those parts again into parts; no longer would

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40 Ibid.
41 Stephen Hero, 213. – Stephen develops the same line of thought in more detail with Lynch as his interlocutor in Portrait of the Artist, but what is missing there is the mention of 'epiphany' as the culmination of the process. Instead we have the following paraphrase: "You see that it is that thing which it is and no other thing. The radiance of which he [Aquinas] speaks is the scholastic quidditas, the whatness of a thing. [...] The instant wherein that supreme quality of beauty, the clear radiance of the esthetic image, is apprehended luminously by the mind which has been arrested by its wholeness and fascinated by its harmony is the luminous silent stasis of esthetic pleasure, a spiritual state [...]." (Portrait of the Artist, 480-81).
anything let itself be encompassed by one idea. Single words floated around me; they congealed into eyes which stared at me and into which I was forced to stare back — whirlpools which gave me vertigo and, reeling incessantly, led into the void. [...] Since that time I have been leading an existence which I fear you can hardly imagine, so lacking in spirit and thought is its flow [...] 43

Then comes the stage of a restitutio ad integrum: the reestablishment of a connection between self and world that is even more intense than the original naive sensation of unity and which in moments of empathetic fusion becomes an epiphany:

These mute and, on occasion, inanimate creatures rise toward me with such an abundance, such a presence of love, that my enchanted eye can find nothing in sight void of life [...] and among the objects playing against one another there is not one into which I cannot flow. To me then, it is as though my body consists of nought but ciphers which give me the key to everything; or as if we could enter into a new and hopeful relationship with the whole of existence if only we begin to think with the heart. 44

Yet although we may see in these instances of gradualistic thinking – as in those we have already discussed – structural analogies in the configuration of authenticity between the archmodel presented by Plato and the epiphanies of Joyce and Hofmannsthal, both the latter completely escape the "platonic shadow" with respect to the positioning of the writer-artist. As Hofmannsthal's statement – "To me then, it is as though my body consists of nought but ciphers which give me the key to everything" – attests, the writer is not at all the ephemeral imitator and superficial creator of seeming realities at a far remove from being, but rather a medium in the double sense of being simultaneously a central point and mediator, a world-body and a body-book. Exactly as in Joyce: "The poet is the intense centre of life in his age to which he stands in a relation than which none can be more vital. He alone is capable of absorbing in himself the life that surrounds him and of flinging it abroad amid planetary music [italics MB]."45 And: "The artist, he imagined, standing in the position of mediator between the world of his experience and the world of his dreams . . . the artist who could disentangle the subtle soul of the image from its mesh of defining circumstances most exactly and 're-embry' it in artistic circumstances chosen as the most exact for it in its new office, he was the supreme artist." 46

The writer who embodies the world in the embodiment of the book: as such he also becomes the crosspoint at which the twofold filiation of the epiphany – in the authenticity of its

45 Stephen Hero, 80.
46 Ibid., 77-78.
being and in its authentication through the ideas of the intellectual tradition – is realized. We grasp this twofold filiation with an almost physical, corporeal urgency in the passage where Chandos details the vision that came over him as he rode through the countryside after giving the order to have the rats in his milk-cellars poisoned. Here the graphic images of "this population of rats" in their death throes connect with the bookworld of Livy's description of the destruction of Alba Longa, and the one "authenticates" the other:

I felt everything within me: the cool, musty air of the cellar filled with the sweet and pungent reek of poison, and the yelling of the death-cries breaking against the mouldering walls; the vain convulsions of those convoluted bodies as they tear about in confusion and despair; their frenzied search for escape, and the grimace of icy rage when a couple collide with one another at a bolted-up crevice. But why seek again for words which I have foresworn! You remember, my friend, the wonderful description in Livy of the hours preceding the destruction of Alba Longa: when the crowds stray aimlessly through the streets which they are to see no more . . . when they bid farewell to the stones beneath their feet. I assure you, my friend, that I carried this vision within me, and the vision of burning Carthage, too; but there was more, something more divine, more bestial; and it was the Present, the fullest, most exalted Present.47

But whereas Hofmannsthal suggests the final anchoring of authenticity and epiphany in a passage that conveys, as it were, the absolute authenticity of pain, suffering and death with its baroque, christological overtones, Joyce's handling of the idea of epiphany remains much more playful and ironic, and, in that sense, far more secularized. After Stephen Hero in his conversation with Cranly realizes that his "applied Aquinas" has irritated him, and his exalted ideas have acquired a meretricious taste, he lightly brushes the whole subject aside: "and to restore a mood of flippant familiarity he glanced up at the clock of the Ballast Office and smiled: – It has not epiphanised yet, he said."48 And in Portrait Lynch counters Stephen's philosophical profundities with "That's a lovely one – said Lynch, laughing again. – That has the true scholastic stink."49

48 Stephen Hero, 213.
49 Portrait, 482.