

## “The Dead” in *Dubliners*: What the Ghosts Light

Rie SHIMOKAWA

(Received October 31, 2016)

### 1. Introduction

This paper examines the influence of Thomas Moore’s song “O Ye Dead!” on ‘The Dead’ in *Dubliners* written by James Joyce. In 1906, Joyce and his wife, Nora, travelled to their home country, Ireland, where they visited Galway, his wife’s hometown. It was Joyce’s first visit to the west of Ireland, and it enabled him to understand the atmosphere of a more primitive and traditional Ireland. During the trip, Nora confessed to Joyce that she once had a passionate love affair with Michael (Sonny) Bodkin, who had died for her, when she was a young girl. They then visited Bodkin’s grave in Oughterard. He realised that even though Michael had died, he was still very much alive in Nora’s memory. It seems to Joyce that the dead Michael was haunting the living including Joyce and Nora, like a ghost. This trip and the events that transpired during its course led him to write ‘The Dead.’ He saw himself as Gabriel Conroy, the protagonist, who was struggling with the same type of love triangle.

The trip impacted Joyce’s thoughts towards Nora as his partner as well as towards the west of Ireland as his native land. Numerous papers have been written on ‘The Dead,’ but only few papers have explored its relation with Moore’s “O Ye Dead!.” This paper introduces a new approach better understand “The Dead,” one of Joyce’s most significant short stories.

### 2. Joyce’s Encounter with ‘O Ye Dead!’

Joyce wrote “The Dead” while living in Rome in 1906 and working as a bank clerk. Although he found this existence somewhat purposeless, some experiences during this time began to form a basis for the story. For example, he became rather suspicious of Nora as he was jealous of her ex-boyfriends and other men rumoured to be in her life. He even questioned her reading the paternity of their child as follows in ‘[i]s Georgie my son?’ (SL 158):

I have been a fool. I thought that all the time you gave yourself only to me and you were dividing your body between me and another. In Dublin here the rumor is circulated that I have taken the leavings of others. Perhaps they laugh when they see me parading ‘my’ son in the streets. (SL 159)

O Nora! Nora! Nora! I am speaking now to the girl I loved, who had red-brown hair and sauntered over to me and took me so easily into her arms and made me a man. (SL 159)

Although Joyce thought of himself as an artist, he also considered himself to be ‘not a very domestic animal’ (Ellmann 214); nonetheless, he longed to be the only man in Nora’s life. He wrote to his aunt, Josephine;

‘Nora does not seem to make much difference between me and the rest of the men she has known and I can hardly believe that she is justified in this’ (Ellmann 214). This thought is also reflected in *Exiles* (1918), in which Richard, the protagonist, tries to maintain psychological liberty in his marriage. However, as Joyce had written to his aunt, although he was not a domestic person, Richard like Joyce requires chastity from his wife.

Richard. [Controlling himself.] You forget that I have allowed you complete liberty — and allow you it still.

Bertha. [Scornfully.] Liberty!

Richard. Yes, complete. But he (Robert) must know that I know. [More calmly.] I will speak to him quietly. [Appearing.] Bertha, believe me, dear! It is not jealousy. You have complete liberty to do as you wish — you and he. But not in this way. He will not despise you. You don’t wish to deceive me or pretend to deceive me — with him, do you? (*Exiles* 30; supplement mine)

Richard’s obsession with Bertha is strange rather than unique. He wishes to keep his liberty as well as his wife; he tries to remain a person whose marital life comprises complete trust between him and his partner. In contrast, Bertha cannot understand the idea of liberty beyond their marital bond. It seems that Bertha is similar to Gabriel, the protagonist of “The Dead,” however her attitude is slightly different because Gretta choose not to hide her unforgettable love affairs; she cannot contain the feelings aroused by her memory. Gabriel had not

realised his wife’s past; he is forced to reconsider his role as a husband when faced with his wife’s confession of a love affair in her youth. The nature of the two couples are different; *Exiles* the liberty of each person is confirmed by their trust on each other, whereas “The Dead” shows the tragedy of a husband’s small misunderstanding but also his unilateral passion for his wife.

Joyce did not enjoy living in Rome for the additional reason that it was a Catholic city; he found that the city was similar to Dublin, which he had abandoned. He remarked that ‘[h]is head was filled with a sense of the too successful encroachment of the dead upon the living city; there was a disrupting parallel in the way that Dublin, buried behind him, was haunting his thoughts’ (Ellmann 244). While he lived in Rome, he considered Rome to be similar to Dublin, a place where people lived in a rotten and paralysed atmosphere. Although he lived in Rome for only one year (1906 – 07), he changed his attitude towards both his city and his country as a result of resemblances between the two cities.

Another experience that significantly impacted Joyce and motivated him to write was his time spent living in Trieste in 1905. During this time, he received a letter from his brother, Stanislaus, who had attended a performance of Harry Plunket Greene, the Irish baritone, in which he sang “O Ye Dead!” from Thomas Moore’s *Irish Melodies*.

*Oh, ye Dead! Oh, ye Dead! whom we know by the  
light you give*

From your cold gleaming eyes,  
Tho' you move like men who live,  
Why leave you thus your graves,  
in far off seas and waves,  
Where the worm and the seabird only know your  
bed.

To haunt this spot, where all  
Those eyes that wept your fall,  
And the hearts that wailed you like your own, lie  
dead!

It is true, It is true, We are shadows cold and wan;  
And the fair, and the brave whom we loved on  
earth are gone,

But still thus ev'n in death,  
So sweet the living breath  
Of the fields and the flow'rs in our youth we  
wander'd o'er,  
That ere, condemn'd, we go,  
To freeze 'mid Hecla's snow,  
We would taste it awhile, and think we live once  
more.

Moore 161-62; italics mine)

The lyric takes the form of a conversation between the living and the dead. As Joyce considered Rome and Dublin to be cities where the living cohabited with the dead, it is likely that he imagined the situation described in the song as quite possible.

In the stanza, the living say, '*Oh, ye Dead! Oh, ye Dead! Whom we know by the light you give*' (Moore 161; italics mine) While the dead wander, they meet the living; thus, in this world, the dead are ghosts who cohabited with the living.

The following is also stated in Moore's notes for "O Ye Dead!":

Paul Zealand mentions that there is a mountain in some part of Ireland, where the ghosts of persons who have died in foreign lands walk about the converse with those they meet, like living people. If asked why they do not return to their homes, they say they are obliged to go to Mount Hecla, and disappear immediately. (Moore 267)

In the second stanza, a ghost that has parted from the body wanders to Mount Hecla in Iceland, which is said to be a symbol of the inferno. However, in "The Dead", the ghosts visit and 'light up' truths, revealing them to the living.

### 3. Gaslight and the Dead

Gaslight has special connotations in this story. It symbolizes the eyes of the dead and particularly Gretta's lover Michael; as it is mentioned above, the dead (Michael) illuminates the way for the living. Light suggests how Gabriel gains his new realisation of his and Gretta's relationship as well as how he encounters the dead.

Gordon mentions that gaslight, which is also known as 'fire gas', was common among residents of

Dublin when the song appeared in 1906 as gas pipes had recently been laid underground throughout the city.<sup>1</sup>

Electric light was a state-of-the-art technology, and thus had much more limited use. Gaslight was called *old light* while electric light was called *new light*.

Gaslight was widely used in Dublin in the early 20th century<sup>2</sup>. Gordon focuses on the spiritual connection of ‘gas’ as follows:

“Gas,” “ghost,” and “ghastly” are all — or have been thought to be etymologically akin, deriving from the Dutch *geest* for spirit. In Thomas Moore’s ‘O Ye Dead,’ the song which probably

suggested the story’s title, the dead are known “by the light you give. (Gordon 20)

Since gas, ghost and ghastly have the same etymological root and these words contain the meaning *spirit*, gaslight is naturally associated with ghost which has only spirit and no physical existence. Gaslight illuminates our path in the dark. It is indeed the same as ‘the light you give’ (Moore 161), which is sung by the living in the lyrics of “O Ye Dead!.” Gaslight is predominantly featured in many significant scenes in the story, including the scene in which Gabriel encounters Lilly in the little pantry, in the moment he recognizes the beauty of Gretta on the Morkans’ stairs and in the final astonishing scene at the Gresham Hotel.

Gaslight first appears in the scene in the pantry where Gabriel and Lily, the caretaker’s daughter, have a short conversation. The light illuminates the girl’s figure. She is described as ‘a slim growing girl, pale in complexion and with hay-coloured hair. The gas in the pantry made her look still paler’ (*D* 177). She had finished school more than a year ago; her age is almost the same as that of Michael when he died for Gretta. Although she is clearly not Michael’s precise embodiment, nevertheless her lit face is ‘still paler’, suggesting Michel’s pale face with a tint of death in the rain. Also, the pallor of her face is an effective contrast with that of Gabriel, who has a healthy, reddish look similar to that of living people: ‘[h]e was a stout tallish young man. The high colour of his cheeks pushed upwards even to his forehead where it scattered itself in a few formless patches of pale red’ (*D* 178). The ghostly

---

<sup>1</sup> Gordon 19. While the use of electric light in London started in the 1870s, it did not appear in Dublin until the 1880s. The Gresham Hotel was considered to be one of the most fashionable hotels in Dublin, so it already had electric lighting. However, Gordon also mentions that the lower middle class in Dublin still used candlelight, which preceded gaslight. For example, in “The Sisters” a boy, upon looking up at Farther Flynn’s room, sees a candle lit on the windowsill to mourn the dead.

<sup>2</sup> Gaslight was a familiar item for Dubliners. Aunt Kate and Mary Jane treat Mr Browne, one of the main guests at the party, they would as gaslight.

— Browne is everywhere, said Aunt Kate, lowering her voice.

Mary Jane laughed at her tone.

— Really, she said archly, he is very attentive.

— He has been laid on here like the gas, said Aunt Kate in the same tone, all during the Christmas. (*D* 206)

Gaslight as used here indicates a warm and attentive character.

pallor and lively red colour are both lit up by gaslight.

Another important episode featuring gaslight occurs when Gretta is faintly illuminated near the top of Morkans' stairs after the party. She is listening to the song "The Lass of Aughrim", sung by Bartell D'Acy. When Gabriel sees her, her pose strikes him as follows:

He stood still in the gloom of the hall, trying to catch the air that the voice was singing and gazing up at his wife. There was grace and mystery in her attitude as if she were a symbol of something of something. He asked himself what is a woman standing on the stairs in the shadow, listening to distant music, a symbol of. If he were a painter he would paint her in that attitude. Her blue felt hat would show off the bronze her hair against the darkness and the dark panel skirt would show off the light ones. *Distant Music* he would call the picture if he were a painter. (D 210)

This is the moment when "The Lass of Aughrim"<sup>3</sup> makes her remember her time with Michael. Gabriel describes her atmosphere as *Distant Music*. The title may come from the faint music and her fragile look, but simultaneously it represents that Gabriel has gradually been recognizing that the dead can approach him from a world he has considered to be far from his own because the song is exactly the symbol of Michael, the dead. The

---

<sup>3</sup> This song, which is a key to understanding Michael, will be mentioned in a later part.

scene suggests that both Gretta and Gabriel are called by Michael from another world.

Michael controls the story by summoning characters' old memories and showing them hidden truths; he acts as if he is God. The changing of their minds is also watched by Michael. Also, he shows Gabriel and Gretta what he wishes them to find in the story: the song, an embodiment of Michael, is expressed as '[t]he voice made plaintive by the distance and by the singer's hoarseness faintly *illuminated* the cadence of the air with words expressing grief' (D 210, italics mine). He lets the characters indicate what he intends to by illuminating. Illuminating leads characters to find something important; the scene of *Distant Music* predicts Gabriel's ghostly encounter with Michael.

Michael, in the form of gaslight illuminates Gretta's grief for him in the Gresham Hotel. In the hotel, Gabriel tells an elderly porter not to put either electric light or candlelight in his bedroom:

The porter pointed to the tap of the electric-light and began a muttered apology but Gabriel cut him short.

— We don't want any light. We have light enough from the street. And I say, he added, pointing to the candle, you might remove that handsome article, like a good man.

...

*A ghostly light from the street lamp* lay in a long shaft from one window to the door. (D 216; italics mine)

The high-class hotel in "The Dead" uses electric light, which does not work properly; this is symbolic, implying the slight misunderstanding that occurs between Gabriel and Gretta. Furthermore, the fact that Gabriel prefers gas street lights to candlelight hints that he feels haunted by the ghost.

Michael is haunting Gabriel; he looks into the hotel room from a window: '[a] ghostly light from the street lamp lay in a long shaft from a one window to the door' (*D* 216). The light from the window to the door symbolizes Michael's eyes, which quietly see the lustful Gabriel, and Gretta with her painful memories, come into the room from the door. He highlights the great gap of feeling between the two.

In the room, Gretta stands in front of the mirror, then 'walks along the shaft of the light toward Gabriel' (*D* 216) as if being led by the light, dead Michael. But, her mind has no interest in Gabriel, and she goes to the window to see outside. She may be calming her feeling, but simultaneously, she may long for her dead lover, whom she has remembered by hearing "The Lass of Aughttrim" sung by Bartell D'Acy, the tenor, at the Morkans' party.

Also, there is a strong link between gaslight and Michael; he had worked at the gasworks in Galway. In other words, Michael provided light to indirectly reveal people's lives. Furthermore, people working at gasworks endured terrible condition of dust pollution. Therefore, many suffered from lung disease like Michael. Michael had been producing gas (light) before his death to light up people's lives and warm them, thus providing proof that gaslight represents Michael.

"O Ye dead!" describes the dead giving light to the living; it suggests the importance of the past and that the living reside in a world that has been built by the dead. Through our memories, the dead can show us truths that we had never before realised. In the story, light associated with memory shows Gabriel a truth that he had not realised. In the hotel room, he finally understands the marital gap that exists between him and his wife. Gabriel stares back at his own astonished face in the mirror when he hears Gretta's confession about Michael; in short, Gabriel realises that Michael's ghost still stands between them.

So she had had that romance in her life: a man had died for her sake. It hardly pained him now to think how poor a part he, her husband, had played in her life. *He watched her while she slept as though he and she had never lived together as a man and wife.* (*D* 223; italics mine)

The light from gaslight illuminates his own face in the mirror while also showing his wife's true face, which Gabriel has never seen before. In Moore's poem, the dead are defined as those 'whom we know by the light you give' (Moore 161). This implies that the dead provide truth and indicate the direction in which the living must journey.

When Gabriel realises that he mirrors himself in his own behaviour, he feels ashamed and avoids the gaslight:

He saw himself as a ludicrous figure, acting as a

Pennyboy for his aunts, a nervous well-meaning sentimentalist, orating to vulgarians and idealizing his own clownish lusts, the pitiable fatuous fellow he had caught a glimpse of in the mirror. *Instinctively he turned his back more to the light lest she might see the shame that burned upon his forehead.* (D 220; italics mine)

He turns his back to avoid seeing his real self and to prevent Gretta from seeing his humiliation.

Clearly, Gabriel regards the dead as a 'ghostly' or 'ghastly' existence in both works, "The Dead" and "O Ye Dead!" However, based on the conversation between the living and the dead in the song and the quotation from "The Dead," 'A *ghostly* light from the street lamp lay in a long shaft from one window to the door' (D 216; italics mine), the dead do not frighten the living. The dead appear as a gaslight not only to provide evidence of their existence, but also to show Gabriel the truth regarding Gretta's past.

#### 4. The Dead Haunt Gabriel

Michael Furey, Gretta's dead boyfriend, emerges as a character during her confession. However, he actually appears throughout almost the entire story, even at the Morkans' lively party. He haunts Gabriel from the time he enters the Morkans' house. More interestingly, Gabriel is unconsciously fascinated by the presence of the dead and unseen Michael.

During the party, Gabriel feels uncomfortable. First in the pantry, where he removes his coat, he is told by Lilly, the Morkans' housemaid, that '[t]he men that is

now is only all palaver and what they can get out of you' (D 178) when he says to her, 'I suppose we'll be going to your wedding one of these fine days with your young man — eh?' (D 178). He is astonished by the girl's grown-up demeanour. Then, at the dance hall, when he dances lancers with Miss Ivors, he is told that he is 'West Briton' (D 190) because he travels the continent and writes articles in *the Daily Express*, whose editorial policy is 'the development of industrial resources and a reconciliation of the rights and impulses of Irish nationality with the demands and obligations of imperial dominations' (Gifford 116). Miss Ivors criticises him because his attitude toward his mother country is in stark opposition to her fanatical nationalism. After a dance, he escapes to the window and looks outside.

Gabriel's warm trembling fingers tapped the cold pane of the window. 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! The snow would be lying on the branches of the trees and forming a bright cap on the top of the Wellington monument. *How much more pleasant it would be there than at the supper table.* (D 192; italics mine)

The quotation above implies a clear contrast between the warm and lively interior and the cold and silence outside. He longs to go out and walk to Phoenix Park in the snow. While the party symbolizes the world of the living, outside is an extraordinary and mysterious world, because snowfall in Dublin is extremely rare. He wants

to run away from those who torture him and seek a strange new atmosphere that he has not experienced. Within the confines of the window is the real world, while outside is a hyperreality that has a strange atmosphere; in this atmosphere, there is something that eases Gabriel's tension, and represents the ideal space for which he longs.

Soon after, when he is at the table, Gabriel still thinks of the outside and imagines people looking up at the window of the Morkans' house.

*The piano was playing a waltz tune and he could hear the skirts sweeping against the drawing room door. People perhaps were standing in the snow on the quay outside, gazing up at the lighted windows and listening to the waltz music. The air was pure there. In the distance lay the park where the trees were weighted with snow. The Wellington Monument wore a gleaming cap of snow that flashed westward over the white field of Fifteen Acres. (D 202; italics mine)*

Nameless people look up at the window and listen to the music. It is curious that people are outside, where it is cold and dark. Furthermore, chronologically considering that Gabriel arrived at the Morkans' at around 10 o'clock, after which there were several piano tunes and dances, it must be nearly midnight when guests at the party had dinner. It is quite unnatural that people would stand outside in the cold late at night. We can therefore guess that they are the dead. It is even quite possible that one of the men is Michael himself, because in the scene,

there is a man looking up at the window, similar to the way in which Michael looked up at the window in the rain to bid Gretta farewell when she was preparing to depart for Dublin. The people outside may have come to haunt and see Gabriel and Gretta from outside.

Pearson states as follows: '... 'The Dead' is haunted by allusions to dead, but potentially speaking, voices from Ireland's past' (Pearson 161). Here, he suggests that the dead are possibly the founders of Ireland; in other words, that we live on the foundation of the dead, who show us what they experienced in order to protect the country from aggressors.

#### 5. What the Dead Light Up

Gabriel believed that Gretta loves him, but her confession shakes his belief. Hearing her confession regarding the affair with Michael in her youth, Gabriel must admit the fact that Michael died for her. Michael's death implies that she was his only woman and that even after his death, he haunts her for his eternal passion for her as if he were her guardian angel. In the last scene, Gabriel again watches the snow fall and listens to snowflakes tapping upon the pane; however, he describes the snowflakes as '[a] few lights taps upon the pane made him turn to the window' (D 223); in this context, it is implied that these lights come from the dead. The snow tapping upon the window is associated with the scene in which Michael visited Gretta:

Then the night before I left was in my grandmother's house in Nun's Island, packing up, and *I heard gravel thrown up against the window.*



The window was so wet I couldn't see so I ran downstairs as I was and slipped out the back into the garden shivering. ... I implored of him to go home at once and told him he would get his death in the rain. But he said he did not want to live. (*D* 221; italics mine)

Michael's soul visits Gabriel in the same way that he bid farewell to Gretta. Michael appears in front of Gabriel and shows him the story of his experience with Gretta.

Gabriel's feelings are described as follows:

Generous tears filled Gabriel's eyes. He had never felt like that himself toward 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. (*D* 223)

He discovered that Michael's love for Gretta was bold and passionate. In other words, while Gabriel's love is realistic and substantial, Michael's passion is ideological and spiritual. In addition, Michael standing outside in despair is associated with the maiden of "The Lass of Aughrim," the song Michael sang for Gretta.

If you'll be the lass of Aughrim  
As I am taking you mean to be  
Tell me the first token  
That passed between you and me.

O don't you remember  
That night on yon lean hill  
When we both met together  
Which I am sorry now to tell.

The rain falls on my yellow locks  
And the dew it wets my skin;  
My babe lies cold within my arms:  
Lord Gregory let me in. (Gifford 124)

The song describes how the maiden of Aughrim asks to see Lord Gregory because she bore his baby; however, she is rejected. While she is waiting, her baby, which she was holding in her arms, dies due to the cold rain. She is thus associated with Michael who also waited for Gretta in the rain.

This is the moment that Michael conquers Gabriel: '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' (*D* 223). The grey impalpable world is the place where the living and the dead cohabited; he is overwhelmed by the fact that his identity disappeared for his experience with Gretta as his finest lover. He enters a world that he had never even realised, but that in which Gretta has lived in and to which her soul belongs. Furthermore, although Michael has been dead for years, his spirit lives on in Gretta's memory.<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>4</sup> The idea that the dead can live forever in the memories of the living is also appeared in "A Painful Case" in *Dubliners*. When the protagonist, Mr. Duffy is faced with the death of Mrs. Sinico, he feels

Gretta lives with the dead while Michael's ghost haunts Gabriel. It seems that the world is not entirely separate but that the border between this world and the other is vague; in short, the living and the dead coexist with one another. At the end of the story, snow falls all over Ireland, on the living as well as the dead.

Yes, the newspapers were right: snow was general all over Ireland. It was falling on every part of the dark central plain, on the treeless hills, falling softly upon the Bog of Allen and, farther westward, softly falling into the dark mutinous Shannon waves. It was falling, too, upon every part of the lonely churchyard on the hill where Michael Furey lay buried. It lay thickly drifted on the crooked crosses and headstones, on the spears of little gate, on the barren thorns. (*D* 223)

The entire Ireland becomes whited out. Snow covers everything as it falls through the universe,<sup>5</sup> into which Ireland appears to gradually melt away. In other words, snow symbolizes a much larger purpose, as if God blanks everything and evenly purified both worlds; the dead and the living, and the border between them are

---

lonely, as he realises that he will disappear unless someone remembers him: 'his life would be lonely too until he, too, died, *ceased to exist, became a memory — if anyone remembered him.*' (*D* 116; italics mine)

<sup>5</sup> 'His (Gabriel's) soul swooned slowly as he heard the snow falling faintly through the universe and faintly falling, like the descent of their last end, upon all the living and the dead.' (*D* 224; supplement mine)

whited-out, removing all differences between the two worlds.<sup>6</sup>

Furthermore, the narrator's view progresses from the east to the west of Ireland. This may be due to Joyce's experiences travelling from Dublin to Galway in 1906. He states that '[t]he time had come for him (Gabriel) to set out on his journey westward' (*D* 223; supplement mine). Gabriel decides to journey westward, and, as Ellman shows, there is a clear implication that westward is towards death.<sup>7</sup> The west implies another world where Michael comes from.

Furthermore, in the first stanza of 'Oh, Ye Dead!', the lyrics say 'we know by the light you give from your cold *gleaming* eye,' (Moore 161; italics mine). Thus, the light comes from eyes of the dead. Considering that truth is indicated by the light, in the speech scene, Gabriel imagines that 'the Wellington Monument wore a *gleaming* cap of snow that flashed westward over the white field of Fifteen Acre' (*D* 202; italics mine). The snow cap illuminates the west, predicting that Gabriel would realise that the time has come for him 'to set on his journey westward' (*D* 223).

#### 6. What Gretta Symbolizes

'I think he died for me' (*D* 220) is the richest but the most striking statement in Gretta's confession and is

---

<sup>6</sup> Gordon explains snow falling all over Ireland as a victory for Michael as an archangel (See Gordon 29). However, I think snow symbolizes a bigger existence, like God, who dominates not only the living and the dead, but also the good and the evil in the world.

<sup>7</sup> See Ellmann 249.

often described as a parody of Yeats's "Cathleen ni Houlihan": '... but there were others that died for love of me a long time ago' (Yeats 82). The old woman in Yeats's play is a symbol of Ireland; to protect her, many men fight against invaders ('many strangers'; Yeats 81) and die. She also sings:

They shall be remained for ever,  
They shall be alive for ever,  
They shall be speaking for ever,  
The people shall hear them for ever. (Yeats 82)

This also implies that, even after death, spirits can exist forever in the memories of the living. In other words, the country is built upon the dead, who should be remembered. Michael Furey in "The Dead" can exist forever in the memory of Gretta, who echoes the Old Woman of "Cathleen ni Houlihan" as a symbol of Ireland.

Clearly, the west of Ireland, where Gretta and Michael reside, is a symbol of Ireland. In comparison, it is a far more passionate area than Dublin. Gabriel, a Dubliner, is astonished by Gretta's tears for the boyfriend who died for her.

Better pass boldly into that other world, in the full glory of some passion, than fade and wither dismally with age. He thought of how she who lay beside him and had locked in her heart for so many years that image of her lovers eyes when he had told her that he did not wish to live. (*D* 223)

Gabriel has been totally defeated by Michael; he admires his instinctive passion, and cries generous tears, which suggests both his forgiveness and his jealousy towards Gretta and Michael, respectively.

Although Gabriel has not experienced the west of Ireland, he finds that the country is composed of numerous layers of the dead by facing his wife's secret memory. It is the moment for him to become interested in the west of Ireland, which is more traditional and primitive. Thus he decides to 'journey westward' (*D* 223).

Shovlin considers Joyce to be a Celtic revivalist. He explains that Connacht, which maintains a typical Irish atmosphere, was considered to be utopia by Celtic revivalists in the late 19th century.<sup>8</sup> He also notes that facing the dead induces Gabriel's decision to travel westward. Through his defeat, his anglicised Dublin spirit dies, and he enters into the primitive lands in the west of Ireland. In the end, he disappears in the snow falling over the whole of Ireland:

His (Gabriel's) soul swooned slowly as he heard the snow falling faintly through the universe and faintly falling, like the descent of their last end, upon all the living and the dead. (*D* 224; supplement mine)

Snow falls from the universe as if it is a gift from God. It means that the living and the dead coexist within the God's domain. Michael's light indicates the truth to

---

<sup>8</sup> See Shovlin 1-11.

Gabriel in his realisation that the dead stand by him and are the foundation of Ireland; in other words, he finds himself to be more of a part of his nation, even if he avoids accepting this fact. Michael, the dead, and Gretta, a symbol of Ireland, allow Gabriel to admit his own nationalistic background.

#### 7. Conclusion

In this paper, with reference to Thomas Moore's "O Ye Dead!", I have examined the impact of the dead (Michael Furey) on Gabriel's revelation. Moore's song is composed of a conversation between the living and the dead. Particularly, the living tells the dead, 'we know the light you give' (Moore 161), which implies that the dead show hidden truths to the living. This conversation inspired Joyce to describe the psychological love triangle with his wife and Michael (Sonny) Bodkin. Even though Michael died many years ago, he still lives in Nora's memory. Joyce was haunted by the dead (Michael), who showed him the truth of his relationship with Nora. Thus, it is demonstrated how 'gaslight' symbolizes the haunting ghosts who illuminates the reality of the living.

In addition, the hometowns of the wife and her dead boyfriend in the west of Ireland completely different from the husband's hometown of Dublin. The west of Ireland contains the calamitous remnants of a storied history. Gabriel stood on the anglicised side, but through Michael, he admits the aspects of Irish colonization. Also, it is seen that both Michael and Gretta represent an image of typical Ireland. In realising his own nationality, the identity Gabriel had is slowly

whited out. He finally acquires a new relationship not only with Gretta but also with Ireland, and realises that it is time to 'set out on his journey westward' (*D* 223), which is associated with Ireland's layers of history and the world where the living and the dead co-exist. As in "O Ye Dead!", the dead (Michael) calls the living (Gabriel) through light, illuminating for Gabriel the new direction in which he must journey to renew his thoughts towards not only himself and his family but also his native land.

#### Bibliography

- 1) Ellmann, R. *James Joyce: New and Revised Edition*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1959.
- 2) Gifford, D. *Joyce Annotated: Notes for Dubliners and A Portrait of the artist as a Young Man*, Berkley: University of California Press, 1982.
- 3) Gordon, John 'Gaslight, Ghostlight, Golliwog, Gaslight', *James Joyce Quarterly* vol. 46, No. 1, Talsa: Ohio University Press, 2008.
- 4) Joyce, J. *Dubliners: Text, Criticism, and Notes*. Edited by Robert Scholes and A. Walton Litz, New York: Viking Press., 2006).
- 5) —,— *Selected Letters of James Joyce*. Edited by Richard Ellmann, London: Faber and Faber, 1975.
- 6) Pearson, N. 'Death Sentences: Silence, Colonial Memory and the Voice of the Dead in Dubliners,' 141-170. Edited by C. Jaurretche, *European Joyce Studies 16: Beckett, Joyce and the Art of the Negative*, Amsterdam: Rodopi B.V, 2011.
- 7) Shovlin, F. *Journey Westward: Joyce, Dubliners and the Literary Revival*. Liverpool: Liverpool University

Press, 2012.

8) Yeats, W. B. *The Collected Plays of W. B. Yeats*.

London: Macmillan London Ltd., 1934.