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TWO INSTANCES OF “CROW”: A CULTURAL STUDY  
OF IRISH MYTHOLOGY AND INTERTEXTUALITY IN “THE DEAD”

By

Joseph LaBine

A Thesis  
Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies  
through the Department of English  
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for  
the Degree of Master of Arts at the  
University of Windsor

Windsor, Ontario, Canada

2014

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Two Instances of “Crow”: A Cultural Study of Irish Mythology

and Intertextuality in “The Dead”

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## AUTHOR'S DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

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## ABSTRACT

Irish archetypes change the function of intertextuality in the “The Dead,” by mythologizing and de-anglicizing British intertextual allusions in the story, and suggest a new understanding of Joyce’s perception of cultural tensions in Ireland. Knowledge of these archetypes is a prerequisite to fully understanding this tension. Many critics fail to notice Joyce’s allusions because they are not reading the story within its defining context—which is the Irish Literary Revival. Celtic folklore helps convey his political outlook and his parody of literary activities in Ireland at the time of his writing. The story is essentially a parody with multiple levels of meaning in which the realistic and mythological levels do not cohere, and yet, paradoxically, it achieves an ironic thematic unity.

## DEDICATION

I dedicate this document, my master's thesis, to Johanna McCarthy, the woman who raised me. She read to me in Gaelic and showed me the old Irish stories; but she taught me as much about being Canadian and how to be part of a family as she did about Ireland. I am forever grateful. Is tú mo ghrá, is tú mo chuisle, agus tiocfaidh ár lá.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It would have been impossible to complete this work without the infinite patience of several people. The first such person is Stefanie Laurella. She endured several research trips to Dublin and travelled with me around Ireland, while I either read or wrote in a hotel room most of the time. Ms. Laurella encouraged my reading and rewriting with kindness and compassion and without her, well . . . no Joycean ellipses could suffice. My parents also encouraged me and believed I would eventually complete this thesis. I would like to acknowledge my readers Dr. Joanna Luft of the English department, Dr. Gordon Drake of Canterbury College and the Physics department, and, if just informally, Phil Hall who shared his passion for Joyce and etymology. I wish to recognize Jack Goodall, Chris Kerr, André Narbonne, Helena Mackenzie, Luke Frenette, Chris Genovesi, Faizal Deen, Brittini Carey, Andrew Kovacevic, Jasper Appler, and many of the other graduate students in the Windsor English department who were all good friends and suffered through numerous meandering conversations about Joyce. Having these conversations allowed me to test out my ideas and stay sane. My thanks go to the staff and helpful librarians at the James Joyce Centre in Dublin, the National Library of Ireland, the Toronto Reference Library, and Windsor's Leddy library. Lastly, I wish to thank my advisor Tom Dilworth. I do not possess the words (or silences) to account for the level of respect and appreciation with which I regard the man who, yelling at me, asked "do you even know what a comma is?" No, Tom. My idea of reading Joyce as a comic writer began in your classroom.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

AUTHOR’S DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY	iii
ABSTRACT	iv
DEDICATION	v
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	vi
CHAPTERS	
I. INTRODUCTION	1
II. STAGING A CÚ IN “THE DEAD”	7
III. THE BROKEN LIGHTS OF IRISH MYTH	24
Critical Background	28
People, Places, Parody and Puns	33
Yeats	38
Hyde	39
A. E.	41
J. M. Synge	42
IV. LADY GREGORY IN <i>DUBLINERS</i>	48
V. <i>ULYSSES</i> AND JOYCE’S UNFINISHED BUSINESS	55
VI. CONCLUSION	61
APPENDIX I: Etymological Allusions in “Counterparts”	64
APPENDIX II: The Lass of Aughrim (Lord Gregory)	70
WORKS CITED	73
VITA AUCTORIS	82



## Ch. 1 Introduction and Thesis Statement

### Introduction

In 1906, James Joyce reconsidered some of his conceptions of Irish culture after Grant Richards declined to publish his manuscript of short stories. In a letter to his brother Stanislaus dated 25 September, Joyce reflects that in “thinking of Ireland it seems to me that I have been unnecessarily harsh...In *Dubliners* at least...I have not reproduced its ingenuous insularity and its hospitality” (Ellmann 2: 166). In the same letter, he dismisses these reflections as “useless” and despairs of being able to “rewrite” his stories differently, despite Richards’s insistence that he write “in another sense.” He hastily terms the publisher’s advice “meaningless,” but his self-criticism reveals his deep concerns about portraying Ireland faithfully.

He quickly began planning new stories to expand the manuscript. On 30 September, he wrote Stanislaus: “I have a new story for *Dubliners* in my head” (Ellmann 2: 168). Richard Ellmann and Terence Killeen have pointed out that the story was to be titled “Ulysses,” but Joyce never wrote it. By 6 February, 1907, he asserted “Ulysses”:

never got any forrader than the title. I have other titles, e.g. *The Last Supper, The Dead, The Street, Vengeance, At Bay*: all of which I could write if the circumstances were favourable. (Ellmann 2: 209)

Ellmann and Killeen associate the “Ulysses” title of the story meant for *Dubliners* with Joyce’s plans for his later novel. However, in 1906 and 1907, in the midst of writing, heavy drinking, and relationship squabbles, Joyce was likely too preoccupied with finding a publisher who would accept his collection of short stories to plan a new novel. It seems more plausible that the “Ulysses” title signals his intentions to write a

mythological story for *Dubliners* and not a story he would expand into the novel he would begin almost ten years later.

Though Joyce never completed the “Ulysses” story, he did write a mythological story. Even though “Ulysses” and “The Dead” were different potential stories, out of the six titles he mentions in the 30 September letter, “The Dead” is the only title of a story published in *Dubliners*. It is also significant in light of his intentions to represent Ireland differently than he had in his earlier writing. In the story, he portrays ingenuous hospitality and alludes to mythology that resonates with Irish primordial culture not Greek mythology. The Irish mythology may have satisfied his mythological desire. These allusions render “The Dead” different than any other story in *Dubliners*. The final version of *Dubliners* was meant to satisfy the aspirations Joyce stated in 1906.

The presence of Irish mythology deepens the meaning of the story. As Thomas Dilworth points out in “Sex and Politics in ‘The Dead,’” Joyce’s interests in re-portraying Ireland are focussed on symbolic political representations of Irish hospitality and the etymology of Gabriel Conroy’s name, which literally means “hound” in Irish, and, though he neglects to make the suggestion, semantically evokes the hero CuChulain in the Ulster cycle of Celtic mythology. This allusion to mythology resonates with Irish cultural identity by deepening the meaning of sexual failure and symbolic political conflict in the story.

Unlike Joyce’s earlier writings, which failed to penetrate Ireland’s literary movement led by W. B. Yeats, Douglas Hyde, and Lady Gregory, with ridicule and parody, the story embodies mythology central to the Irish Literary Revival and appears to follow some of its directives. These Irish cultural allusions are no doubt meant to be

significant for Lady Gregory and the Gaelic enthusiasts at Coole Park. Some instances in the text appear to be coded messages. Joyce was likely familiar with Dr. Douglas Hyde's essay on "The Necessity for De-Anglicizing Ireland," as "The Dead" follows the "definite program" established by the Rev. Stopford Brooke in 1893, which J. W. Cunliffe outlines in his 1919 history of the Irish movement:

Irishmen of formative genius should take, one by one, the various cycles of Irish tales, and grouping each of them round one central figure, supply to each a dominant human interest to which every event in the whole should converge. (Cunliffe 251)

There was no doubt to Joyce that he was one of these "Irishmen of formative genius." In "The Dead," Joyce alludes to myths that surround the central figure Gabriel, positioning him as the etymological and imaginative evocation of an archetypal Irish hero, thus also placing him within the context of the Irish Literary Revival. Ironically, many of Joyce's contemporaries missed his allusions to Irish folklore in a text about a party that has affinity with a traditional Celtic rambling house.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Clodagh Brennan Harvey's discusses "rambling houses" in her article "Some Irish Women Storytellers and Reflections on the Role of Women in the Storytelling Tradition." Her description of the historic setting for one these story-telling occasions bears a close resemblance to "The Dead" with respect to the party setting and Mrs. Malins:

Delargy's [repeated] assertions on the subject of the superiority of men as narrators of *sgealta gaisce*, or hero tales: 'In Ireland I have found few women who can tell [Finn- or hero-]tales at all, and none who can compare with the men' (1945:181)...have since become virtually axiomatic in the tradition and in its related scholarship. The most important of the many contexts associated with traditional storytelling for men and women was the nightly visiting among neighbors which was customary in the Irish countryside until relatively recently. This custom is known by a wide variety of names in Irish (e.g., ar cuairt, "on a visit"; dirnedn, "night visiting") and in English (e.g., "rambling houses," "courting houses") Depending upon the size and nature of the group, such occasions might involve a multitude of activities as well as storytelling, including music making, dancing, singing, and the discussing of local news and affairs. These visits occurred most frequently during the winter months when the nights were long and cold and the demands of the agricultural cycle were fewer than they were during the other seasons. (Harvey 112)

The story is a cultural dialogue with Lady Gregory and other Irish Revival figures. Joyce's early fiction was his way of continuing his commentary on their ideas which he had already written about extensively in his non-fiction and poetry. Much scholarship on his involvement with the Irish Revival has been done already, first by G. J. Watson, in his book *Irish Identity and the Literary Revival* (1975) and, most recently, by Frank Shovlin, in *Journey Westward: Joyce, Dubliners and the Literary Revival* (2012). Watson's chapter "James Joyce: From Inside to Outside and Back Again" and Ulick O'Connor's account of Joyce meeting with Yeats and Gregory in his book, *Celtic Dawn* suggest there is a strong cultural and historical context to the mythological allusions and Irish politics in "The Dead." However, these allusions to Irish mythology in the story have not been noticed previously. They are essential to its significance because they help determine the full meaning of the story. They also correct Lady Gregory's accounts and establish continuity between Joyce's early and later writing.

My methodology is aimed at revealing how Joyce portrays Ireland. I emphasize the importance of letter writing to his creative process. I examine letters that mention "The Dead," as well as letters written before and during the period in which he composed *Dubliners*. With respect to instances of intertextuality, I consult many of the texts that Joyce mentions reading, books he read but fails to mention in his letters, and also relevant works that contextualize the period. Critics have written much about Joyce's reading list; therefore, for the sake of brevity, I focus exclusively on mythology and the Irish literary movement, paying particular attention to the texts that best illuminate Irish culture within Joyce's writing. These materials are grouped into three categories of primary texts: Joyce's critical writing before and during his composition of "The Dead"; collections of

Irish mythology, folklore and songs; and a range of popular texts written by Irish authors. However, I intend only to deal with the works most relevant to “The Dead” and *Dubliners* and to refer only to other primary texts as necessary.<sup>2</sup> For the sake of clarity, I have placed all lengthy commentary on these sources into footnotes whenever possible. In a few of these notes, I have also found it necessary to refer to the large body of literary criticism on Joyce’s works. Those frequently mentioned are John V. Kelleher, Thomas Dilworth, and Frank Shovlin: the first for beginning the discussion on Irish mythology in Joyce’s story; the second for developing a hermeneutical method and etymological research which revises aspects of Kelleher’s article; and the third for pointing out the subtle, near invisibility of Joyce’s allusions.

The four main sections of this study highlight Irish cultural allusions in the “The Dead.” The next chapter discusses sexual and political resonance of Joyce’s allusion to CuChulain. The third chapter documents his relationships with Lady Gregory and other Irish literary figures who are alluded to in the story and whose writings were integral to shaping his attitude while writing *Dubliners*. The fourth and fifth chapters suggest the impact these allusions have on the meaning of the story by re-historicizing its interpretation, the fifth showing that Joyce continued to develop them in *Ulysses*.

His letter writing and his association with the Irish Revival show that Joyce generated much of the content for “The Dead” by following the Gaelic League’s protocol for the Irish literary movement. He uses subtle allusions to satirize the work of other

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<sup>2</sup> A multitude of primary sources and ephemeral publications are listed in the bibliography of this study. Many of these were consulted to get a sense of the period Joyce was writing in and are texts he would have seen. However, many of these texts, while interesting in their own right, are not relevant to a discussion of “The Dead” but are addressed by Joyce later in *Ulysses*. For anyone interested I would recommend looking at the Cuala Press books. Gifford Lewis’s *The Yeats Sisters and the Cuala*. Black Rock, Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 1994, is the authority on these texts.

Irish authors and, in doing so, assumes in his readers an awareness of Irish culture. The story is Joyce's Irish mythological masterpiece, but it is necessary for me to present this subtext for my cultural study to be comprehensive.

### Thesis Statement

Irish archetypes change the function of intertextuality in "The Dead" by mythologizing and de-anglicizing British intertext, represented in allusions to Browning and Shakespeare. They represent an ironic shift in the story's dynamic tension. Knowledge of these archetypes is a prerequisite to fully understanding this tension. The story is essentially a parody of heroic Ireland with multiple levels of meaning in which the realistic and mythological levels do not cohere, and yet, paradoxically, it achieves an ironic thematic unity by relying on Irish folklore. Many critics fail to notice Joyce's allusions because they are not reading the story within its defining context—which is the Irish Literary Revival. Celtic folklore helps convey his political outlook and his parody of literary activities in Ireland at the time of his writing.

## Ch. 2 Staging a Cú in “The Dead”: Politics, Puns, and Mythology in Gabriel’s Surname

Building on the significance Thomas Dilworth establishes in “Sex and Politics in ‘The Dead,’” any comprehensive interpretation of the two-part structure of the story must be focussed on Gabriel and must explain the relationship between politics and sex. This relationship can be seen in the symbolic political representations of Irish hospitality and the etymology of Gabriel Conroy’s surname which semantically derives from the Celtic word “hound.” Dilworth fails to point out that the latter is synonymous with the Irish “CúChulain,” or “Cú Culain,” Gaelic for “hound of Culain” and also the given name of Setanta, the hero CuChulain in the Ulster cycle of Celtic mythology. This allusion to mythology embedded in Gabriel’s surname resonates with Irish cultural identity by deepening the meaning of his sexual failure and symbolic political failure in the story. Failure to read the story’s mythological resonances coincides with a failure to understand its cultural significance. CuChulain mythology unites both parts of “The Dead” and is central to understanding the symbolic connection between sex and politics.

The presence of CuChulain in the etymology of Gabriel’s surname is juxtaposed with his own political outlook. His name epitomizes his Irishness by symbolically uniting him with a key figure from Irish myth in several different scenes in the mythological story. These allusions give his character a cultural depth which, on a realistic level, he politically opposes. Gabriel’s surname unites him with Ireland’s heroic past, which contrasts with his steadfast refusal of Irish nationalism in favour of a broadly European and even specifically English outlook. The effect of this juxtaposition emphasizes his role in the story as a false hero or failed redeemer of Ireland. He does not

see the value in his own culture or the culture that is connected to his name. A mythological reading of Gabriel reinforces the epiphany at the end of the story as a revelation of his cultural failure and, therefore, does not differ from most critical readings where “Gabriel’s final submission to sexual frustration and death-reverie is a manifestation of spiritual paralysis” (Dilworth 158). However, the most convincing interpretations of the story are those that extend its meaning beyond a simple moral analysis of Gabriel to wider cultural themes.<sup>3</sup> Florence Walzl and Vincent Pecora have both explored the Christian resonances of Gabriel’s given name and have argued unconvincingly that redeemer qualities in Gabriel emphasize his affinity with Christ. If any such affinity existed, the reader would expect more from Gabriel, who is insecure, conceited, easily angered, and is driven by lust to the extent that he considers forcing himself on his wife at the end of the story. That he is disturbed enough by the thought of how brutal it would be to rape her indicates that he has a conscience, but hardly that he has redemptive qualities. Irish mythology is the key to understanding the story. There is nothing remarkable about Gabriel’s character other than his rejection of his own Irishness in favour of a more Euro-centric identity. The importance of this rejection is amplified by the meaning of his name and his attitude about the Irish language Revival; both have political implications because, symbolically, he has betrayed his country.

In “The Dead,” Gabriel is a parody of CuChulain. In depicting him as such, Joyce symbolically extends his criticism of Irish political failure by using an unworthy character to mock the archetypal figure that is intertwined with the modern propaganda

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<sup>3</sup> Many critics have argued convincingly that Gabriel’s revelation at the end of the story is a false epiphany. John V. Kelleher (1965), John Feeley (1982), Janet Egleson Dunleavy (1984), Thomas Dilworth (1986), Tara Prescott (2009), and Frank Shovlin (2012) all in some way find Gabriel’s new self-awareness at the end of the story to be empty.



machinery of the Irish Revival. CuChulain symbolizes bravery and heroism to the Irish; however, Joyce's allusion to CuChulain through Gabriel suggests that the modern Irish reject these heroic ideals. He uses Irish etymology and CuChulain to undermine the narrow-minded political agenda and language "propagandism" of the revivalists as unrealistic, romantic, and pretentious (*D* 192). The political and symbolic meaning of "Conroy" locates existential tension within Gabriel, who rejects Ireland by his own admission when he says he is "sick of it" (*D* 189). These conflicting political and mythological resonances juxtaposed in Gabriel can be adequately understood only in terms of the story's structural and thematic unity.

John V. Kelleher was the first to notice the importance of Gabriel's name for its etymological allusion to mythology. He convincingly argues several connections between the mythical figure "King Conaire" and Gabriel Conroy, whose surname is given "three syllables" (in a manner similar to the pronunciation of Conaire or Connery) by Lily the servant girl (*D* 177). Lily's pronunciation of the name at the beginning of the story allows phonetically for the misinterpretation of the Irish version "rí," meaning "king." Kelleher suggests that Joyce alludes to the "Old Irish Saga, *Togail Bruidne Dá Derga*, or "The Destruction of Da Derga's Hostel" (419). He traces the source text for the myth back to its appearance "in *Revue Celtique* in 1901 and 1902, around which time...Joyce studied Irish 'for a year or two'" (419). Kelleher accurately demonstrates Joyce's interest in the flurry of works on Irish mythology published at the beginning of the twentieth century. He emphasizes that Joyce's knowledge of these Irish myths would have likely originated in print sources rather than by word of mouth. While Joyce's proficiency in Gaelic, or modern Irish, is a weak foundation for Kelleher's argument, "The Destruction

of Da Derga's Hostel" is a logical narrative for Joyce to allude to because it takes place in Dublin, in an area not far from where the story is set. However, convincing as Kelleher's account is, Dilworth observes that these connections are predicated on a false etymology of Gabriel's last name. He argues that this false etymology actually evokes the myth of the Mock King, wherein Gabriel's failure to have sexual intercourse is symbolically "disastrous" because he has not completed the archetypal fertility ritual (165). In Irish, Conroy becomes Cú and Conroi, literally meaning "hound." This deliberate representation of the name is a substantive basis for exploring CuChulain mythology and Irish political tension within the text. The allusions to myth indicate Joyce's willingness to use Irish archetypes to achieve the story's thematic unity.

There are several other political and historical allusions connected to Gabriel's surname. Frank Shovlin notes that Conroy is a patriotic name associated with the name of "Father Andrew Conroy of Lahardane...an important leader of the 1798 uprising against British rule in County Mayo," an association he aligns with Gabriel's brother Constantine who is also senior curate in Balbriggan (135). The most obvious connection is to Bret Harte's novel *Gabriel Conroy* (1876), which "opens with a description of snow falling silently, reminiscent of the famous last paragraph of Joyce's story" (Shovlin 137). The name Conroy figures prominently in William Rooney's *Poems and Ballads* (1902), which Joyce reviewed for the *Daily Express* in December of 1902. Either work could have inspired Joyce to use the name in his story. These historical and political allusions are not at odds with a CuChulain-based interpretation of "The Dead" however, because they occur at a different (realistic) psychological depth in the story and the work clearly has multiple imaginative levels. While the archetypal interpretation of his name has the

most symbolic resonance throughout the story, it is important to look at allusions at all levels.

Shovlin connects Harte's novel with the snow falling at the end of "The Dead," but he fails to mention the snow falling at the beginning of the story and how this evokes CuChulain in Gabriel's opening and closing descriptions. As the story begins, the reader can assume that snow is falling outside because Gabriel is described as having "a light fringe of snow...like a cape on the shoulders of his overcoat" (*D* 177). The cape is central to a symbolic portrayal of the hero CuChulain and also reinforces the false etymology of his name by depicting him as a king since part of royal regalia is a cape. The snowy "toecaps on the toes of his galoshes" resemble the toecaps seen on armoured boots. This description also has unity with a literal reading of the surname because the "Gaelic original is Mac Conroi, which means hound of the plain, or of the battlefield" (Dilworth 163). Norma Lorre Goodrich suggests that snow is symbolically important to the folklore because CuChulain's "victory brings an end to winter, but like the winter sun, he dies in order to give birth to spring" (178). Most importantly, the snow cover links Gabriel's footwear to the "bright cap" on top of the phallic Wellington monument, an image of infertility, which he contemplates later in the story (*D* 192).

Both Dilworth and Tara Prescott point out that the snow-covered Wellington Monument symbolizes a phallus, and these interpretations, along with Gabriel's contraceptive waterproof footwear, amplify the sexual and political resonance of his failure. The snow-covered galoshes have an affinity with the tip of the monument, but they also evoke "Wellington boots," which are better known by the name, "Wellies," and were popular in Joyce's time. The monument's phallic appearance foreshadows the

sexual failure in the Gresham hotel room and evokes the CuChulain folklore because, as mythologist John Sharkey observes, “phallic symbolism is represented all over the Celtic realm in prehistoric stones...in the *Táin Bó Cúalgne*, Cú Chulainn foils King Ailill by ramming his two emissaries, his daughter and his fool, on two standing stones” (31). As the only upright cylindrical object in the story, the Wellington Monument echoes the archetypal pillar-stone CuChulain tied himself to at his death.

King Billy’s monument symbolically evokes the historic defeat of the Irish Catholic supporters of James II at the Battle of Boyne, and thus has political significance for Protestants and Catholics. Roger Cox establishes that the horse imagery and puns are integral features in the story.<sup>4</sup> Dilworth argues the political importance of the horse motif by tracing it to this equestrian statue, which “assume[s] overt political significance in Gabriel’s symbolic encounter with King William III” during the anecdote about Patrick Morkan (160). Given the prominence of the horses Dub Sainglend (“black of Saingliu”) and Liath Macha (“grey of Macha”) and in the CuChulain mythology, it is likely that the monument has both British Imperial and Irish archetypal significance.

Monuments have an ambiguous significance in “The Dead” in how they evoke Irish defeat but also resonate with primordial Irish warrior culture. By linking the Wellington Monument and the statue of William of Orange on horseback to various elements of the CuChulain story, Joyce mythologizes the sites as symbols of British imperialism and enhances their political importance as markers of Irish defeat. These images become ambiguous in relation to the statue of Daniel O’Connell, which is symbolic of Catholic struggle for emancipation. Like the Wellington monument, it too, is covered in snow. Miss O’Callaghan’s comment that “you never cross O’Connell Bridge

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<sup>4</sup> Cox, Roger. “Johnny the Horse in Joyce’s ‘The Dead.’” *JJQ* 4 (1996): 35-41. Print.

without seeing a white horse” draws a symbolic connection between the O’Connell monument and King Billy’s equestrian statue, and evokes CuChulain’s second horse (*D* 214).

Galoshes and boots reveal Gabriel’s sexual anxiety in both parts of the story. When he tells his aunts about his decision to book a hotel room rather than make the journey home after the party—seemingly an attempt to accommodate Gretta who “caught a dreadful cold...last year,” he laughs “nervously” as Gretta jokes about the galoshes he makes her wear (*D* 180). The explanation for the hotel room characterizes Gabriel as genuinely protective of his wife; however, the conclusion of the story reveals that his motivation to stay at the Gresham is sexual and selfish. In this second part of the story, Gretta tells her husband about her romance with Michael Furey. In an effort to encode Gabriel’s sexual anxiety and possibly avoid censorship, Joyce employs a similar image to the galoshes in the scene where Gabriel neurotically contemplates Gretta’s refusal of sexual opportunity:

Perhaps she had not told him all the story. His eyes moved to the chair over which she had thrown some of her clothes. A petticoat string dangled to the floor. One boot stood upright, its limp upper fallen down: the fellow of it lay upon its side. (*D* 222)

The limp boot has symbolic affinity with the galoshes at the beginning of the story. Its limpness, in proximity to the women’s clothing, suggests the alternatives in sexual encounter between stiff arousal and incapacity. The boot’s description bears similarity to Cuchulain’s death, when he ties himself to a pillar-stone “with his breast-belt, that way he would not meet his death lying down, but would meet it standing up,” the purpose of

performing this task so close to death being to leave his enemies “in dread of going close to him, for they were not sure but he might still be alive” (Gregory, *Cuchulain of Muirthemne*, 340). Likewise, the boot’s “fellow” resembles Cuchulain’s horse, Liath Macha, which lay on its flank, dead, beside him on the battlefield.

Through the boot, Joyce symbolically evokes the myth as an analog to Gabriel’s sexual failure. The close of the story also shows him being unheroic with Gretta. He contemplates “how poor a part he, her husband, had played in her life” when another “man had died for her sake” (*D* 222). This morbidity couples with his sexual frustration and causes him to reflect on a heroic cliché: “Better pass boldly into that other world, in the full glory of some passion, than fade and wither dismally with age” (*D* 223). The word “passion” implies sexual passion, which Gretta and Gabriel evidently, for now, do not share. On a realistic level, they will likely stay married. Their children are the result of a sex-life; however, on a symbolic level, the story ends as if they “had never lived together as man and wife” (*D* 222). His only revelation is that heroics and a connection to the West of Ireland are two keys to success with the woman he calls his wife.

Gabriel’s reverie, brought on by the failures of the evening, is his symbolic death. He meets this symbolic end by pitying himself in bed, which contrasts with CuChulain’s own heroic death standing up:

He thought of how she who lay beside him had locked in her heart for so many years that image of her lover’s eyes when he had told her that he did not wish to live...He had never felt like that himself towards any woman but he knew that such a feeling must be love. The tears gathered more thickly in his eyes and in the partial darkness he imagined he saw the form

of a young man standing under a dripping tree. Other forms were near. His soul had approached that region where dwell vast hosts of the dead...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...The time had come for him to set out on his journey westward. (*D* 223)

The story's sexual imagery, heroic mythology, and politics are all connected in the ambiguous temporality evoked in these last moments of Gabriel's consciousness. There is a sense of timelessness wherein the past and present coincide. Ireland's Celtic past is part of the spirit world that is briefly evoked here before "dissolving and dwindling" away. However, in turning his attention to the west, Gabriel symbolically focusses on Connacht and the Gaeltacht, a region of the country that is linguistically and politically nationalist.

Politicized etymological references to the west of Ireland and other allusions to Celtic myth scattered throughout the story add depth and weight to Gabriel's poignantly ironic reverie in the last scene. Like Gabriel, Freddy Malins evokes an Irish mythological figure. His name "Freddy" is similar to "Ferdiaid," a friend of CuChulain, known for dying with honour at the hero's hand. A typical Irish stereotype, Freddy is an alcoholic, and Gabriel mimics CuChulain's action, symbolically murdering his friend by lending him a pound to open a Christmas card stand, which, Gabriel can only have assumed Freddy would spend on drink, though Freddy honourably pays it back in the story. In Joyce's portrayal, neither man is heroic. On a realistic level, Gabriel and Freddy are not positive representations of Irish manhood and, on a symbolic level, they ironically mock the mythology by being unworthy of it.

These previously unnoticed allusions to Irish mythology in “The Dead” are derived partly from Lady Gregory’s texts, which Joyce was aware of. He was corresponding with Gregory and Yeats while planning the story.<sup>5</sup> He was angry about the Irish revivalists’ appropriation of Celtic mythology, and his allusive retellings evince what he perceived to be the important components of the stories. The allusions to CuChulain and Finn in “The Dead” imply more culturally resonant versions of the myths than Lady Gregory provided in both of her books. Her vague translations lacked certain words that Joyce viewed as essential. His allusions target her texts because he knew her accounts excluded important details from the original mythology.

Gregory’s most significant omission from her translation of the CuChulain myth is the word “crow,” in favour of the more general translation “bird.” In most versions of the myth, the symbol of refusing to surrender is a crow, which lands on the hero’s shoulder, making his death known; only afterwards do his enemies approach the body to cut off the head. Joyce knew the version of the myth that included the word “crow,” and it is woven into “The Dead” at particular instances of failure. First, when Molly Ivors has “a crow to pluck” with Gabriel about his writing in the *Daily Express*. Their discussion terminates in a row over his refusal to go to the Aran Islands, and this stubbornness ultimately causes him to falter with his wife who sarcastically calls him a “nice husband” (D 187, 191). The second failure pertains to the conclusion of Mr. Bartell D’Arcy’s singing. When asked why he stopped abruptly, D’Arcy remarks, “I’m as hoarse as a crow” (D 211). The third instance corresponds to a bird pun in the narrative during a

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<sup>5</sup> Lady Gregory did not translate *Togail Bruidne Dá Derga* but her books *Cuchulain of Muirthemne: The Story of the Men of the Red Branch of Ulster Arranged and put into English by Lady Gregory* (1902) and *Gods and Fighting Men: The Story of the Tuatha De Danaan and of the Fianna of Ireland, Arranged and put into English by Lady Gregory. With a Preface by W. B. Yeats* (1904) were known to Joyce and available in Europe.



description of Freddy Malins, who listens to Julia Morkan's singing with "his head *perched sideways*" (*D* 193, my italics). On one level, Gregory's choice of "bird" over "crow" is bad writing; however, on another level, it is symbolic of Irish revivalist contamination of the idea of CuChulain. The symbol of Irish refusal to surrender to British culture, seen in the stone pillar and the crow, is reduced by bad translation. Joyce's use of the word "crow" with his evocation of CuChulain is the beginning of a corrective dialogue with the Gaelic League.

The CuChulain allusions also bear a close similarity to The Finn cycle mythology, which is also evoked in the story. These resonances continue the corrective dialogue. Gregory's book on the Fianna leaves out a key conceit from an episode in "The Boyhood Deeds of Finn," the idea that Finn can recall the knowledge of the Salmon of Wisdom by singing. According to Cross and Slover's 1936 translation: "whenever he [Finn,] put his thumb into his mouth and sang through *teinm laida*, then whatever he had been ignorant of would be revealed to him" (Cross and Slover 365). Joyce understood the relationship between singing and the myth; one could argue this is one of the reasons singing plays such an integral role in "The Dead." It is possible that Joyce read other English versions of the CuChulain myth, Standish James O'Grady's *Cuculain Cycle* for instance. However, Gregory's translations were available and no other English texts of the Fianna cycle appeared until Charles Squire's *Celtic Myth and Legend, Poetry and Romance* (1912). There is no record of him studying the original Irish manuscripts, but he undoubtedly knew the myths well enough to correct Gregory. These corrections are consistently politically significant and, therefore, meaningful to the reinterpretation of "The Dead."

The allusion to “The Boyhood Deed of Finn” deepens the meaning of Gabriel’s sexual passion. When Gabriel sees Gretta on the stairs flashing the “salmonpink panels of her skirt,” and hears “a few notes of a man’s voice singing” a song in “the old Irish tonality,” the combination enlivens Gabriel’s sexual passion for his wife and moves him to recall their intimacy (*D* 209, 210). His nostalgic recollection of their personal life contrasts with Gretta’s being reminded of Michael Furey, upon whom the climax of the story hinges. The singing in Gretta’s memory, which corresponds symbolically to the singing in the mythology, achieves a transition by shifting the political tension from the dinner party towards the sexual tension in the hotel room.

The allusion to the “The Boyhood Deed of Finn” is reinforced by puns on the word “catch.” Mrs. Malins has a voice with “a catch in it like her son’s” (*D* 190). She tells an anecdote to Gabriel that has a strong affinity with The Salmon of Knowledge episode from the myth:

Her son-in-law brought them every year to the lakes and they used to go fishing. Her son-in-law was a splendid fisher. One day he caught a fish, a beautiful big big fish, and the man in the hotel boiled it for their dinner.

Gabriel hardly heard what she said. (*D* 191)

In the myth, Finneas catches the Salmon of Knowledge and gives it to Finn to cook with explicit instructions not to taste it. Finn burns himself while boiling the salmon and sticks his thumb in his mouth to soothe it, thus receiving the fish’s special knowledge.<sup>6</sup>

The pun on “catch,” as in a stammer, alludes to the myth by referring to the verb “catch.”

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<sup>6</sup> In “Some Observations on the Text of ‘Dubliners’: ‘The Dead’” (1962), Robert Scholes notes that Joyce changed the original wording of the verb in the anecdote from “cooked” to “boiled” on one of the proof copies of *Dubliners* as late as 1912, but the change was not reflected in the original publication and now only appears in the revised text.

In the anecdote recited by Mrs. Malins, the verb appears in the past tense: “caught a fish.” Both noun and verb evoke the fish in the anecdote. The latter meaning corresponds symbolically to Gretta’s “salmonpink panels.” The evocation is significant because the conceit of the story rests on Gretta having a special knowledge (recalled by singing) that Gabriel does not have.

Gabriel’s cultural emptiness is apparent in several discrepancies surrounding the myths. The description of the way in which he receives Mrs. Malins’s story is ironic because most of it is “hardly heard.” On a realistic level, the meaning of this phrase pertains to his inability to hear her because of the noise in the room, or his inability to understand her stammer. He is also so preoccupied with his speech and his encounter with Molly Ivors that he is only half-listening. On symbolic level, women being frequently repositories of folklore and mythology in oral culture, he hardly hears the evocation of “The Boyhood Deed of Finn.”<sup>7</sup> Given the resonance of the myth and its importance to the story’s musical turn, Gabriel is also culturally hard-of-hearing. His failure to pay attention to Molly, Mrs. Malins, and Gretta, and his arrogance towards them, has symbolic significance. By mistreating them, he is degrading Irish culture.

Joyce clearly enjoyed these intertextual and mythological allusions. Molly Ivors’ phrase “I have a crow to pluck with you” is intertextual (*D* 187). The word “crow” does not evoke the CuChulain myth on its own. However, given the proximity of the word to Gabriel, who evokes CuChulain by name, and his proximity to the *Daily Express*, which

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<sup>7</sup> Both Clodagh Brennan Harvey, in “Some Irish Women Storytellers and Reflections on the Role of Women in the Storytelling Tradition”(1989) and Janet and Gareth Dunleavy, in “The Hidden Ireland of Irish Landlords: Manuscript Evidence of Oral Tradition” (1974), argue convincingly for the dominant role of women in proliferating and collecting Irish folk tales. Joyce also knew that women are the custodians of Irish cultural knowledge and reflects on the idea in a letter to Nora about her mother, dated 26 August 1909.

connects three CuChulain scholars, Gregory, Hyde, and O'Grady to the story, it seems plausible that word has a significant meaning. The reference highlights the CuChulain mythology, but is also textually ambiguous in how it alludes to a British intertext within the story. The expression "a crow to pluck" is a cliché, but it may also allude to a scene in chapter thirty five of Charlotte Brontë's *Villette*. In Brontë's novel, the expression appears in Lucy Snowe's angry conversation with her colleague, Paul Emanuel, about an "examination" she has to endure because of his meddling.<sup>8</sup> Brontë uses the same expression, and the possible allusion to her novel corresponds to the exchange in the story between Molly and Gabriel, when the other dancers turn "to listen to the cross-examination" (D 189). As Anthony Kearney suggests in his article about intertextuality in *The Portrait of The Artist*, Joyce has a frequent habit of "reworking a familiar device of earlier fiction. At the same time, not content with mere reworking, he adds some extra meanings of his own" (35).<sup>9</sup>

The tension between Catholic Paul and Protestant Lucy in *Villette* may inform the political background and sexual conflict in "The Dead," which Dilworth, Thurston, and other commentators have written about extensively. Paul and Lucy's personal relationship is defined, at least partly, by their religious beliefs and their political affiliation with either Catholic France or Protestant England. By possibly using Brontë's words to beckon CuChulain, Joyce may be conflating the British with the Irish, as he does with the monuments. The resulting hybridity is actually a truer Celtic representation

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<sup>8</sup>(Brontë, *Villette*, 493-494). The note for "a crow to pluck" in the 1984 Penguin edition of *Villette* edited by Mark Lilly cites the expression as being synonymous with "a bone to pick" and references Dromio of Ephesus in *The Comedy of Errors* (III, i, 83).

<sup>9</sup>Kearney, Anthony. "Joyce's A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man." *The Explicator* 56.1 (1997): 33-35. Print. Kearney notes instances of Zola's *L'Oeuvre* (1886), Daudet's *L'immortel* (1888), and Flaubert's *Madame Bovary* (1857), in *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. Joyce had clearly read nineteenth century French literature and had also likely read Brontë's *Villette*, a British work with many correspondences to French literature.

because areas in Britain, Ireland, Scotland, and Wales were all sites of Celtic culture, and the pre-Christian Celts did not know the nationalistic and political boundaries imposed on the land in the later centuries. With respect to *Villette*, Molly Ivors's name bears some similarity to that of Lucy Snowe and evokes a similar whiteness. Their character descriptions are also similar. In his notes on *Villette*, Mark Lilly writes that the phrase "a crow to pluck" dates back to the fifteenth century and is used by Brontë to evoke a scene from *The Comedy of Errors*. Joyce may be using it to evoke CuChulain, Victorian fiction, and Shakespeare simultaneously. He is also joking because Gabriel emotionally "eats crow," after he is humiliated by Ivors. The allusion to Shakespeare's play enhances the joke. The original phrase appears in a poem that Dromio of Ephesus recites to his master:

A crow without feather? Master, mean you so?

For a fish without a fin, there's a fowl without a feather;

If a crow helps us in, sirrah, we'll pluck a crow together.<sup>10</sup>

Gretta's comment "you're the comical girl, Molly," strengthens a possible allusion to Shakespeare's comedy (*D* 196). The play and "The Dead" also have similar themes. Miscommunication and confusion in both works create marital tensions. In the play, Adriana experiences sexual anxiety as her husband, Antipholus, is mistaken for his brother. Joyce's story is largely about Gabriel's identity crisis. He is mistaken for a West Briton and a generous family member. The false and true etymologies of his surname give him resonances by which he can be mistaken for a hero, a king, King Conaire, and CuChulain.

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<sup>10</sup> (Shakespeare, *The Comedy of Errors* III, i, 83). It seems likely that Joyce would have favoured the play because unlike Synge's play, which he mocked for not following an Aristotelian model, Shakespeare's play does follow an Aristotelian model.

Gabriel's name is most powerfully evocative of Irish mythology and, if it were properly translated into English, he would be called Gabriel Hound. Dilworth's claim that Joyce would have known this is convincing. He states that "that anyone with an amateur knowledge of Gaelic – and Joyce had at least that – would recognize the *Cu* of Curoi and the Con of Conroy as meaning 'hound.' According to his brother Stanislaus, James Joyce had spent over a year studying Irish... Any Irish schoolboy would know the story of how Cuchulain, 'the hound of Ulster' got his name" (Dilworth 170).

In as much as Gabriel represents Ireland in his name, his sexual and political blunders suggest that the Irish are complicit in their own symbolic defeat. Most Irish of the time opposed the British politically, but they accommodated them personally and culturally. Joyce shows this accommodation by using the stereotype of Irish hospitality. The Morkan family's hospitable accommodation of the British suggests a degeneration of Irish culture. This symbolic and real accommodation resonates with political self-betrayal that is also historically true in Ireland.

"The Dead" emphasizes that Ireland's cultural and spiritual paralysis inhibits the development of meaning and forms of Irish self-expression. In the past and in current myth CuChulain transcends this paralysis. Gabriel's sexual failure is symbolic of realistic Irish political failure, but these failures are not essential to all Irish culture, and the allusions to mythology confirm this view. The story exemplifies Joyce's changing attitude about Celtic themes and the presence of mythological allusions. The etymology of character names is evidence of this. The political and symbolic meaning of "Conroy" locates Gabriel with CuChulain and false warrior-redeemer culture. Most importantly, he uses the CuChulain allusion in Gabriel's name, and the sense of culture it evokes, to

check Ireland. This allusion in “The Dead,” which is arguably the most important because it evokes fundamental Irish ideals, has not previously been commented on by critics.

### Ch. 3 “the broken lights of Irish myth”: A Portrait of the Irish Literary Renaissance in “The Dead”

There is no need to place James Joyce in the Irish Literary Renaissance because he is already generally recognized as there. He wrote about Gaelic League members in his letters, and they wrote about him. The correspondence reveals that Joyce’s contribution to critical thought on Irish writing in the period, even in its derision, is still significant. He caused a sensation amongst the revivalists, and their association with Joyce, prior to his fame and recognition in Ireland, is also a significant context to his early writing, whether he agreed with their politics or not. Joyce had personal relationships with the revivalists and his allusive nods to them and their works in “The Dead” suggest his familiarity; but more significantly, these allusions suggest his implied criticism of the Revivalist agenda. This context is vital to a full understanding of Joyce’s work because it shows how George Russell (known as A. E.), J.M. Synge, W. B. Yeats, Lady Gregory, and Douglas Hyde all share a ghostly presence in “The Dead.”

The following chapter aims to emphasize that “The Dead” is a parody of the Irish Literary Revival in several ways. The first section couples primary accounts of Joyce’s friendships with revivalists with critical analysis of republications of his satiric poems targeting revival figures, his critical essays, and his published articles about the movement and Irish politics; the historical and cultural context to *Dubliners* begins to emerge from these sources. A section on the critical writing about “The Dead” emphasizes that essential connections to the Revival are missing from Joycean discourse. The middle section of the chapter discusses all the allusions to each key figure with the exception of Lady Gregory, who is arguably the revivalist Joyce is most concerned with



her implication in the ballad, “The Lass of Aughrim” is discussed extensively in Chapter Four.

The impact of the revivalists on “The Dead” has its counterpart in the dialogue he generated amongst them. They seem to have accurately predicted that Joyce would be the next great Irish writer. Joyce’s allusions to the revivalists suggest that he was invested in garnering their attention and generating an Irish cultural dialogue.

Joyce had a predilection for writing about people he knew. His acquaintance with Gaelic League members makes it seem more plausible that he would use them as models for his stories. Yeats is mentioned as “a friend of mine” in “Ireland: Island of Saints and Sages” (Joyce, *Occasional, Critical, and Political Writing*, 126).<sup>11</sup> Joyce also briefly praises him in “Today and Tomorrow in Ireland.” If they were friends, Joyce was certainly a terrible friend. At their first meeting, the younger writer laughed uproariously at the elder’s suggestion that he should read Balzac; then, after asking Yeats’s age, insulted him by saying, “I met you too late, you are too old” (O’Conor 297). In “The Soul of Ireland,” Joyce mocked how Yeats’s age was reflected in his writing when he criticized *The Celtic Twilight* for “the fullness of its senility,” and this idea reappears in “The Dead” (*OCPW* 75).

The meaning of “The Dead” is not limited to satire, but understanding the subtle corrective dialogue with Anglo-Irish writers within the story is essential to its intertextual interpretation. The rhetorical structure of this satire implicates the revivalists as readers in their failure to understand the references to themselves. This failure suggests intellectual degeneration for which the Irish Revival is responsible. Joyce encodes references to their

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<sup>11</sup> Joyce, James. *Occasional, Critical, and Political Writing*. Ed. Kevin Barry. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2000. Print. Hereafter cited as *OCPW*.

texts—handcrafted allusions to fit his hybrid notion of Irish identity, mythology, and intertextuality. By alluding to their works, he was seeking fame and he was challenging them as intended readers to respond to his ideas. These gestures contain the seed of his vision of Ireland taking shape and it has been largely misunderstood.

Joyce evokes the Irish Revival so frequently in his early writing that it has become a common trope in his writing. Of his satiric poems, the most noteworthy are “The Holy Office” (1904), and the “Satire on the Brothers Fay” (June 1904). In the Fay poem, a traditional limerick, the speaker ridicules a performance at the Abbey theatre by alluding to his drunkenness with the phrase “for I lay in my urine” (*Poems and Exiles* 78). The conceit of the poem is the notion that the speaker makes more of a spectacle out of himself than the famous Abbey players. The name “Gaelic League” is also frequently a derisive signifier. In chapter XXVI of *Stephen Hero*, Stephen reductively refers to someone as a “Gaelic League chap.” Also in *Stephen Hero*, Stephen remarks to Heffernan, “my own mind is more interesting to me than the entire country.” Comic writing about the group also has a counterpart in his critical writing. On 21 October 1901, he co-published “The Day of the Rabblement,” a two and a half page attack on Yeats, the Revival, and the Irish Literary Theatre, in a pamphlet along with Francis Skeffington’s essay, “A Forgotten Aspect of the University Question.” The latter argued in favour of equality for women attending university. We shall see that the linkage of these two essays is significant for the story.

Despite his criticism of the Revival, Joyce’s knowledge of the Gaelic League is too extensive to ignore. Extracts of his criticism and commentary on the movement can be found in several Irish notebooks held in the Yale manuscript collection. His Italian

lecture, entitled “Ireland: Island of Saints and Sages,” demonstrates a thorough understanding of Irish translation as well as Gaelic League and German scholarship on “Irish Grammar” (*OCPW* 109). Dilworth suggests that, during his exile, “Joyce was a patriot. When seeking help for the publication of *Dubliners* from Arthur Griffith, the founder of *Sinn Fein*, Joyce...boasted that he was the only Irishman on the Adriatic coast publishing articles in Triestine newspapers in favour of Home Rule” (“Sex and Politics,” 169). Kevin Barry and Conor Deane have located an extract entitled “The Irish Literary Renaissance,” originally written in Italian, which they suggest is part of a third lecture that Joyce intended to deliver at the Università Popolare, in Trieste, May 1907 (Barry and Deane 321). If one follows a biographical timeline for the author, it is apparent that he was thinking about Irish mythology and the revival of the Irish language, and writing about Irish literary figures, while writing “The Dead.”

Joyce’s awareness of the Gaelic League, and their efforts to popularize Irish manuscript scholarship in Ireland, suggest that Irish folklore is worth examining as context to the story. Lady Gregory’s translations of *CuChulain* and “The Coming of Finn” and Gaelic League efforts to rewrite and republish the mythology predate and inform the mythological allusions in “The Dead.”<sup>12</sup> It is unlikely that Joyce read the original Irish but his Italian lectures suggest the depth of his knowledge concerning work being done in Gaeilge. The intertextual connections to Lady Gregory and the revivalists, through dialogic allusions to mythology, are significant hybrids; they have a Gaelic

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<sup>12</sup> Ireland’s Mythology scholarship is frequently associated with the Gaelic League, but it is difficult to name with certainty the version of the text Joyce would have seen. He may have read Standish James O’Grady’s English version of the *Cuculain Cycle* (1894), which appeared in three volumes. O’Grady was considered the Father of the Celtic Revival by Yeats, Gregory, and Russell. Joyce may also have been familiar with the Finn Cycle through the popularity of the Irish version that appeared in *Silva Gadelica* (two volumes, 1892), which was arranged by Standish Hayes O’Grady (cousin to Standish James O’Grady).

League context, but different political motives. The revivalists sought to rekindle heroic ideals from Celtic folklore, and Joyce is countering by making Gabriel Conroy seem unheroic. His allusions reclaim the primordial culture of mythology from those revivalists who were using it for political propaganda.

### Critical Background

In “Mr. Joyce and Dr. Hyde: Irish selves and doubles in ‘The Dead,’” Luke Thurston briefly touches on the allusion to the Irish mythology in the story, but greatly misrepresents Joyce’s position and neglects the historical revivalist context to the story. The article distorts the cultural sub-text to *Dubliners* by limiting its interpretation by focussing on Joyce’s rejection of the Irish Revival and its supporters:

For a while, in Douglas Hyde the young Joyce saw everything he loathed about the Celtic Revival, with its well-heeled Protestant enthusiasts who dominated Dublin literary life. Like Yeats and Lady Gregory, Hyde was a product of the Anglo-Irish ruling class who had subsequently been blinded, as Joyce saw it, by ‘the broken lights of Irish myth’. Thus when Hyde famously spoke in 1892 of ‘The Necessity for Deanglicizing Ireland’, giving voice to a militant linguistic and cultural nationalism, Joyce – with his global literary ambitions, it may be argued, inextricable from the imperial expanse of English– could only reject what he saw as a narrow-minded parochialism. (454)

While Thurston is correct about Joyce’s opposition militant to linguistic causes, he fails to consider the complexity of his relationship to Gaelic League members and the Irish cultural revivalists. Thurston is one of many scholars offering loose associations between

Joyce's work and British subtext such as Robert Louis Stevenson's *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, an association he fails to convincingly demonstrate because he does not consider the full Irish cultural subtext necessary for an understanding of the political landscape in which *Dubliners* is set. Even as explanation for the duality of the story, the reference to *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* is pointless because it obscures how the different portrayals of Ireland in the story are in conflict. He also neglects to note the context for "the broken lights of Irish myth," which was originally explained by Richard Ellmann in his biography of Joyce. The phrase appears in *A Portrait of the Artist* and in letters to Stanislaus. It was intended (at least by Joyce) not as a criticism of Irish mythological writing but rather, as Ellmann correctly notices, as an attack on the barriers of language policies and the narrow scope of dramatic productions at the Irish Literary theatre. Joyce was upset with the revivalists because he had been working on "translations of Hauptmann...for submission [to the theatre] in October 190, when he learned with dismay that the next plays would be...Douglas Hyde's Irish language play, *Casadh-an-tSúgáin*, and a play taken by Yeats and George Moore from Irish heroic legend" (JJ 88). Joyce's problem was focussed on language and not Hyde's play specifically. Thurston's claims about what Joyce saw in Hyde are largely baseless because he fails to cite Joyce's essay "The Soul of Ireland" (1903), a review of Lady Gregory's *Poet's and Dreamers*, which mentions Hyde directly.

"The Soul of Ireland" is relevant to any discussion of "The Dead" and Douglas Hyde because there is an allusion to it in the story. Joyce used the review as a platform to ridicule Gregory and the Revival:

in the future little boys with long beards will stand aside and applaud, while old men in short trousers play handball against the side of a house. This may even happen in Ireland, if Lady Gregory has truly set forth the old age of her country...Half of her book is an account of old men and old women in the West of Ireland. These old people are full of...these magical-sciences. (*OCPW* 74)

Ernest Longworth, editor of the *Daily Express*, found the review so distasteful that he attached Joyce's initials to it so that Gregory and the revivalists could lay responsibility for its views with the author and not blame the newspaper.<sup>13</sup> Identifying the reviewer by his initials thus becomes a trope in "The Dead." Prior to Gabriel's exchange with Molly Ivors concerning the "review of Browning," she asks "—Who is G. C.?" highlighting this idea of conflict arising from the printed initials (*D* 187-188).

The review of Gregory's book suggests that Joyce read some of Hyde's work in translation. He describes the English version of *The Twisting of the Rope*, as "entertaining" (*OCPW* 75). Joyce's inability to understand the material in Irish is significant. Barry and Deane suggest continuity between his criticism of Hyde's play in "The Soul of Ireland" and his disapproval of the Irish Literary Theatre in "The Day of the Rabblement" essay in regard to the theatre decision in October 1901 "to produce *Casadh an tSúgáin* (*The Twisting of the Rope*)...and *Diarmuid and Gráinne* by Moore and Yeats" (*OCPW* 297). But his criticism was based on language politics, probably because he could not read Irish. The example of Hyde's play evinces that the real issue was not as much about content as it was about the accessibility of the plays being performed. Joyce wrote in English for a wide audience and, when the theatre shifted its policy towards

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<sup>13</sup> "J. J." still appears at the end of the review republished in the Oxford collection of Joyce's *Occasional, Critical, and Political Writing*.

Gaeilge, it became inaccessible to Joyce as an author and a viewer. Thurston's claim that Joyce was unequivocally opposed to Douglas Hyde is also easy to disprove because Joyce alludes to Hyde's *Love Songs of Connacht* (1893) in the story.<sup>14</sup>

The elaborate nod to Hyde in "The Dead" makes Joyce's opposition to the Literary Revival more ambiguous than Thurston would have it seem. Joyce certainly opposes the Gaelic League in his early writings, but much of his early popularity stems from supporters of the movement. He gained a reputation for disagreeing with the Revival and featured in a large dialogue between many revivalists and nationalists. In August 1902, after meeting Joyce, Russell wrote to Gregory, Yeats, Sarah Purser, and Maud Gonne about the young artist's talent, intellect, and sense of culture. In his letters, Russell suggests that Joyce had been critical of him at their first meeting. He later complained to Purser: "I wouldn't be his Messiah for a thousand million pounds. He would always be criticising the bad taste of his Deity" (O'Connor 296). In a letter to Yeats dated 11 August 1902, Russell describes Joyce as "an extremely clever boy who...has all the intellectual equipment, culture and education which all our other clever friends here lack" (Ellmann 2: 12).

Thurston is right about Joyce having global literary ambitions. The "broken lights of Irish myth" did not fit Joyce's aspirations to reach a wider English audience; however, they were apparently suitable enough for his symbolism in "The Dead." Despite whatever disagreements Thurston claims that Joyce had with Hyde, the revivalists epitomize the Ireland he is portraying in the story. Furthermore, his allusions to Irish

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<sup>14</sup> In *History of British Folklore*, Richard Mercer Dorson stresses that Hyde's *Beside the Fire, A Collection of Irish Gaelic Folk Stories* (1890) was well known among revivalists. His annotated collection thoroughly assimilated the work of his predecessors, and was the prototype for subsequent collections by Gregory and Yeats. It is likely that Joyce was also familiar with Hyde's methodology for collecting folktales and "De-Anglization" discussed in lectures at UCD and Trinity College.

myth rely on hybridized English and Irish etymologies; while Joyce may have rejected the language policies of the Gaelic League, he clearly does not reject all Irish language. He did not agree with Hyde's politics, but he was certainly willing to read and criticize Hyde's work once it was in a language he could access, and it appears he was more than ready to test assertions made by the Gaelic League against his own theories. This is one of the reasons the theoretical framework of "The Dead" can be located ironically within Hyde's discussion of de-anglicization in Ireland.

Joyce's problems with the Irish Revival cannot be so easily explained or resolved as Thurston attempts to do. G. J. Watson notes the tendency among readers to "neglect or simplify the real nature of Joyce's relationship with Ireland, taking Stephen Dedalus's Luciferian rejection of the fatherland as unqualified triumph" rather than probing his biography for context (151). Watson's observation is applicable to "The Dead" however, because Gabriel's political attitudes, like Stephen's, are not an exact analogue to Joyce's. Gabriel is similar to Joyce, but ironically so. Watson convincingly argues that Joyce was initially "social" in his interactions within the Irish literary community before his success surpassed it (151); however, the dialogic and social aspect of "The Dead" was never properly understood by the literary community – for whom it was intended as a parody – and, therefore, has not been interpreted either as a parody or a satire by critics.



## People, Places, Parody and Puns

Most critics observe that Gabriel's writing for the *Express* is partly autobiographical in its connection to Joyce's own writing.<sup>15</sup> At the time the "The Soul of Ireland" was published, some of Lady Gregory's more fervent disciples may have cross-examined Joyce in a similar way to the encounter between Gabriel and Molly. Shovlin notes that "Joyce chooses to make Gabriel a version of himself... via their mutual involvement as reviewers for the *Daily Express*. Gabriel is unhelpfully revealed to Molly Ivors as a reviewer... and so too, Joyce was exposed by the paper's editor, E. V. Longworth, as the reviewer of Lady Gregory's *Poets and Dreamers*," citing also that this "has long been critically acknowledged" (137). It should also be noted that Joyce expressed apprehension about writing the review. In a letter to his mother on 20 March 1903, he wrote, "I sent in my review of Lady Gregory's book a week ago. I do not know if Longworth put it in as I sent it: the review was very severe. I shall write to Lady Gregory one of these days" (Ellmann 2: 37-38). One can speculate that Joyce felt a need to explain the review, but since no such letter of explanation exists, the parody of the review in "The Dead" is the only writing that implicitly connects Joyce's personal views about Irish Nationalism to Lady Gregory.

The political dichotomy in the story is too simplified to reflect Joyce's relationship with the paper or Gregory. Molly calls Gabriel a "West Briton" before he divulges any opinions about Ireland or the Irish language (*D* 188). With respect to Joyce's writing in the *Daily Express* however, his review did not make him a West Briton. Barry and Deane note that Longworth had agreed (on Lady Gregory's

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<sup>15</sup> While I have cited Shovlin as the most recent critic to make note of the *Express* review in his chapter "The Uses and Abuses of Revivalism," from *Journey Westward*, Richard Ellmann was the first to acknowledge the connection in his article "Joyce and Yeats." *The Kenyon Review* 12.4 (1950): 618-638.

recommendation) to send books to be reviewed by Joyce in Paris. At the time, the *Express* claimed to seek to reconcile “the rights and impulses of Irish nationality with the demands and obligations of imperial dominions” (Barry and Deane 301). It was indeed a Unionist paper, but it cannot be placed in simple dichotomy between nationalist sentiments and British imperialism. Joyce cleverly omits the paper’s importance to the Revival, which has a significant connection to the Gaelic League, thus making it ironic. Standish James O’Grady was a frequent contributor and had just stopped writing for it when Joyce started. Also, the paper was frequently a forum of Irish political debate. In “John Eglinton: A Model for Joyce’s Individualism,” Bonnie K. Scott observes that Yeats and Eglinton “engaged in a friendly debate...over the issue of combining literature and nationalism. Others, including William Larminie and AE joined the dispute. Their essays were widely circulated in the Dublin *Daily Express*” when Joyce was still a student at University College (347). The paper also featured letters and editorials by revivalists that contravened its own political agenda. On 15 February 1899, it published Hyde’s famous open letter concerning the “University question” (*D* 188). Hyde’s remarks are recounted in the Kelly and Schuchard edition of *The Collected Letters of W. B. Yeats*, specifically Hyde’s reference to “that Stygian flood of black ignorance of everything Irish which, Lethe-like, rolls through the portals of my beloved Alma Mater” (991).

As part of the subtext to “The Dead,” Skeffington’s essay about the University question – an Irish political discussion primarily focussed on the education of Catholics – makes the reference to the debate in the text ironic and politically ambiguous. It highlights two main political conflicts in the story—Catholic and Protestant interaction, and English subjugation of the Irish. Because Molly is a university graduate who teaches

with Gabriel, the reference to the question in the story evokes Skeffington's essay, who argues that "little attention has been given to that aspect of it which concerns the position of University Women, and how generally it is assumed that the matter is one for discussion and settlement by men" (Hardford 44).<sup>16</sup> This evocation underscores the comic satire of the Gaelic League by politicizing "The Dead" because it occurs immediately after Gabriel's response to Molly, "that he saw nothing political in writing reviews of books," and their discussion of the debate, ironically, makes him feel "more at ease" (D 188). The allusion to Skeffington's essay also evokes Joyce's "The Day of the Rabblement," by association, because both essays appeared together in 1901. Joyce's essay is full of anti-Revival sentiment and, by alluding to it in a conversation that is focussed on nationalism, Joyce creates ambiguous political tension.

The analogue to Joyce's review of Gregory's book for the *Daily Express* sets up the sequence with Molly Ivors on several ironic and imaginative levels. Molly is a nationalist and linguistically pro-Irish; however, the allusions to the *Daily Express* and "the University question" ironically undermine her values. Surely such an important paper addressing Irish matters, with a longstanding connection to Gaelic League members, could not be readily dismissed as a "rag like that" by any knowledgeable revivalist. Gabriel could reasonably be called "West Briton" for "his review of Browning's poems" in that newspaper (D 188). The passage must be read ironically. The absence of any conflict surrounding the review in the story, even one bearing little or no similarity to the problems which arose from the publication of Joyce's real life review of *Poets and Dreamers*, is an allusive nod; by not mentioning Lady Gregory, Joyce is subtly

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<sup>16</sup> See Judith Harford's article "The Admission of Women to the National University of Ireland." *Education Research and Perspectives* 35.2 (2008): 44-56.

alluding to her. These politicized correspondences are keys to understanding the complexity of the story's conflict, because they form associations that cannot be read in simple binaries or as political dichotomy.

The nearly identical names, "Browne" and "Browning," are also juxtaposed in the story and are politically ambiguous. One evokes the dissolution of the Catholic monasteries, while the other evokes Lady Gregory's literary circle in London. In his recent article "Mr. Browne in 'The Dead,'" Dilworth suggests the "pointed historical allusion" in Browne's character to that of Anglican Archbishop of Dublin George Browne, and that Browne is also etymologically linked to Browning because "the names are etymologically identical, each originating in the Norman-French *brun* as identification of a person according to his or her complexion or hair color" (337). To these, Joyce also attaches a description of his father to Browne – his father also coincidentally, had a moustache. In a letter Joyce sent to his mother on 20 March 1903, he writes, "I never saw Pappie look better than on S. Stephen's Day...He looked brown and healthy and neat" (Ellmann 2: 38-39). Brown John Joyce could be a model for Mr. Browne, who is "all brown," and Joyce's father's boisterousness and drunken antics correspond to Browne's character (*D* 200). There is also a similarity between the Joyce family Christmas festivities and "The Dead"—a story set at Christmas time. However, the caution to strictly read figures out of Joyce's life and biography as characters in the story is aptly put by Dilworth.

There are several ironic connections between Lady Gregory's reminiscences of the poet Robert Browning and Browne's public demeanour and behaviour as a loud dinner guest. Lady Gregory had a longstanding friendship with Browning. She also writes of an

occasion where Browning's antics and "singing" were the focus of table conversation amongst her London circle. The discussion topic and behaviour are particularly similar to the dinner scene in "The Dead." In the "London table talk" chapter of her autobiography she refers to:

a very amusing lunch at Raffalovich's...Browning...so unlike his poetry, which I knew first, that there is a kind of double identity about him which disturbs one. He is very proud...Also Justin McCarthy, most respectable of Irish members, Charles Wyndam (David Garrick!), Arthur Cecil, Lady Dorothy Nevill, Lady Monckton (who to Browning's indignation ate her lunch with her gloves on)...The table was rather crowded and Browning called out, 'You look like Napoleon at St. Helena, as if you wanted elbow room', and he at once folded his arms in the Napoleonic attitude and looked the part most absurdly. (Gregory 116)

As Dilworth observes, it seems likely that Browning's name has been included for its correspondence to Browne; Browne and Browning behaved similarly at dinner parties and the latter figure was friends with Lady Gregory. There are also similarities between Joyce's life and Browning's. Both lived in self-imposed exile in Italy and both were criticized for not being nationalistic in their writing. Browning's connection to Gregory and his association with the Gaelic League through her reveals irony in Molly's ridicule of Gabriel as a "West Briton!" for his review (*D* 190). This evocation seems more complete than a mere autobiographical reading because it enhances the effect of the story's cultural irony.

## Yeats

The reference to Browning is likely meant as a nod to Gregory and the revivalists. John Feeley has argued unconvincingly that “the language of Gabriel’s speech suggests the lines he intended to quote are from ‘Epilogue’ in *Asolando: Fancies and Facts*” (89). Since the lines of the poem are unspoken in the story, the claim is largely baseless. One can only assume the importance of “Browning” as a name, and interpret the relevance of the quotation from Gabriel’s review, which appears in the text. The lines from Gabriel’s “review of Browning’s poems” evoke a review called “Browning” by Yeats. Joyce appears never to have published a review on Browning. However, the line from the review given in the story, “*one feels that one is listening to a thought-tormented music,*” does resemble words in the review by Yeats of Browning (*D* 192). Yeats writes:

To Browning thought was mainly interesting as an expression of life... The clatter and chatter to him was life, was joy itself. Sometimes the noise and restlessness got too much into his poetry, and the expression became confused and the verse splintered and broken. (Yeats, *Letters to the New Island*, 98-99)<sup>17</sup>

The effect of the allusion to the review is to make Gabriel more Yeatsian, and, therefore, more out of touch with Irish people.<sup>18</sup> Yeats transitions from “thought” to “life,” and Joyce seems to have inserted his own ideas about music. However, like Gabriel’s review, typified by “the indelicate clacking of men’s heels,” Yeats also places emphasis on thinking, listening, and having thought interrupted by a kind of cacophony (*D* 179). The

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<sup>17</sup> Neither Ellmann in “Joyce and Yeats” (1950) and nor Shovlin in *Journey Westward* (2012) address this particular essay by Yeats in their commentary on Joyce’s reading. Ellmann writes that he “could hardly have avoided Yeats’s work” as a student, and Shovlin maintains that Joyce was familiar with Yeats’s essays, but neglects to mention this essay entitled “Browning” (Ellmann 620).

<sup>18</sup> In his article “Ellmann’s Revised Conroy,” Robert Boyle repeats Bernard Benstock’s absurd argument for Gabriel’s affinity to Yeats, suggesting the “close juncture” between Gabriel’s reverie at the end of the story and “Yeats’s attitude in ‘The Second Coming’” (262). Yeats’s presence in the story is represented in Gabriel’s attitude only.

point about being “surrounded by endless clatter and chatter” could easily be re-construed as “thought tormented.”

### Hyde

Following this pattern of allusions to works by revivalists, one sees that Douglas Hyde’s *Love Songs of Connacht* (1905) provides a suitable analogue for “The Dead.” The introduction to the collection might be a model for Gabriel’s arc in the story:

the same man who will to-day be dancing, sporting, drinking and shouting, will be soliloquising by himself to-morrow, heavy and sick and sad in his poor lonely little hut, making a croon over departed hopes, lost life, and the vanity of this world, and the coming of death. (Hyde 3)

Given that there is little mention of Hyde in Joyce’s writing outside of *Ulysses*, it seems peculiar that his book should form such a major part of the intertextual web. Shovlin also notes “this possible use of Hyde by Joyce...[as] just one in a very complex pattern of nods and winks at revivalism throughout *Dubliners*” (123). To add to this, Cólín Owens argues that Hyde’s translation of “If I Were to Go West,” from the same collection, forms part of the subtext to the story.<sup>19</sup> The most convincing evidence of the possible allusion is the “well-thumbed, loose-leafed, card covered copy of Douglas Hyde’s *Love Songs of Connacht*” amongst the books from Joyce’s Trieste library now held by the Harry Ransom Center in Austin, Texas (Shovlin 122).

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<sup>19</sup> See Owen’s remarks about “If I Were to Go West” in “The Mystique of the West in Joyce’s ‘The Dead’” *Irish University Review* 22.1 (1992): 80-91.

The allusion to *Love Songs* is especially significant because Joyce likely falsely associated “The Lass of Aughrim” with the book. On 27 October 1909, in a love letter to Nora, he repeats the verses “it is far and it is far / to Connemara where you are” from what he calls a “*Connacht Love Song*,” which connects the title of song (in Joyce’s italics) with an incorrect wording of the title of Hyde’s book (Ellmann 2: 256). Ellmann notes the mistake and attributes the lyrics to Alice L. Milligan’s “Mayo Love Song” (256-257). Since “The Lass of Aughrim,” does not appear in Hyde’s collection, it is possible, given that Joyce confused different collections of songs, that he associated the “The Lass of Aughrim” with Hyde’s popular title. Other Joyce scholars have likely not noted this observation before because of the ambiguity surrounding Aughrim. The name belongs to several small villages in Ireland. Its personal and historical significance to Joyce is frequently debated by critics.<sup>20</sup> Given the political atmosphere of the story, as well as Gabriel’s nod and cheerful “—Good-night” to the statue of Daniel O’Connell, Aughrim Co. Wicklow, in the east of Ireland, it is historically significant (*D* 214). The eastern village is popularly known as a site of the 1798 uprising against British rule; however, in the story, the song is associated with Connacht, Michael Furey, and the west.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Richard Ellmann associates the song with the Aughrim “in the west,” 60 km outside of Galway city (*JJ* 257). However, George Geckle and Julie Henigan observe that Ellmann has confused what goes on in the ballad. In “The Old Irish Tonality”: Folksong as Emotional Catalyst in ‘The Dead,’” Henigan convincingly argues that “‘The Lass of Aughrim’ is a rarely collected traditional ballad of Scottish provenance” (136). The song’s origins outside the west enhance the ambiguity of the allusion. Shovlin notes the discrepancies I mention above. His essay “Aughrim of the Slaughter” is discussed in more detail in Chapter Four.

<sup>21</sup> The commemorating stone in Aughrim, Co. Wicklow, is dedicated to “all those who lost their lives in the capture of Aughrim by General Joseph Holt’s United Irishmen on Sept. 19<sup>th</sup> 1798 – Coiste Chill Mhantain.”



A.E.

Shovlin's theory about the story's allusive nods to the revivalists is convincing because Joyce also parodies a letter by Russell to Lady Gregory, in Gabriel's dinner speech:

A.E. had written to me in August 1902: "Tell Willie that the thing I prophesied to him has already come to pass. A new generation is rising, to whose enlightened vision he and A.E. are too obvious, our intelligence backward and lacking in subtlety. The first of the new race called on me a couple of days ago...His name is Joyce...He is too superior for me. I belong to a lower order of thought than this spectre of fastidiousness..." (Gregory 425)

The section in Gabriel's speech "for Miss Ivors" resembles Russell's concerns about a "new generation...rising" so nearly, that it is almost impossible to deny its affinity with the letter (*D* 192).<sup>22</sup> The passage ironically alludes to the Gaelic League and the conflict Gabriel has with Molly Ivors concerning Irish language:

—A new generation is growing up in our midst, a generation actuated by new ideas and new principles. It is serious and enthusiastic for these new ideas and its enthusiasm, even when it is misdirected is, I believe, in the main sincere. But we are living in a sceptical and, if I may use the phrase, a thought-tormented age: and sometimes I fear that this new generation, educated or hypereducated as it is, will lack those qualities of humanity, of hospitality, of kindly humour which belonged to an older day. (*D* 203)

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<sup>22</sup> It is likely that Joyce drew his inspiration for the wording of Gabriel's speech from a conversation he had with George Russell in 1902. He would not have seen the letter at the time and it was not published until the appearance of Gregory's *Autobiography* long after the publication of *Dubliners*.

When the two passages are read in tandem, they appear to be in dialogue with one another; however, Gabriel is focussed on language propagandising and Russell is talking about Joyce and the young writers in Ireland that would unseat the old. Both authors address the idea of the new generation in Ireland. The irony is that Gabriel does not see himself as part of it, even though he and Molly are colleagues, are roughly the same age and, categorically, are part of the same generation. Symbolically, Joyce means Yeats and Russell's generation.

### J. M. Synge

It was arguably Synge that Joyce liked best of all of the Revivalists. In contrast to Yeats, he admired Synge, whose *Playboy of The Western World* caused riots in the streets of Dublin, an incident Joyce followed in the Irish papers from Trieste. After *Playboy*, he described Synge as a man with a “wonderful vision.” In a letter to Stanislaus, on 11 February 1907, which mentions composing “The Dead,” he writes about his admiration for Synge’s racy writing and fame. The passage refers to a review of *Playboy*:

I would like, however, to hear the phrases which drove out the ladies with expressions of pain on their faces...I see that Synge uses the word ‘bloody’ frequently, and the great phrase was ‘if all the girls in Mayo were standing before me in their shifts’, wonderful vision. (Ellmann 2: 211)

Joyce goes on to compare Synge with Yeats, to discuss some Gaelic League members, and to talk about Synge’s influence on him. He makes a crucial remark about how the publicity of the Abbey riots has interrupted his work on “The Dead”:

Yeats is a tiresome idiot: he is quite out of touch with the Irish people...Synge is better at least he can set them by the ears. One writer speaks of Synge and his master Zola(!) so I suppose when *Dubliners* appears they will speak of me and my master Synge...I think the Abbey Theatre is ruined. It is supported by the stalls, that is to say, Stephen Gwynn, Lord X, Lady Gregory etc who are dying to relieve the monotony of Dublin life...This whole affair has upset me. I feel like a man in a house who hears a row in the street and voices he knows shouting but can't get out to see what the hell is going on. It has put me off the story I was 'going to write'—to wit, *The Dead*. (Ellmann 2: 211-212)

Joyce alludes to Synge in the story using material drawn from his personal letters. In a letter to his mother that discusses the family Christmas party of 1902, he writes, "I never saw you look better than the night I went home and you came into the hall" (Ellmann 2: 38). The compliments Freddy pays to Julia Morkan for her singing resemble Joyce's comments to his mother when he says, "I was just telling my mother...I never heard you sing so well...I never heard your voice so good as it is to-night" (*D* 193). Of course, he writes about his mother's looks while Freddy remarks about Julia's singing voice, but the passage should not be disregarded, because the word change from "look" to "sing" has an important implication for the pun a few lines earlier. Take Julia Morkan's initials J.M. in the allusion to "the old leather-bound song-book that had her initials on the cover," extract from the word "song," "sing," and there homonymously is "J. M. Synge." The reference to Synge is also supported by the dialogue a few pages earlier

regarding a visit to “the Aran Isles,” an expression nearly interchangeable with “the Aran Islands,” a title of one of Synge’s recent books (*D* 188).<sup>23</sup>

Joyce knew Synge’s work intimately by the time he wrote *Dubliners*. On 9 March 1903, he wrote to Stanislaus from Paris saying “Synge is here for a few days selling out—he can’t get on either and is going back to Ireland...” he also mentions criticizing Synge’s *Riders to Sea*, “a play of Aran peasant dialect” (Ellmann, *SLJ*, 17). Synge’s biographers David Greene and Edward Stephens write that “Synge showed him the manuscript of *Riders to the Sea*, but Joyce, who later admired the play and translated it into Italian, pronounced it un-Aristotelian. Synge was annoyed; they spent the rest of the time arguing and Synge’s ‘harsh gargoyle face’ was subsequently enshrined in *Ulysses*” (Greene and Stephens 139). Synge and Joyce were clearly well enough acquainted for Synge to trust the younger author with his unpublished writing. They evidently saw more of each other after Joyce returned to Dublin in April. However, as Greene and Stephens note, Synge records only one other meeting in his diary, on 21 September 1903.

Joyce was trying to use “The Dead” as a way of communicating with these authors. Since most of the allusions to them, or their work, are connected to Gabriel, his failure to understand his own culture at the end of the story corresponds with the failure of the revivalists to understand Irish culture the way Joyce does. The most significant allusion to the Revival in the story plays on the title of Lady Gregory’s estate, Coole Park, and appears in the text after Gabriel has just refused to take his wife to Galway –

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<sup>23</sup> Synge’s book *The Aran Islands* (1907), published with illustrations by Jack Butler Yeats, seems to be the butt of the joke here. The book is comprised of a collection of journals Synge had completed writing by 1901. It is possible that he mentioned it to Joyce when they met in Paris it is likely that Joyce knew it only by title and became familiar with it later during the *Playboy* riots or while translating *Riders to the Sea*.

the location of Gregory's estate – because of his heated encounter with Molly (*D* 191). He longs to be outside but, ironically, on a symbolic level, he also yearns for Coole Park:

How *cool* it must be outside! How pleasant it would be to walk out alone, first along by the river and then through the *park*! (*D* 192, my italics)

Coole Park was the centre of Revival activities and Joyce would have known this.

The allusion to the name of the estate underlies Molly's invitation "to go for a trip to the west of Ireland" which, on a realistic level, means going to the area of the country where the Revival is strongest, and symbolically it is a veiled request to join Gregory's faction of the Gaelic League (*D* 191).

The list of Irish names, "Mr Clancy...Mr Kilkelly...Kathleen Kearney," offered by Molly reinforce the Revival based interpretation (*D* 189). In "A Mother," an earlier *Dubliners* story, Kathleen Kearney is an Irish language enthusiast, and plays piano at a Gaelic League ceilidh. The other two names etymologically evoke Galway and Mayo. Shovlin has already observed "the sneer at the movement," and in "The Dead" it seems Joyce is referring to a Revival parody from an earlier story:

In 'A Mother' the Gaelic Revival, of which Molly Ivors of "The Dead" is a disciple...[and] a friend of Kathleen Kearney...Joyce has not picked his names idly: the impresario...Mr Holohan, assistant secretarty to the *Eire Abu* Society...and the piano player together would be 'Kathleen Holohan', a reference to *Cathleen Ni Houlihan*. Except that, while the Gregory/Yeats play was heroic and rousing, Mr Holohan is a small-time promoter with a lame leg, known to his friends as Hoppy, and Kathleen Kearney is the daughter of an upwardly mobile

mother, [who] by cashing in on her daughter's name, cashes in on Ireland itself – and this, in large part, is what Joyce felt the revivalists were up to. (157)

Ironically, Yeats did read *Dubliners* as a satire but not as a parody of himself. He noticed “great subtlety” and technical ability in Joyce’s poetry, but missed or neglected to notice many of the allusive features of the fiction and read it as mere satire. In a letter written on Joyce’s behalf to the Royal Literary Fund, on 24 July 1915, he referred to Joyce as “a man of genius...[who] has written *Dubliners* a book of satiric stories of great subtlety, a little like Russian work...”<sup>24</sup> He elaborated on this criticism quite prophetically in a second letter to the Literary Fund concerning *Dubliners* on 29 July: “his book of short stories...has the promise of a great novelist and a great novelist of a new kind. There is not enough foreground, it is all atmosphere perhaps, but I look upon that as a sign of an original study of life” (Ellmann 2: 354, 356). It is ironic that Yeats did not see the work as a study of himself and the revivalists, but it is not surprising. The allusions in the text are subtle and not addressed in Shovlin’s study of the Literary Revival. The observation of the work as a parody has not been widely made.

Regardless of Joyce’s personal feelings towards the revivalists, the allusions to these Irish writers in “The Dead” inform Gabriel’s identity crisis, which, as previously mentioned, is also a crisis for Ireland. He is ironically surrounded by allusions to Gaelic League writers. These allusions establish an ironic tone through which Joyce separates himself from Gabriel, whose life circumstances and attitudes in the story are so similar to

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<sup>24</sup> Like Yeats, Steven Doloff writes of Joyce’s similarity to the Russians. He argues a connection to Dostoevsky’s works unconvincingly, stating that “variations on several narrative elements in *Notes from the Underground* may be found in ‘The Dead’” (484). He also mentions that commentators “have asserted his stylistic debt to Dostoevsky (among others) for the Russian’s contribution to the narrative technique of interior monologue,” tracing these observations to Andre Gide’s notes on Dostoevsky, Joyce, and Browning, published in 1923. The Russians include Tolstoy and most importantly Chekov – whom Joyce most resembles.

his own. He differs from Gabriel because he realizes the value of his culture or, at least, its literary merit. The allusions are a semi-autobiographical attempt at portraying his historical connection to the movement. Joyce's allusions to the Gaelic League are his attempt to engage it but they were too subtle to be noticed. Because of this, the story is ironic when read in its historical context. None of the revivalists realized they were being parodied and their lack of awareness deepens the meaning of Gabriel's affinity with the movement.

Watson and Thurston's argument, that Joyce's global literary aspirations (and eventual achievements) overshadow the importance of the Irish Revival is anachronistic. The impact of the revivalists on his writing has its counterpart in the dialogue he generated among them. However, this effect of "The Dead" was never properly realized by the revivalists. They remain relevant to a discussion of Joyce's later accomplishments because they accurately predicted that Joyce would be the next great Irish writer and he immortalized them.

#### Ch. 4 “that awful fiction written by Joyce”—Lady Gregory:

##### The Woman Who Failed to See Herself in *Dubliners*

The elaborate parody of the Irish Revival in “The Dead” centers on Lady Gregory. Joyce alludes to both of her mythological texts, her home, and her connection to the *Daily Express*. Also, the turn of the story is set to the “Lass of Aughrim”—which reflects a connection to the Gregory family. Biographical context is essential to these allusions, because they resonate with Joyce’s real-life connection to Lady Gregory. They met in 1902. She recognized the young Dubliner’s brilliance and helped to find him work in Paris. She was a driving force in his early career—a literary figure whom he knew, writing books he disagreed with as with the rest of the revivalists. She had a profound influence on his life. The allusions to the Revival in the story suggest she influenced his writing as well.

Their correspondence indicates that she was kind to and admired him. In a letter dated 15 November 1902 reprinted in her autobiography, she writes that “Joyce has a genius of a kind and I like his pride and waywardness” (Gregory 425). Ulick O’Connor observes that Gregory also “gave him his fare to leave Dublin in October 1904” (343). The significance of their relationship resonates with the inclusion “The Lass of Aughrim” in “The Dead,” because the song evokes the Gregory family name. This emphasizes the importance of the allusions to Lady August Gregory discussed in the previous two chapters. These allusions were not understood by Lady Gregory and, as a result, have been largely misinterpreted by critics.

Shovlin’s essay “Aughrim of the Slaughter,” from *Journey Westward*, is the first definitive piece of criticism on the reference to “The Lass of Aughrim” in “The Dead.”



He identifies the song “as a means to attack Lady Gregory” (101). He credits Paul Muldoon as being “the first critic to realize the force of the missing lines” of “The Lass of Aughrim” as they relate to Lady Gregory and cites his book, *To Ireland, I* (102).<sup>25</sup> In an approach similar to Julie Henigan’s in “The Old Irish Tonality”: Folksong as Emotional Catalyst in ‘The Dead,’” he repeats musicologist Hugh Shield’s observation that ““Popular tradition...drops the older, more poetic title and labels the song ‘Lord Gregory’, after its relatively inactive hero”” and this title change strengthens a long held inaccuracy about the song (103). Shovlin elaborates on how a change in the name of the song can affect its interpretation of the story:

Most critics of ‘The Dead’ have failed to examine ‘The Lass of Aughrim’ in the sort of detail necessary to understand the many ways in which it gives meaning to the story. Some readers, such as Richard Ellmann and C. P. Curran, have noticed the name Gregory but have made little of it other than to remark on the coincidence between this and the name of the Revival’s leading female figure, and...both fail to notice that it is Lady rather than Lord Gregory who is primarily at fault for the death of the lass and her child...it is Lord Gregory’s *mother* who asks questions and who deceives the lass while Lord Gregory sleeps, thereby causing tragedy...as well as being a convenient way to heap yet more scorn on Lady Gregory, [the song] is a perfect allegory of the unhappy relationship between Ireland and England, between Catholic and Protestant, Colonized and Colonizer. (103-104)

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<sup>25</sup> Shovlin suggests that Muldoon does not do enough to trace Gregory’s name in the story, though he does notice the presence of Gregory’s *Gods and Fighting Men* in the story, as I have already noted in “Staging a Cú in ‘The Dead’” (Muldoon 53).

This impressive correction of Ellmann, Curran, and other critics shifts the blame in the song, which has been laid on the girl's lover, Lord Gregory, to Gregory's deceitful mother, who is a "Lady" Gregory. Ellmann's argument that Joyce believed "'The Lass of Aughrim' would connect more subtly with the west and with Michael Furey's visit in the rain to Gretta," is still convincing. Curran suggests, simply, that Joyce had a personal interest in the song, and this remains likely (*JJ* 248).

The new significance, which Shovlin and Henigan demonstrate, gives the song a stronger resonance with Lady Augusta Gregory. Henigan points out that it is unclear "how complete a knowledge Joyce had of the ballad's lyrics" (143). However, Joyce was a singer and it seems highly unlikely that he would make the story turn on a song that he did not have complete knowledge of. Gabriel hears just a few faint lines of the song playing in the hallway and only a partial verse from the ballad is repeated in the story, but Joyce knew the whole song:

*O, the rain falls on my heavy locks*

*And the dew wets my skin,*

*My babe lies cold . . . (D 210)*

The title and few short lines that appear in the text evoke the remaining portion of the song, which has a clear meaning in relation to the story. The missing verses provide an analog to Joyce's life. On 26 August 1909, he wrote to Nora after hearing her mother sing the song, "My darling's mother . . . sang for me *The Lass of Aughrim* but she does not like to sing me the last verses in which the lovers exchange their tokens" (Ellmann 2: 240). Joyce expresses here his knowledge of the last verses. While Henigan correctly establishes that there are multiple versions of the "Lass of Aughrim," her argument that

Joyce's knowledge of the song was possibly incomplete is unconvincing. He clearly knew a complete version of the song, and stated as much, but Henigan fails to mention this because she has not fully examined his letters.

Anyone familiar with the song would likely know that the first verse mentions "Lord Gregory" in the second and fourth line, and that this evokes Lady Gregory's family name. Furthermore, Joyce's ellipsis suggests that he knowingly omits the reference in the final line of the stanza. The complete first stanza is as follows:

I am a king's daughter who strayed from Cappaquin  
In search of Lord Gregory, pray God I find him  
The rain beats at my yellow locks, the dew wets my skin  
My babe is cold in my arms, Lord Gregory, let me in.<sup>26</sup>

As Ellmann observes, the third line of the ballad has affinity with the image of Michael Furey keeping out of the rain by "standing at the end of the wall where there was a tree" (*D* 221). There is pathetic fallacy in both instances, reflecting the tragedy of the situation as the cold rain kills both Michael and the lass. Since Joyce repeats the words "cold" and "rain" in the short quotation in the story and evokes them during Gretta's meeting with Michael in the garden via "wet" and "shivering," it can be assumed that these words have a special significance (*D* 210, 221).

These words "cold," "rain," "wet," and "shivering" are inextricably tied to the omission of Gregory's name. The name is symbolic for Joyce because he and Lady

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<sup>26</sup> The version of the ballad I am citing references Cappaquin Co. Waterford, in the southeast of Ireland, and therefore differs from the versions cited in Shields's "The History of The Lass of Aughrim," which is repeated in *Journey Westward* (Shovlin 107; 118n). A full version appears in Appendix II.

Gregory were acquainted.<sup>27</sup> Joyce resists a direct reference to Lady Gregory because, as Muldoon notes, “it brings with it much too much cultural impedimenta of a very specific historical moment” (58). However, if the “Lass of Aughrim” is read in conjunction with the other allusions to Lady Gregory in the story, then the implication seems to be that like Michael, Joyce has been symbolically shut out in the cold by Lady Gregory. Shovlin’s observation that the mother, “‘Lady’ Gregory,” is the real antagonist in the song strengthens this reading. The ballad scenario has an analog to Joyce’s life to some degree and also to that of Michael Furey. Both were singers. Both sang the “Lass of Aughrim”.<sup>28</sup> Joyce’s love letters to Nora (the model for Gretta) suggest an analog to the emotions Michael displays. These contrast with Gabriel, who knows that Michael’s feelings for Gretta “must be love,” and has “never felt like that towards any woman” (*D* 223).

Joyce’s efforts to implicate Lady Gregory in the turn of the story were not noticed by the revivalists. Furthermore, although his writing engages the movement, he did not wish to be considered part of the Irish Revival in his later career. In an angry letter to Gregory sent from Paris on 8 August 1922, he thanks her for “acts of kindness in the past,” but makes clear his position:

I shall feel very much obliged if you will omit from your forthcoming book, which I understand is largely a history of the Irish literary movement, all the letters of mine and all mention of me. In doing so you will be acting strictly in accordance with the spirit of that movement, inasmuch as since the date of my

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<sup>27</sup> One recalls the lines about the blind poet, Anthony Raftery, from “The Soul of Ireland” review in the *Daily Express*: “he took shelter one day from the rain under a bush” (*OCPW* 75).

<sup>28</sup> In a letter to Nora, dated 31 August 1909, Joyce writes: “I was singing an hour ago your song *The Lass of Aughrim*. The tears come into my eyes and my voice trembles with emotion when I sing that lovely air. It was worth coming to Ireland to have got it from your poor kind mother” (*Ellmann* 2: 240)

letter, twenty years ago, no mention of me or of my struggles or of my writings has been made publicly by any person connected with it.

Mr. Pound has enclosed with your letter, a letter from Mr. Yeats to him in which there are several kind expressions concerning my book *Ulysses*. May I ask you to be kind enough to convey to Mr. Yeats, for whose writing I have always had a great admiration, my thanks for his favourable opinion, which I value very highly.

Believe me, dear Lady Gregory, Sincerely yours. (Ellmann, *SLJ*, 290)

The resentment in this 1922 letter speaks to his frustration of many years standing. Gregory's failure to see herself in *Dubliners* partly explains Joyce's wish to be excluded from the movement after becoming famous. He retracts a series of letters with Gregory beginning in early November 1902, which shows him trying to gain financial support. Of these, only four pieces have been recovered: Joyce's first undated letter, a second from 1 December, a third from Gregory to Joyce with a suggested date by Ellmann of 23 November, and a final letter from Joyce dated 21 December, which may be responding to a message from Gregory that is now lost.<sup>29</sup> In disavowing his involvement in the movement, he disregards these letters to Gregory, as well as numerous other letters to Yeats from twenty years earlier and he ignores the purpose of a large portion of his early work that was written in response to the movement, Irish drama, Irish folklore, and Irish mythological writing. The failure of the revivalists to understand his allusions is analogous to Gabriel's failure to realize the truth about his own Irish identity.

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<sup>29</sup> All of these letters can be found in full in the second volume of the *Collected Letters of James Joyce* Ed. Ellmann, with exception to the response to Gregory dated 21 December which only appears there as a fragment. The Complete letter along with the message quoted above were published in 1975 in Ellmann's *Selected Letters of James Joyce*.

Through his reference to “The Lass of Aughrim,” Joyce evokes Lady Gregory both as a figure crucial to the Revival movement and someone significant to his early career. As Ellmann observes, sometime between 1903 and 1904, while Joyce was planning “The Dead,” “Lady Gregory had a literary party to which she refused to invite Joyce. The young man came anyway” (631). Ironically, “The Dead” is about a party and, at the very moment Joyce could name “Gregory” in the few lines of the “Lass of Aughrim” which Gabriel overhears, he refuses. The irony is revealed now, more than one hundred years later, as it becomes clear that awareness of Joyce’s criticism of the Revival and his acquaintance with important revivalists like Gregory are crucial to understanding his story.

It is clear that Joyce wished to set himself apart from the Revival, but it is not difficult to understand why he felt his writing was neglected by the revivalists. He recognized greatness in his work long before they did. Their coolness to him can also be explained as their aversion to his tendency to denounce all Dublin literati publically and in his writing. However, privately, quietly, he clearly yearned for their money and attention.

Ch. 5 “spatchcocked on to a Celtic Legend older than history”:

*Ulysses* and Joyce’s Unfinished Business

Many of the Revival figures and works parodied in *Ulysses* are alluded to in “The Dead.” The following analysis focusses on Irish mythology and explores continuity between these allusions. The three previous chapters closely document Joyce’s evocations of Irish myth, Shakespeare, the Gaelic League, and Irish Revival literature; with respect to *Ulysses*, however, this is too great a task to undertake in one chapter. Even if focus is placed only on “Scylla and Charybdis,” “Cyclops,” and “Oxen of the Sun,” as three episodes that frequently allude to the Revival, it is still difficult to draw significance from Joyce’s allusions to the Irish Revival, and these episodes are already widely read as a parody. However, this parody of the Revival has a greater significance when read in connection to “The Dead.” It is useful to show, first, that several of Joyce’s theories expressed in the novel encapsulate ideas about CuChulain seen in the story and, second, show that there are corresponding allusions to the Revival in both *Ulysses* and “The Dead.” “Scylla and Charybdis” can be understood as a logical development of ideas in “The Dead.” While Joyce’s mockery in the novel is more obvious, drawing the connections shows that the Revival parody in *Ulysses* is a deliberate continuation of political and mythological allusions which first appeared in *Dubliners*.

*Ulysses* not only reveals consistency between the allusive and mythological aspect of Joyce’s prose, but also suggests a productive methodology through which *Dubliners* can be re-approached. Both Frank Shovlin and Bernard Benstock stress the complexity of Joyce’s technique in *Dubliners*. What might be considered salient, but trivial, is especially significant for Joyce. Weldon Thornton’s comprehensive annotated list, *Allusions in Ulysses* (1968), evinces the allusive richness of the work with compelling

accuracy. However, Benstock is more rigorous in his approach to reading Joyce in “Text, Sub-Text, Non-Text: Literary and Narrational In/Validities,” and measures the “basic assumption” of this type of allusive analysis with a rule:

if the original source can be located, its ‘meaning’ isolated and determined, and its applicability to the new text determined, [then] a neatly constructed unit becomes apparent that establishes a specific meaning with that new text. (355)

This reading method applies to both works. In a similar manner, Andrew Gibson applies and revises John Eglinton’s “way of reading Joyce” in *Ulysses*, where Eglinton sees the English language is “constrained by its new master...to utter all but unimaginable filth and treason” and the text is the author’s “‘Celtic Revenge’ on colonial power” (Gibson 1). Like Shovlin’s approach to *Dubliners*, Gibson contextualizes Joyce’s allusions to the Revival as part of an assault on revivalist historiographies. In his book, *Joyce’s Revenge*, he argues that Lady Gregory, Yeats, and Standish O’Grady were recasting “the old ‘heroic history’ in ‘a literary form’” (110). Evidently, Joyce disagreed with their form and their lack of subtlety; he viewed their mythological writing as “an appropriation of a past by those to whom it did not truly belong” (Gibson 108).

In “Scylla and Charybdis,” Joyce counteracts the appropriation of Irish myth by parodying Revival and Gaelic League texts. The list of allusions is staggering and what follows is by no means comprehensive: there is a direct reference to *Tir na n-og*; Haines goes “to Gill’s to buy Hyde’s *Lovesongs of Connacht*,” and the Irish spelling in the phrase “Lir’s lonliest daughter,” combines an allusion to Shakespeare’s play *King Lear* with a direct reference to the Irish legend of “The Children of Lir,” a story that focusses on Lir’s lonely daughter, Fionnuala (*U* 250, 254, 246). In addition to these, Thornton and



William Schutte observe that Best's reference to "Jubainville's Book" evokes "*The Irish Mythological Cycle and Celtic Mythology* (Dublin, 1903)," which was compiled by Marie Henri d'Arbois de Jubainville, professor of Celtic at the College de France, and translated into English by Richard Best (Thornton 157). The most significant allusion corresponding to "The Dead" evokes Synge, Yeats, and Lady Gregory's *Cuchulain of Muirthemne*:

—Mounful mummer, Buck Mulligan moaned. Synge has left off wearing all black to be like nature. Only *crows*, priests and English coal are black.

A laugh tripped over his lips.

—Longworth is awfully sick...after what you wrote about that old hake Gregory. O you inquisitional drunken jew Jesuit. She gets you a job on the paper and then you go and slate her drivel to Jaysus. Couldn't you do the Yeats touch?

He went on and down, mopping, chanting with waving graceful arms:

—*The most beautiful book that has come out of our country in my time. One thinks of Homer.* (U 277-278, my italics)

As Thornton observes, this last line paraphrases Yeats's preface to Gregory's *Cuchulain*, "I think this book is the best that has come out of Ireland in my time. Perhaps I should say that it is the best book that has ever come out of Ireland" (vii).<sup>30</sup> This reference combines with an evocation of *Poets and Dreamers*, as Ellmann notes, in the allusion to Joyce's review "The Soul of Ireland" via the reference to Longworth a few lines earlier (Ellmann 2: 38n). However, Ellmann fails to point out that this review was first parodied in "The Dead."

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<sup>30</sup> Thornton notes this allusion to CuChulain in his entry "216.27/213.39."

The continuation of this satire in *Ulysses* is significant in how it demonstrates Joyce's familiarity with Gregory's work and forms a subtle comparison with their use of mythology. In his preface to the work, Yeats does not mention Homer. The closest relevant line is: "the Irish stories make one understand why the Greeks called myths the activities of the daemons" (Yeats, *Lady Gregory's Complete Irish Mythology*, 334). The line "one thinks of Homer" is unique to *Ulysses*, while it imitates Yeats's writing style. It makes two points about mythology. First, it suggests Joyce's familiarity with CuChulain scholarship and its evocation of Homer. In *Celtic Myth and Legend* (1912), Charles Squire refers to the Ulster cycle as "The Irish Illiad":

Cuchulainn, whose name means "Culann's Hound"...Alfred Nutt calls him "the Irish Achilles,"<sup>31</sup> while Professor Rhys would rather see in him a Heracles of the Gaels. Like Achilles, he was the chosen hero of his people, invincible in battle, and yet...it matters little enough; for the lives of all such mythical heroes must be of necessity somewhat alike. (158)

Joyce seems aware of the parallel. More importantly, it refers to the novel's Homeric model, emphasizing Joyce's own mythological preference. Mulligan's comment about the Yeats touch ironically creates distance between the mythological frame of *Ulysses* and what Gibson refers to as Gregory's and other revivalists' "heroic historiography" (110). *Ulysses* is the Irish *Odyssey* and, when "one thinks of Homer" and Ireland, one thinks of Joyce (*U* 278).

The allusion to CuChulain, evoked by Gabriel's surname in "The Dead," unites the public and private aspects of the story; however, in *Ulysses*, CuChulain is only a

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<sup>31</sup> Squire refers to Nutt's article "Cuchulainn, the Irish Achilles" in *Popular Studies in Mythology, Romance, and Folklore* 8.

symbol of the Celtic Twilight that unites Joyce's past and present mockery of the revivalists. "Cuchulin" only appears once in the text in the large list of "Irish Heroes" in "Cyclops," which juxtaposes Greek and Irish figures among others (*U* 382). In this juxtaposition, Joyce aims to undermine the importance of the figure and favours mythological ideas that are more universal. The major difference with the revivalists' agenda is obvious—they favoured CuChulain because he was Irish, whereas Joyce favoured mythology generally and had wider literary ambitions. When the line, the "most beautiful book come out of Ireland in my time" is repeated in "Oxen of the Sun" it is clear that Joyce is holding Yeats and Gregory up to ridicule (*U* 556).

CuChulain has a political resonance that is clearer in *Ulysses* than in "The Dead." In his introduction to the novel, Declan Kiberd writes that Joyce's first remarks and satiric works about the Irish Revival "failed to provoke a response," and suggests, as Gibson does, that Joyce avoided Irish mythological writing and historiography:

Joyce was reacting against the cult of Cúchulainn, which was purveyed in poems, plays and prose by writers such as Patrick Pearse, W. B. Yeats and Lady August Gregory...He therefore side-stepped the story...[because] a central theme of such tales was the skill of Cúchulainn in glamorized combat and his capacity to make violence...the Cúchulainn cult was objectionable to Joyce because it helped to perpetuate the libel of the pugnacious Irish overseas, while gratifying the vanity of a minority of self-heroicizing nationalists at home...the heroic past turned out, on inspection, to be a concealed version of the British imperial present. (*U* xi, xii-xiii)

While Kiberd correctly notes Joyce's political opposition to the revivalists, he fails to point out the several instances in the novel where CuChulain is used to express these views. Joyce clearly read Gregory's *CuChulain*. He alludes to various Irish mythological cycles in "Scylla and Charybdis" to evince his staggering knowledge of Irish cultural writing and to demonstrate his own genius. While CuChulain is central to "The Dead," in *Ulysses* the effect of his inclusion is highly ironic because the figure is only part of an elaborate joke on Gregory and Yeats.

## Ch. 6 Conclusion

“The Dead” is an early culmination of Joyce’s subtle allusive writing, the first glimpse at his ideas about Irish mythology, and an implied analog to his criticism of Lady Gregory’s Irish Literary Theatre and Douglas Hyde’s Gaelic League. The story’s major theme—that sexual failure and symbolic political failure are emphasized by Celtic myths, which deepen the resonance of Irish cultural paralysis—follows the process of de-anglicization. Unlike his earlier writings, which failed to penetrate Ireland’s literary movement with ridicule and surface parody, the story embodies mythology central to the Irish Literary Revival and appears to follow some of the directives set out by Hyde and Stopford Brooke in 1893. Joyce engages their theories with Gabriel Conroy by following Brooke’s protocol:

Irishmen of formative genius should take, one by one, the various cycles of Irish tales, and grouping each of them round one central figure, supply to each a dominant human interest to which every event in the whole should converge.

(Cunliffe 251)

The significance of his Irish cultural allusions is no doubt meant for Lady Gregory and the Gaelic League. The allusion in the text to Coole Park, the missing “Gregory” in the “Lass of Aughrim,” and the evocation of Yeats’s review of Browning are but a few of the coded messages meant for the revivalists.

Regardless of Joyce’s personal feelings towards them, the allusions to these Irish writers in “The Dead” inform Gabriel’s identity crisis which is a crisis that affects Ireland, and is primarily a crisis that affects the interpretation of history in the story. He is ironically surrounded by allusions to Gaelic League writers, Irish patriotism, and myth.

Through this allusion-cluster Joyce separates himself from Gabriel, whose life circumstances and attitudes are so similar to his own.

Joyce's allusions to the Gaelic League in "The Dead" show his attempt to engage the revivalists' sense of Irish culture. His allusions are historical and part of his semi-autobiographical attempt at portraying his historical connection to the movement. However, they were too subtle for the revivalists, who as readers, disappointed him. This is not entirely their fault. As many have argued, Joyce's allusions are extremely subtle. He spent more than eight years trying to publish *Dubliners*. Censorship in Ireland and printers' oversight forced him to encode many of sexual allusions and bury them deep until subtlety became his normal writing practice. However, the scathing satire of the Revival in *Ulysses* contextualizes the reasons he had not forgotten what he perceived to be a slight. Because of engagement with Revival writing throughout Joyce's career, "The Dead" is more ironic when read in its literary-historical context. It is a damning parody which, as an imitation, surpasses anything the revivalists ever did.

Joyce's virtuosity and allusive writing style required a readership capable of understanding his technical ability. As readers, the revivalists formed most of the early public opinion of his work, but failed to be good readers. According to Ellmann, Yeats admitted to having "never finished *Ulysses*" ("Joyce and Yeats," 634). With "The Dead," the revivalists were Joyce's intended readers. Any critical approach that downplays the importance for Joyce of their reception of his early poems and *Dubliners* on the basis that Joyce surpassed their popularity later in his career is unconvincing and precludes a thorough reading of the story.

Beyond parody, the central idea of the story emphasizes that Ireland's cultural and spiritual paralysis inhibits the development of cultural meaning and literary forms of expression. This is also the unifying theme of *Dubliners*. CuChulain emphasizes the country's paralysis, but also transcends it. The sexual failure of Gabriel/CuChulain is symbolic of Irish political failure, but these failures are not essential to Irish culture, and the allusions to mythology confirm this. By alluding to archetypal heroes, Joyce challenges cultural narratives about fighting against British oppression. Most importantly, he uses the CuChulain allusion in Gabriel's name, and the sense of culture it evokes, to balance negative impressions of Ireland by celebrating the country's mythology.

APPENDIX I. Delacour's Correspondence: Encoding Sexual Imagery  
and Etymological Allusions in "Counterparts,"

Analyzing Joyce's allusive technique is one aspect of decoding his imagery. His sexual imagery adheres to patterns and constraints similar to the mythological allusions buried deep within "The Dead." Joyce's cautious subtlety in writing leads him to avoid obvious allusions. His technique is born out of the necessity to avoid censorship and to placate reluctant publishers.

With respect to uniting sex and political themes, "The Dead" has several precursors in *Dubliners*. The clearest synthesis is the image of the street musician in "Two Gallants," who plays an Irish tune on a prostituted harp.<sup>32</sup> Symbolically, the harp is Ireland. However, in "Counterparts," Joyce uses a subtle etymological allusion to suggest an idea about sex. The technique he displays in the earlier story is similar to how he uses the name Conroy to evoke CuChulain in "The Dead."

In "Counterparts," Joyce alludes to the colloquial "French Letter" in Miss Delacour's correspondence, symbolically, as condoms. The conflict between Mr. Alleyne and Farrington surrounds the Delacour correspondence, from which "the last two letters were missing" (*D* 89). The letters are French; etymologically, Delacour is a French name "de la Cour," literally meaning "of the Court." These missing letters inform the sexualized descriptions of Alleyne and Delacour:

Mr Alleyne was said to be sweet on her...She came to the office often and stayed a long time when she came. She was sitting beside his desk now in an aroma of perfumes, smoothing the handle of her umbrella...Mr Alleyne had swivelled his

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<sup>32</sup> This significance of the harp image was first noted by Dilworth in a class meeting. Personal notes: Dilworth, Thomas. "Dilworth on Two Gallants." University of Windsor. Dillon Hall, Windsor, Ontario. N.p. 1 Feb. 2010. Lecture.



chair round to face her and thrown his right foot jauntily upon his left knee. (*D* 90).

The phallic umbrella handle, the water-proofed covering, and the missing all letters evoke contraception. These images inform the story's symbolic anti-fertility.

Joyce knew the meaning of the colloquialism. In a letter dated 7 August 1909, he refers to a "French Letter" when discussing an offer made by one of Nora's previous partners to wear a condom during intercourse (Joyce, *Selected Letters* 158). It is possible that Joyce learned about the phrase from Nora as early as 1904. Robert Scholes places the writing of "Counterparts" in July of 1905.<sup>33</sup>

The missing correspondence seems crucial to understanding conflict between Alleyne and Farrington. Thomas Dilworth was one of the first critics to acknowledge that "umbrellas suggest contraceptives" elsewhere in *Dubliners* (Dilworth 101). His research, which connects the word umbrella to an evocation of the diaphragm in the Dublin vernacular, is consistent with Tara Prescott's recent study of the historical, medical, and cultural context of the word "gutta-percha" in "The Dead."<sup>34</sup> However, despite the general agreement about these allusions to rubber and water-proofing, critics still debate which types of contraceptives Joyce is evoking. The evocation of condoms suggests the symbolic importance of the missing letters to the story's motifs of failed consummation and emasculation.

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<sup>33</sup> Buck Mulligan also refers to George Moore ironically, as the "lecturer on French letters to the youth of Ireland" in "Scylla and Charybdis (U 276).

<sup>34</sup> Dilworth's note on the location of the word "umbrella" in the Dublin vernacular, put forward by Gifford and Robert Siedman as "slang for diaphragm, the contraceptive device that blocks the cervix" is very convincing (110). His attempt to take Zack Bowen to task for reading "the umbrella reference in 'The Sisters'...[as] a condom the priest ought to have used to avoid contracting syphilis" further highlights the importance for critics to emphasize the type of contraceptive being evoked by Joyce. Prescott's study of early 20<sup>th</sup> century birth control is the most comprehensive (and recent) examination of contraception in one of Joyce's works.

If Delacour's umbrella symbolizes a diaphragm, it allows infertile sexuality even without condoms. Both Delacour and Alleyne hardly take "any notice" of Farrington when he brings in the letters (*D* 90). Flirtation seems to be the pair's sole interest and their nervous tension, mutual attentiveness, body language, and proximity all suggest arousal. But the meeting culminates in an angry row over the letters. This symbolically highlights the infertility of this relationship. On a realistic level, the relationship between Delacour and Alleyne is futile; it is about flirtation and about "her money" (*D* 90). Symbolically this futility becomes sexual infertility, an interpretation reinforced through contraceptive imagery.

Even if Delacour and Alleyne are not interested in sex, their anticipation does not subside at the arrival of the correspondence. While in each other's company, neither one seems distracted by the goings on of the office. This heightened focus adds greater symbolic importance to the missing letters. Alleyne's violent "tirade of abuse" towards Farrington on the office main floor seems unjustified, given the intensity of his preoccupation with Delacour upstairs only moments earlier unless it expresses symbolic sexual frustration (91). The importance placed on the letters shifts the symbolic value of the umbrella back towards ambiguity, whereby it may only evoke contraceptives generally, through its waterproof cover, rather than a diaphragm specifically. Whether they have sex or not, and almost certainly they do not, symbolic contraceptive imagery foreshadows the failed consummation of their meeting.

The office scene culminates in a deflating climax when Farrington emasculates his employer with wit and Alleyne's attempt to posture in front of his female client fails. The exchange bodily impacts Alleyne who is "flushed to the hue of wild rose...his mouth

twitch[ing] with a dwarf's passion" (91). This scene has a counterpart later in the story, when Farrington's "dark wine-coloured face" becomes "flushed darker still" after Weathers defeats him in an arm wrestling match (*D* 96). Weathers is also "a sponge" in Farrington's opinion and ruins his night of drinking (*D* 95). Farrington runs out of money, which results in a failure to consummate his plan for the evening as he does "not even feel drunk"; however, all the blame is placed on what "he had done for himself in the office" earlier in the day (*D* 96-97).

The catalyst to failure throughout the story is the French correspondence which symbolically connects sex and politics in the narrative. Farrington's loss of the letters corresponds to his loss of financial security by affecting the safety of his job. He fails to get drunk and cannot put the events of the day out of his mind. The symbolic sexual implication of the letters also has a political counterpart in the literal translation of Delacour's name as "of the Court." The meaning of her French name, and Delacour's "Jewish appearance" depict her as a wealthy foreigner. Alleyne's symbolically Protestant "North of Ireland accent" evokes the ruling Anglo-Irish ascendancy (*D* 90, 92). There is also a phonetic similarity between "Delacour" and Delacroix. Though not a direct allusion, the surname draws attention to French Romantic symbolist Eugene Delacroix (1798-1863), whose paintings would have been popular in Europe in Joyce's time. His erotic nudes like *Louis d'Orleans Showing his Mistress* support a sexualized reading of Delacour.

Anti-fertility imagery enhances the difference between the characters' social class. Delacour's beauty, her money, and her amiable demeanour are all unattainable to Farrington. In contrast, Farrington's wife is described as "a little sharp-faced woman

who bullied her husband when he was sober and bullied by him when he was drunk.” Despite their hostility, they have “five children,” (*D* 97). The paralysis in which Farrington finds himself is emphasized by the beating he gives his son. He and his wife have sex, but the result is poverty and moral failure.

The Delacroix evocation exemplifies how Joyce establishes erotic appeal throughout *Dubliners*. In “The Dead,” Gabriel wants to paint a picture of his wife as “a woman standing on the stairs listening in the shadow” and call it *Distant Music* (*D* 210). This passage elegantly establishes Gretta’s poignant attitude and coincides with Gabriel realizing that he desires his wife physically. Painting and sexual arousal also emerges in a letter about *The Picture of Dorian Gray* in a letter to Stanislaus dated 19 August 1906:

The central idea is fantastic. Dorian is exquisitely beautiful and becomes awfully wicked: but never ages. His portrait ages. I can imagine the capital which Wilde’s prosecuting counsel made out of certain parts of it. It is not very difficult to read between the lines. Wilde seems to have had some good intentions in writing it...If he had had the courage to develop the allusions in the book it might have been better. I suspect he has done this in some privately-printed books. Like his Irish imitator. (Ellmann 2:150)

The general tone of Joyce’s letter is one of concern. He evidently believed Wilde could have protected himself, had he not so thinly veiled the sexual exploits of the characters in his novel. This attitude seems somewhat paradoxical in light of Joyce’s comment about having “the courage to develop the allusions.” However, the reader who is familiar with Joyce’s fiction will be aware that Joyce means having the courage to allude to everything

subtly, taking pains carefully to craft each allusion and hide it in the text so that only a reader initiated in popular culture can appreciate it.

APPENDIX II. “The Lass of Aughrim (Lord Gregory)”<sup>35</sup>

I am a king’s daughter who strayed from Cappaquin  
In search of Lord Gregory, pray God I find him  
The rain beats at my yellow locks, the dew wets my skin  
My babe is cold in my arms, Lord Gregory, let me in.

Lord Gregory is not home my dear, henceforth he can’t be seen  
He’s gone to bonnie Scotland to bring home a new queen  
So leave you these windows and likewise this hall  
For it’s deep in the ocean you must hide your downfall.

Who’ll shoe my babe’s little feet? Who’ll put gloves on her hand?  
Who’ll tie my babe’s middle with a long and green band?  
Who’ll comb my babe’s yellow locks with an ivory comb?  
Who’ll be my babe’s father till Lord Gregory comes home?

I’ll shoe your babe’s little feet, I’ll put gloves on her hand  
I’ll tie your babe’s middle with a long and green band  
I’ll comb your babe’s yellow locks with an ivory comb  
I’ll be your babe’s father till Lord Gregory comes home.

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<sup>35</sup> No date appears on this translation of the song but it is comparable to the versions discussed by Heningan. The complete citation is: “The Lass of Aughrim (Lord Gregory).” *English Language Songs*. Evergreen State College. N.d. Web. 29 Aug. 2014.

But leave you these windows and likewise this hall  
For it's deep in the ocean you must hide your downfall.  
Do you remember Lord Gregory that night in Cappaquin?  
We exchanged silken handkerchiefs, and all against my will

Yours were fine linen, love, and mine was old cloth  
Yours cost one guinea, love, and mine none at all.  
Do you remember Lord Gregory, that night in my father's hall?  
We exchanged rings on our fingers, and that was worse than all

Yours were fine silver, love, and mine was old tin  
Yours cost one guinea, love, and mine just one cent.  
But leave you these windows and likewise this hall  
For it's deep in the ocean you must hide your downfall.

My curse on you mother, and sister also  
Tonight the lass of Aughrim came knocking at my door  
Lie down my little son, lie down and sleep  
Tonight the lass of Aughrim lies sleeping in the deep

Saddle me the brown horse, the black or the grey  
But saddle me the best horse in my stable this day

And I'll roam over the valley, and mountains so wide  
Till I find the lass of Aghrim and lie by her side

But leave you these windows and likewise this hall  
For it's deep in the ocean you must hide your downfall.



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