

Gabriel and Unsung Heroes in 'The Dead'

Fumio Yoshioka

I

Toward the end of 'The Dead', Gabriel Conroy reiterates the word 'shade' three times in his interior monologue. Listening in a hotel bed to the faint taps of the falling snow on the window, he opines: 'Poor Aunt Julia! She, too, would soon be a shade with the shade of Patrick Morkan and his horse' (*Dubliners*, 254: hereafter cited page numbers alone), and 'One by one they were all becoming shades' (255). The word unequivocally signifies 'being dead' (*OED*, 'shade' 6) in the context while still retaining its primary sense of 'absence of complete illumination' (*ibid.*, 'shade' 1) or, more descriptively, 'being shadowy or in the shade' in the light of the plot.

The latter meaning promptly harks back to three figures that emerge in the preceding scenes. One belongs to Michael Furey, who stood in the 'darkness' under a tree on a rainy night many winters earlier and went on to be a 'shade' before long:

... I ran downstairs as I was and slipped out the back into the garden and there was the poor fellow at the end of the garden, shivering. ... He was standing at the end of the wall where there was a tree.

(253)

A very delicate young man debilitated by a mortal disease, Michael Furey ever lived in the shadow of death. The other two figures are of Gabriel and Gretta at the end of Misses Morkan's annual dance. The married couple are momentarily assimilated into a shade at the same time:

He was in a dark part of the hall gazing up the staircase. A woman was standing near the top of the first flight, in the shadow also. ... It was his wife. (239)

Prior to the climactic scene, the hero and heroine are integrated into the world of the dead through their affinity with 'shade' and 'shadow'. Gretta is reunited with her first lover by immersing herself in his favourite melody and turning herself into a shadow. Gabriel inadvertently copies the posture of his unseen rival in her

love and prefigures him in the plot before the dead boy is invoked a little later in her confession. The psychological love triangle is formed around the axis of 'shade' in the murky domain of reverie and imagination. The tense relationship is portended when Gabriel remembers his mother's sullen opposition to his marriage: 'A shadow passed over his face' (213). The final scene is enacted in a hotel room devoid of any artificial lighting: even the frail light of candles is removed upon Gabriel's insistence. The protagonist's gaze into what essentially defines him is assisted by '[a] ghastly light from the street lamp' (247), as if the ghost of the country boy who was 'in the gasworks' (251) helped to enlighten him. 'The Dead' ends in the multi-dimensional 'shade' of Gabriel's fading consciousness, of Celtic thoughts of death, and of the abundant snow.

Thus ubiquitous in the story, 'shade' spawns 'shadowy creatures' at the crucial turns of the plot. Indeed, a legion of historical, cultural and mythical apparitions lurk in the niches and corners of the narrative plan of 'The Dead'. While ghosts of the dead walk abroad in the course of the plot, characters of no visibility – if they can be called 'characters' – crawl out of the subliminal sphere of memory and encroach on the consciousness (and also conscience) of the living. Allusions are frequently made to famous men of letters, historical figures, and heroes and heroines of ditties, legends and literary works. The narrative framework is erected upon not only dialogues and actions but also recollections of the past, references to distant people and places, and outlooks for the future. The plotline is, as a result, borne by those who are named but never appear in person as much as by the regular characters who are physically present in the story.

It seems that Joyce delved deep into the mechanism of references and allusions in 'The Dead' and refined his style of 'scrupulous meanness' (Ellmann, *Letters*, 134) into a synthetic narrative mode geared to 'telling more by writing less'. Noticeably, he made an extensive use of shadowy characters and even allowed them to act on the plot behind the scenes. The earlier tales of *Dubliners* bear witness to application of this technique at different stages of its development, as Patrick A. McCarthy notices (3–4). In 'Eveline', the eponymous heroine becomes paralyzed under the spell of her dead mother and Blessed Margaret Mary Alacoque. 'Ivy Day in the Committee Room' shows how the ghost of the 'Uncrowned King' haunts the nation, solely by virtue of the dialogues and traffic of canvassers both loyal and disloyal. 'The Dead', composed in 1907 as an epilogue or a special addition to the collection, marks the pinnacle of the narrative craft Joyce developed for short fiction in view of the complicated effects of referentiality.

The criticism of 'The Dead' has scarcely failed to observe this part of Joycean artistry. Here are a few examples: John V. Kelleher has taken notice of 'all atmospherics..., things subtle and disturbing' (433); Bernard Benstock has attempted to 'understand the nature of the substance from its shadow' (159); and shadowy characters are labelled 'constitutive absences' or 'ghostly presences' by Thomas Jackson Rice (30–1). Despite these efforts, however, 'The Dead' still remains to be analyzed and scrutinized in all its fine detail.

For instance, the function of 'shade' as a bond that binds Gabriel and Gretta with Michael, as this paper argues at the outset, has not been discussed sufficiently. The present study intends to illuminate the substance of 'The Dead' primarily by heeding the voices of the dead and absent and recovering what is hinted in the plot and hoarded between the lines.

II

The following list might be called an Invisible Who's Who of 'The Dead'. Pat Morkan, Ellen Conroy, Patrick Morkan, and Michael Furey are among the dead, while Constantine Conroy ministers to the dead at Balbriggan. The lass of Aghrim hovers in the periphery of the story as an Irish archetypal heroine of unrequited love. William III, Robert Browning, Duke of Wellington, and Shakespeare, all regarded as icons of English culture and spirit, stalk the protagonist like spectres. The European Continent looms large beyond the names of Paris, the Three Graces, and renowned opera singers. After her early departure, Miss Ivors leaves her Gaelic spirit behind, ensconced cozily in the imaginary company of Mr Clancy, Mr Kilkelly and Kathleen Kearney. James McNally (410) maintains that Miss Ivors' comrades all bear 'typically Celtic names beginning with K'. In the wake of her nationalistic cause enter the monks at Mount Melleray and Daniel O'Connell, the latter being as intent as ever on a patriotic mission. All these unseen characters cast a long shadow over the spiritual and cultural ambience of 'The Dead'. Their presence is so haunting and powerful that the living appear at times as if they were ever entangled with the wills, desires and even whims of their invisible counterparts.

The first phantom in 'The Dead' takes the shape of Robert Browning. Celebrated poet as he is, Browning makes no aesthetic contribution in the story. He instead serves to conjure up the long-suppressed Celtic ghost as an adversary and activate an acrimonious confrontation which might otherwise remain dormant. In fact, 'The Dead' is a far cry from a novella that depicts Irish generosity and hospitality in a festive mood. The tale was conceived, according to the author, under the dual motif of Ireland's 'ingenuous insularity and its hospitality' (Ellman, *Letters*, 166). But the plot seems to be focused more on the first motif than on the second through its illustration of a series of nagging battles of wills and egos. Laden with contention, hypocrisy and betrayal, 'The Dead' could in some sense be the most relentless, caustic portrayal of 'dear dirty Dublin' (82) in *Dubliners*. The emphasis on the odious nature of the 'living dead' is a preliminary measure to maximize the altruism of the dead in the finale. Joyce ushers in the theme of antagonism by Lily's 'back answer' to Gabriel and installs it securely at the centre stage by alluding merely a few times to Robert Browning.

Gabriel not only idolizes the English poet but also shares with him an ardent worship for the Continental

Europe (Jackson & McGinley, 161). Browning's works, commonly reckoned as avant-garde and cryptic at the close of the nineteenth century (Gifford, 114), mark a cultural watershed which divides the intelligentsia from ordinary people in Irish society. This explicates Gabriel's anxiety about the adequacy of his quotation from the poet in his after-dinner speech. His misgivings at the same time mirror the sense of intellectual superiority he espouses and actually relishes with gusto over the other guests of the party. An inveterate, virulent class-consciousness, as Trevor L. Williams contends (95), underpins the protagonist's complacency as a petit bourgeois in the circumscribed community of Dublin.

Then, quite unexpectedly, Gabriel is subjected to a sudden jolt under the barrage of verbal and psychological shots from his intellectual equal Miss Molly Ivors. His review of Browning's latest collection of poems in the Unionist *Daily Express* stimulates her to call his national identity into question and reproach him as a 'West Briton' (216). To patriotic Irish people like her, Gabriel can hardly be anything else but an Anglophile who shamelessly admires and subscribes to their oppressors' culture. In her peculiarly forthright manner, Miss Ivors makes her political stance clear, dresses the protagonist for soul-searching, and vanishes from the scene quickly. Joyce is little concerned with the reason for her early exit. What matters to him is that things Irish, such as the Irish language, the Aran Islands, Connaught and Galway, are poised over the Christmas dinner against the cultures of Britain and the Continent. The feat is accomplished even without quoting a line from Browning – an exquisite case of Joycean exploitation of and, perhaps, retribution against British imperialism.

Browning sweeps the way for his countryman Shakespeare. An unrivalled banner-holder of English culture, the Elizabethan dramatist further elucidates the environment in which Joyce's Ireland retains its precarious existence as a colonized nation. Gabriel protests to Miss Ivors that 'Irish is not my language' (216) and remarks, uniquely for his moderate disposition, in an irritated tone that 'I'm sick of my own country, sick of it!' (ibid.). He is in effect a voluntary exile in his own land, a land which has nearly forgotten its native tongue and ethnic background. His annual trip to the Continent enables his uneasy state of being to be transposed, if only temporarily, into real exile. The fact that Shakespeare is as familiar to Gabriel's audience as Thomas Moore's *Melodies* (published in 1807–34) gauges the extent to which the Irish are subjugated to the power of the invaders. The conquered people are given access to the commonplaces of English culture but are mostly barred from seeking anything further. Browning is scarcely known to ordinary Irish people nor do they have contemporary poets of their own to quote from. Or, if they do, Gabriel personally turns a deaf ear to the voices of artists and cultural traditions of his own land.

How far the Bard infiltrates the Irish mind is demonstrated by an instance more germane to Gabriel's private world. A picture of the Balcony Scene in *Romeo and Juliet* decorates a wall of Misses Morkan's drawing room as a household item. More significantly, the picture furnishes an optical and spiritual analogy

to the young fervent love of Michael Furey and makes a stark contrast with the Irish song of *The Lass of Aughrim*, which the hapless boy used to hum. Gretta's first love is split between the two cultures in literary representation. Her sincere expression of a wish to travel back to her hometown in 'I'd love to see Galway again' (218) elicits from her husband the unsympathetic reply of 'You can go if you like' (ibid.). The exchange evinces an incongruity between the couple concerning their spiritual roots and cultural backgrounds. Piloted thus by ghosts and shadows, the narrative moves leisurely like a funeral procession toward a scene of epiphany, where the most potent of the dead wakes from his long rest and tells his story in an inaudible voice.

In the meantime, Britain and the Continental Europe intrude into the party scene and impinge stealthily upon the subconscious of the participants. Miss Julia lets out a subdued sign of reverence by nodding significantly at Miss Kate's mention of the Continent in connection with Gabriel's goloshes. The Irish backwardness of this sort, implicit also in the menu of 'blocks of blancmange..., pyramids of oranges and American apples' (224) as Earl G. Ingersoll observes (149), and Miss Ivors' overt anti-British attitude are somewhat counterpoised by Mrs Malins' sincere praise for Scotland and Scottish people. The old lady best embodies the good will and generosity of the season among the characters of 'The Dead'. Moreover, with her advanced age, limited mobility and fragile health, Mrs Malins plays the role of intermediary between the dead and the living. The table talk soon becomes dominated by the theme of cultural supremacy. When the topic of opera singers is raised, all the names reputed as the best of each era are Continental or English to the total exclusion of Irish musicians. The conversation leads nowhere but to a revelation of the lack of amity and concord, let alone rapport, among the people present.

The subject of the table talk in due course draws closer to the homeland at the lead of Mrs Malins. Her son, with his long-standing problem with drink, is scheduled to have a retreat in a Trappist monastery at Mount Melleray, known as 'a refuge for well-heeled alcoholics in need of a cure' (Gifford, 122). Although the monks abide by the stoic rule of silence and rehearse the more-than-stoic art of dying each day by sleeping in their coffins, the monastery itself welcomes anybody free of charge. Here, as anywhere else in 'The Dead', the spirit of charity and selflessness dwells in taciturnity and not in eloquence. It is disclosed during the conversation that Mr Browne is not a Catholic, and his jocular taunt about the monks' bizarre habit invites no response but Mrs Malins' brief but decisive statement, 'They are very good men, the monks, very pious men' (230).

Mr Browne, prone to vulgarity and garrulousness, represents certain unpleasant aspects of Anglo-Irish Protestants. Aunt Kate lowers her voice to say, 'Browne is everywhere' (235). Gabriel echoes her insinuation later on by saying on Mr Malins that 'It's a pity he wouldn't keep away from that Browne, because he's not a bad fellow at heart' (248). The anecdotes undermine the Irish spirit of hospitality which Gabriel has praised in

his speech, particularly when leagued with his own hypocrisy betrayed in 'What did he care that his aunts were only two ignorant old women?' (219). With a cultural fault line running deeper and human relationships exposed more blatantly in the spurious condition of gentility, Misses Morkan's Christmas party comes to an end.

III

Dubliners could be described as a memento of unfulfilled dreams and wishes, of frustrations and disillusion, experienced by ordinary citizens of Dublin. The fifteen vignettes delineate in their individual hues and shades how an inner cry for escape is muffled to silence and buried in the soil of sterility. The thematic trio of 'paralysis, gnomon and simony' (7) manifests itself in the process as the cause or consequence of a 'deadly work' (ibid.) by the city. What normally lies hidden underneath banalities then becomes palpable to the protagonist or the reader, or both. 'The Dead' holds back the motif of escape until the groundwork is laid, until its narrative world is steeped in an insidious claustrophobic atmosphere. Truly, under the unobtrusive cover of annual reunion and merrymaking, most of the scenes in the story take place in a stifling, enclosed space starkly epitomized by the coffins of the Trappist monks. The party itself is held in 'the dark gaunt house on Usher's Island' (199) with the small, vault-like pantry on the ground floor for a makeshift cloakroom. Yet nobody envisions escape but Gabriel, and all the other characters are domesticated to the milieu of Dublin. There is probably a single exception to this generalization – Mrs Malins. An expatriate set free from the cultural and psychological strictures of the city, the old lady is possessed of a wider spectrum of views and opinions.

It is worth noting that Gabriel's wish for escape is quaintly associated with shadowy figures as if he were guided to a certain destination by unseen hands. Now, another prominent Englishman presents his ponderous image in the inner vision of the protagonist. Twice during the course of the party, Gabriel's thoughts abruptly fly to the Wellington Monument, a huge obelisk erected in Phoenix Park in honour of Arthur Wellesley, first Duke of Wellington. After the unpleasant moments with Miss Ivors, Gabriel looks out of the window and indulges in temporary daydreaming :

The snow would be lying on the branches of the trees and forming a bright cap on the top of the Wellington Monument. How much more pleasant it would be there than at the supper-table. (218-9)

Once again, prior to his speech after the dinner, the protagonist's introspection drifts out of the heated room and toward the Monument :

The air was pure there. In the distance lay the park where the trees were weighed with snow. The Wellington Monument wore a gleaming cap of snow that flashed westward over the white field of Fifteen Acres. (230-1)

Far more contented and privileged than the other main characters of *Dubliners* except Jimmy Doyle of 'After The Race', Gabriel is the last person who is expected to long for escape from his present conditions of life. Yet tremulous moments set him in acute search for solace and comfort, for he is by nature a sensitive and insecure person as indicated by '[h]is delicate and restless eyes' (202). Furthermore, his inclination to isolation is testified by his habit of roaming around the city after work, the habit comparable with the obsessive plodding by Patrick Morkan's horse 'Johnny' around the equestrian statue of King William III. Like some of his counterparts in *Dubliners*, most notably Mr Doran of 'The Boarding House' and Mr Chandler of 'A Little Cloud', Gabriel imagines fleeing away when he feels psychologically challenged or threatened. What is peculiar about him is the object of his fancy. In no way does he yearn for a vague, distant land in the East but for a specific emblem of strength and magnanimity. The Duke of Wellington, or more appropriately his monument, provides a spiritual refuge for Gabriel. Born in Dublin and made a hero in the East, the English nobleman stirs a sense of reverence and admiration in this 'West Briton': it might be assumed that the latter's preoccupation with the European Continent is projected onto the Orient and substantiated vicariously by the former.

It is significant that the Wellington Monument faces to the west whereas the protagonist determinedly looks eastward to England and the Continent for cultural and intellectual stimulation. He awkwardly claims to Miss Ivors that he spends summer each year in the Continent 'partly to keep in touch with the languages and partly for a change' (215). He actually, albeit unknowingly, carries out an eastbound journey as he heads with Gretta for the Gresham Hotel on O'Connell Street. The motif of 'escape' appears to be fully executed when the couple arrive at the destination :

... as they stood at the hotel door, he felt that they had escaped from their lives and duties, escaped from home and friends and run away together with wild and radiant hearts to a new adventure. (246)

The enthusiasm that the protagonist believes he shares with his wife is ostensibly akin to the excitement shown by the boy-heroes of 'An Encounter' and 'Araby' on their secret excursion. But euphoria is destined to be short-lived in *The Dubliners*. Gabriel's personal expectation is soon to prove a grand illusion, and his new adventure a great fiasco, for he is unaware that Gretta is travelling west all the while on her own through memory. The disastrous situation prepares him for a radical turnaround in his spiritual journey.

More shadowy characters are in the wings to reinforce this move. On the way to the hotel, Gabriel cracks a joke about 'a white man' and flippantly salutes, 'Good night, Dan' (245), to the statue of Daniel O'Connell. This is the third time that he has treated the Irish dead pejoratively, after Ellen Conroy and Patrick Morkan. It is a commonplace in Irish history that the 'Liberator' persuaded Prime Minister Wellington to implement an unprecedented shift in the policies of the British government toward its closest colony. The Irish statesman lives up to his epithet in the story in that he provides a presentiment of the protagonist's recognition of spiritual liberation. His statue hallmarks the process in which Gabriel is pulled away from his emotional attachment to England and re-directed toward his native land. The snow-capped 'Dan' brilliantly matches the massive Wellington Monument in terms of the intensity of influences over Gabriel. The 'white horse' is ready to gallop around whereas the 'phoenix' remains lethargic in the snow. Moments of 'revelation' are soon to swoop on Gabriel.

As the narrative treads the metaphysical path to the west of Ireland, the shadow of death gradually deepens. A clear picture of Julia Morkan's funeral flashes in Gabriel's mind, while Mrs Malins appears as if she were placed in a coffin when she is hoisted into a cab with tremendous difficulty. The hero and heroine, too, squeeze themselves into a small cab and travel silently to the hotel enshrouded in an air of morbidity and darkness. The room reserved for them envisages a 'grey impalpable world' (255), where the living, the living dead, and the dead meet and mingle indiscriminately.

The ghost of Michael Furey is given a cameo role in the protagonist's inner growth as well as in the development of the plot. The young man from Oughterard incarnates what Gabriel is not – physically frail, pitifully undereducated, engaged in hard manual labour, and poignantly reticent. Above all, his passion, his readiness for self-immolation on behalf of love, takes the protagonist utterly by surprise. To Gabriel's inquisition, which camouflages his jealousy, angst and insecurity, Gretta replies curtly, 'I think he died for me' (252). If the utterance echoes *Cathleen ni Houlihan* as Florence L. Walzl shrewdly detects (26–7), W. B. Yeats claims a spot for shadows to promulgate the Gaelic cause further. Gretta's revelation aborts Gabriel's eastbound trip at its final stage and opens up a new horizon of awareness before him. His third failure with women (or his fourth if his mother is counted) raises existential doubts about his being. The disparity in gender is now firmly conjoined with the polarities between the living and the dead and between Europe and Ireland. In the meantime, things Irish, both contemporary and historical, begin to abound around the protagonist and gain momentum in asserting their value on his sensibility.

The concept of generosity in 'The Dead' is oriented in the materialistic sense of the word. There is no question about Gabriel's bounteousness and princely attitude in pecuniary terms: he even appears to be convinced that money can forestall and cure most problems in human relationships. His verbal inadequacy with Lily prompts him to offer a coin under the ridiculous pretext of 'Christmas-time! Christmas-time!'

(203), though his act of liberality aggravates rather than redresses the awkward situation. He pays a shilling more to the cab driver than the due fares. He lends a sovereign to Freddy Malins without much expectation or solicitation of repayment. He displays a different kind of generosity, which might be called 'fairness of spirit', when he offers to walk Miss Ivors home. It is hence not without cause that Gretta addresses him, though a little impassively, as 'a very generous person' (249).

There is nevertheless much reservation about his generosity in private domains. It is undeniable that Gabriel is a respectable citizen who has made most of his supreme education, hewed his way to success and prosperity, and cultivated distinctive tastes worthy to be termed 'cosmopolitan'. Despite, or rather, owing to these benefits and achievements, however, he is opinionated and pompous intellectually, awkward and callous emotionally. His personal limitations have acted more inwardly on him than socially and carved out of him an egocentric male who is scarcely generous as a husband and much less as a lover. On the way to the Gresham Hotel, the protagonist is indeed absorbed in his masculine fantasies and desires that accommodate no consideration of the feelings of their object.

Gabriel's solipsism and lack of insight all of a sudden meet robust challenge from 'some impalpable and vindictive being' (252) that ultimately assumes the figure of Michael Furey. The latter's alarming guilelessness at once scrapes any intellectual pretension and protection off the former, whose lofty intelligence ironically perceives him stunned and paralyzed in his naked frailties. The shadow shames the substance into humiliation, and hubris is hurled down to the ground where 'dwell the vast hosts of the dead' (255). The notion of generosity now gains a fresh meaning through the premature death of Gretta's first lover. As Miss Ivors' pugnacity lays bare the protagonist's cultural identity, so does Michael Furey's unpretentiousness his essential humanity.

IV

Awakened anew to the unfathomable profundity of life and love, Gabriel comes to accept Gretta as a separate human entity that he can neither own nor control. He persuades himself to acknowledge that her spiritual being long preceded their marriage and has long remained virtually nonexistent to him. Then 'a strange, friendly pity for her' (254) seizes the protagonist, a genuinely selfless feeling he entertains for the first time in the story. The '[g]enerous tears' (255) that fill his eyes bear a dual message with a subtle difference: they betoken his reinstatement as a generous person after moments of psychological perturbation and also brings him close, once again, to the image of the 'young man standing under a dripping tree' (ibid.). 'Water' serves here as the promise of regeneration before a physical death for Michael and as the symbol of regeneration after a spiritual death for Gabriel. The protagonist learns far more about the virtue of generosity

from the ordinary Irish boy than from all the intellectual exertions he has so far made. In addition, his sympathy with the pitifully innocent romance buried unknown in the countryside reminds him first of his obscure Irishness and then, with devastating impact, of his very Irishness in the sense that his life mimics the nightmarish history of his country. 'History' now makes its presence felt in the story as an elusive yet prodigious shadow, the history not only of Ireland but also of Gretta and Gabriel's own. It occurs to the protagonist that a travel westward to the heartland of his country might provide him with an opportunity to obtain better knowledge of all these histories and, by so doing, to ascertain his own ethnic identity. He has come a long way to the threshold of spiritual redemption and resurrection. It is anticipated that the story closes with Gabriel born again into a new self in the glow of the all-embracing snow.

'The Dead', however, eschews the beaten track of storytelling and thwarts the reader's wishful reading. The end of the tale is, as it were, a narrative labyrinth without a clear exit. The reader is required to seek his way out by deciphering a series of verbal enigmas and may more often than not end up wandering into a no man's land of literary ambiguity and indeterminacy. Florence Walzl's convenient overview (17) of the critiques of 'The Dead' cites three dominant types of interpretation concerning Gabriel's inner development and the meaning of the snow. The first type, advocated by Hugh Kenner (55-6) and Brewster Ghiselin (83-5), argues that Gabriel identifies with the dead and resignedly accepts the reality as it is without achieving any inner growth. The second type, supported by David Daiches (36) and Bernard Benstock (169), maintains that Gabriel attains spiritual maturation while his vision of the snow signifies an experience of rebirth. Richard Ellmann (*James Joyce*, 258-63) and W. Y. Tindall (45-6) are leading proponents of the last type of reading that focuses on ambivalence and multiple perspectives prevailing at the end of the story.

It might be suggested here that 'The Dead' evolves in line with the protagonist's spiritual growth and alters its form and tone accordingly. A mist of ambiguity indeed begins to hang over the final section of the story. There can also be pointed out a delicate change in the rhythm of the narrative voice. Such shifts all proceed from a unique synchronization of theme, characterization and style. As has been discussed above, two different tales, two different streams of consciousness, are embedded within the narrative framework of 'The Dead': the one is acted and verbalized by the living and living dead, while the other is implied and signalled by the dead and absent. The former makes up the bulk of the plot and strikes the ringing keynote of realism. The latter, anchored in the margins and haunting the former under various guises, furnishes depth, feeling and density, mostly by way of its application of symbol, imagery and analogy as its specific medium of expression.

What takes place towards the end of 'The Dead' is a considerable turnaround in the mode of narration, not much unlike Gabriel's in the state of his awareness:

His own identity was fading out into a grey impalpable world: the solid world itself, which these dead had one time reared and lived in, was dissolving and dwindling. (255)

As the protagonist's conviction of who he is crumbles away and his rationality ebbs to the brink of drowsiness, the active consciousness of the story rapidly wanes and dissolves into the inanimate one. The voice of the quick, in other words, begins to yield to that of the dead. The transition entails, thematically, dissipation of the dominant sense of reality and, technically, departure from the naturalistic mode of storytelling. What slips into the void is 'an etherealized world', as Seamus Deane (33) names it, sketched with a prominently Impressionistic touch, Continental in origin and style but Gaelic in spirit. Replacing logic and reason, imagination begins to pulsate and spin a tale in a mythic, almost oracular cadence as Gabriel, at the very moment of falling asleep, envisions the Bog of Allen, the Shannon River, and Michael Furey's grave.

'The Dead' is now adrift, along with the protagonist, in a hazy, indefinable sphere of the fundamentally Celtic texture, in the twilight zone of the pagan practice of remembering and cherishing the dead. Inflated from within by a combination of dream and fantasy, the narrative framework begins to betray an early sign of being stretched to the breaking point, beyond which no art of fiction was known to exist in Joyce's era. It can be conjectured that, looking far into the future of his artistry, the author conceived and tentatively experimented his ambitious idea of overcoming the confines of Naturalism and formulating a new vision of fiction during the composition of 'The Dead' (Ehrlich, 99–100).

Generally, tales are more difficult to finish than to begin. 'The Dead' ends in an on-going process of transmutation from paralysis to assimilation to epiphany, from reality to history to prophecy. The plot simply tapers off to the vanishing point of consciousness, to the undiscovered country of 'shadows'. The narrative voice is softly muffled to silence by the falling snow. A grand leveller like death, the snow veils the distinct shapes of the Wellington Monument and the statue of Daniel O'Connell. It likewise obliterates the difference in masculine values between Gabriel and Michael. Forming a part of the symbolism of 'water', the snow now functions as an arbitrator that nullifies the distance in time, place and gender. The protagonist, who listens to the taps of the snow on the window, travels westward in imagination through the space of history and fuses into the youthful Gretta who became alert at the sound of gravel thrown at her window years and years earlier. The nubile beauty of that girl is long lost, but Gabriel is amply comforted by his discovery of what goes much deeper than the skin. His love for Gretta is sublimated through a soul-to-soul intercourse, notably, in the bitter aftertaste of the cancellation of a physical one.

Looking east and west as well as forward and backward, the final scene with Gabriel and Gretta lying side by side embodies an integration of polarized visions in terms of representation. It recalls the picture of 'the two murdered princes in the Tower' (212) derived from Shakespeare's *Richard III* and also evokes an Irish

'lonely churchyard on the hill' (256). The plausible model in the latter case is the cemetery at Oughterard where Joyce came across the tombstones for Michael Bodkin and J. Joyce '[w]ith a sense of sacred coincidence' (Ellmann, *Joyce*, 336): 'Michael Bodkin' is the name of the boy with whom Joyce's wife Nora went out in her girlhood back in Galway. Differences and conflicts are contained, if not entirely eliminated, in 'an elegiac mode' in the phraseology of David Spurr (29). Setting the whole environment in monochrome, the falling snow lends a helping hand to this procedure. To die, to sleep – at the beck of a westbound journey and with a dim promise of redemption, the narrative swoons into a sheer silence, in which to play a 'Distant Music' (240) of its own.

Works Cited

- Benstock, Bernard. 'The Dead'. Clive Hart ed. *James Joyce's 'Dubliners': Critical Essays*. London: Faber, 1969, pp. 153–169.
- Daiches, David. 'Dubliners'. *The Novel and the Modern World*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1960, pp. 66–82; reprinted in Peter K. Garrett ed. *Twentieth Century Interpretations of 'Dubliners'*. Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice–Hall, 1968, pp. 27–37.
- Deane, Seamus. 'Dead ends: Joyce's finest moments'. Derek Attridge and Marjorie Howes, eds. *Semicolonial Joyce*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000, pp. 21–36.
- Ehrlich, Heyward. 'Socialism, Gender, and Imagery in *Dubliners*'. Jolanta W. Wawrzycka and Marlena G. Corcoran eds. *Gender in Joyce*. Gainesville, Fla: University Press of Florida, 1997, pp. 82–100.
- Ellmann, Richard. *James Joyce*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1959.
- ~ *Letters of James Joyce*, II. New York: Viking Press, 1969.
- Ghiselin, Brewster. 'The Unity of *Dubliners*'. *Accent*, XVI (Spring, 1956), 75–88 and (Summer, 1956), 196–213; reprinted in Peter K. Garrett ed. *Twentieth Century Interpretations of 'Dubliners'*, pp. 57–85.
- Gifford, Don. *Joyce Annotated: Notes for 'Dubliners' and 'A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man'*. Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1982.
- Ingersoll, Earl G. *Engendered Trope in Joyce's 'Dubliners'*. Carbondale and Edwardsville, Ill.: Southern Illinois University Press, 1996.
- Jackson, John Wyse and McGinlery, Bernard. *James Joyce's 'Dubliners': An Annotated Edition*. London: Sinclair–Stevenson, 1993.
- Joyce, James. *Dubliners*. 1914; rpt. London: Jonathan Cape, 1923.
- Kelleher, John V. 'Irish History and Mythology in James Joyce's "The Dead"'. *The Review of Politics*, 27: 3 (1965), 414–33.

- Kenner, Hugh. 'Dubliners'. *Dublin's Joyce*. London : Chatto & Windus, 1956, pp. 48–68 ; reprinted in Peter K. Garrett ed. *Twentieth Century Interpretations of 'Dubliners'*, pp. 38–56.
- McCarthy, Patrick A. 'Introduction' to Bosinelli, R. M. B. & Mosher, Jr. H. F. eds. *Rejoycing : New Readings of 'Dubliners'*. Lexington, Ken. : University Press of Kentucky, 1998, 1–9.
- McNally, James. 'K-Marked Names in *Dubliners*'. Clive Hart et al. eds. *Images of Joyce*. Gerrards Cross, Buckinghamshire : Colin Smythe, 1998. 408–15.
- Murray, J. A. H. & et al. *The Oxford English Dictionary*, Vol. IX. Oxford : Clarendon Press, 1933.
- Rice, Thomas Jackson. 'Dante ... Browning. Gabriel .. Joyce : Allusion and Structure in 'The Dead''. *James Joyce Quarterly*, 30 : 1 (Fall, 1992), 29–40.
- Spurr, David. 'Colonial Spaces in Joyce's Dublin'. *James Joyce Quarterly*, 37 : 1 and 2 (Fall, 1999 and Winter 2000), 23–39.
- Tindall, William York. *A Reader's Guide to James Joyce*. London : Thames and Hudson, 1959.
- Walzl, Florence L. 'Gabriel and Michael : The Conclusion of "The Dead"'. *James Joyce Quarterly*, 4 (1966/67), 17–31.
- Williams, Trevor L. *Reading Joyce Politically*. Gainesville, Fla. : University Press of Florida, 1997.