THE INARTICULATE COMMUNITY:
A COMPARATIVE STUDY
OF JAMES JOYCE'S DUBLINERS AND
SHERWOOD ANDERSON'S WINESBURG, OHIO
WITH PERTINENT REFERENCE
TO THE LATER FICTION OF THESE AUTHORS

MICHAEL BRIAN OLIVER

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by

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts, Memorial University of
Newfoundland, June 1970.

ABSTRACT

This thesis is concerned with three areas of comparison between the short fiction techniques of James Joyce and Sherwood Anderson. The first of these is the brief establishment of a poetics for both authors from their critical and autobiographical writings. Such a process reveals that they each showed a judicious respect for 'reality' -- or "the fact in nature" as Anderson called it -- but significantly they each purified the facts deep down in the forges of their imaginations, and favoured a poetic, suggestive -- imaginative -- style of writing, in the tradition of the Romantic poets.

The second phase of comparison, and by far the most extensive, covering Chapters II-V, examines the re-created communities of Dublin and Winesburg, Ohio, and especially the individuals in these communities. This scrutiny discloses that the people in both these communities are lonely and frustrated because they are inarticulate, powerless to communicate the forces of their underminds to each other. This inability to speak is also coupled with a lack of community vitality to further isolate the individual. Ultimately, the meaning of life for such people can only

come from the inner visions of their imaginations, to find which they must descend into their memories and passions.

Lastly, this search -- and occasional revelation -- determined the kind of short stories that Joyce and Anderson wrote: namely, the plotless, suggestive story of "epiphany," which was a revolutionary form breaking with the action-climax tradition in short story writing. Joyce's and Anderson's contribution to this early twentieth century renovation in short fiction is briefly looked at in the last chapter.

Because writing for Joyce and Anderson meant imaginative re-creation, and because the people they sympathetically re-created lived sordid, unrewarding lives, illuminated only occasionally by visions of the meaning of such existence, it is only natural and proper that their short stories should re-incarnate the searchings of these people in the depths of their minds and the occasional disclosures of their questing imaginations.

THE INARTICULATE COMMUNITY

I could not
Speak, and my eyes failed, I was neither
Living nor dead, and I knew nothing

—— T. S. Eliot, The Waste Land

PREFACE

This thesis was written with the intention of showing that two of the most influential men of English letters of the first half of the twentieth century were motivated by similar artistic impulses, were given similar circumstances from which to create their works, and were responsible -- independently yet coincidentally -- for a major revolution in the genre of short fiction. The similarities between these two geniuses are indeed expansive, in spite of the fact that their total literary achievements have earned vastly dissimilar reputations, for one of these authors, the Irishman James Joyce, was a sophisticated giant of creativity, while the other, the American Sherwood Anderson, was more of a common craftsman, working humbly but beautifully in his almost rustic métier. And it is the similarities between these authors that ultimately count, for as modern mythmakers they illustrate perfectly the eternal truth of Percy Bysshe Shelley's remark that "The distinction between poets and prose writers is a vulgar error," and perhaps even more important, they are two of the noblest examples of the verity of William Blake's statement that "None is greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven; it is so in Poetry."

I would like to express grateful thanks at this time to the English Department of Memorial University of Newfoundland;

a special mention is reserved for Mrs. Alison Feder who supervised this work (and read all my illegible handwriting); and lastly, deep appreciation goes to my wife Theresa for her typing.

M. B. O.

Fredericton

June 1970

T A B L E O F C O N T E N T S

I

RE-CREATING A COMMUNITY

Within six years of each other, just before and just after the Great War, on opposite sides of the Atlantic Ocean, two books of short stories were published that were unified by the same underlying principle. James Joyce's Dubliners, published in 1914, and Sherwood Anderson's Winesburg, Ohio, published in 1919, each drew upon a similar basic resource; namely, the community in which the author had spent the early formative years of his life. The stories in both these volumes form, respectively, the collective chronicle of two communities at the turn into the twentieth century. The people in the stories are neighbours. The Dubliners all have a common national, cultural, and religious heritage, as do the residents of Winesburg, Ohio; and the Dubliners all walk the same streets and know the same landmarks, as do the residents of Winesburg, Ohio. The communities en masse are entirely different: Dublin is a city, Winesburg is a small town; Dublin is self-sufficient, Winesburg is largely dependent upon the surrounding countryside; Dublin is Catholic, Winesburg is Protestant -- the differences are manifold. But when the individuals who comprise these disparate communities are considered, it becomes another matter. The Dubliners and the residents of Winesburg, Ohio share both a common loneliness and a common inability to communicate to each other what most matters to

them. This fact of the similar sufferings of the inhabitants of these two communities, besides the more mechanical fact that these communities were portrayed by means of two collections of short stories which were published within a few years of each other, gives ample grounds for a comparison.

Here some limitations (and some lack of limitations) must be stated. This thesis is not solely a comparative study of Dubliners and Winesburg, Ohio. To limit the range of the discussion in such a way would be to rule out most of Joyce's best writing and much of Anderson's in which Dublin and the Midwestern small town are vitally significant. But this thesis is mainly a comparative study of these two books. Strict confinement to them would hamper inquiry, but once the move is made away from them into the later works of these authors, a gap develops that is perhaps too great for bridging; for Joyce grew away from the short story into the epic novel, while Anderson's main strength remained with the short story for his entire career. Even so, similarities are present between Ulysses and The Triumph of the Egg for example, and any such similarities will be evoked where they are thought to be pertinent.

The title of this first chapter -- "Re-creating A Community" -- in a way begs a question, or at least hints something about the process of writing used by both Joyce and Anderson. The question might be put: Are the communities of Dublin and Winesburg in the fiction of Joyce and Anderson

realistic? or, to phrase the question differently: Is their method realism? In regard to authors who portray communities specifically fixed in time and space, these are important questions. How real are the Dublin and Winesburg of Joyce and Anderson? "M.A.," a contemporary reviewer of Winesburg, Ohio, said, "Every middle westerner will recognize Winesburg, Ohio, as the town in which he grew up."[1] And it is likely that many readers of Dubliners felt the same way about that book; as a reviewer put it, "we feel Dublin about us as we read."[2] Joyce himself referred to Dubliners as a "chapter of the moral history "[3] of his country, and in a letter to Grant Richards, an early prospective publisher, he said:

> I seriously believe that you will retard the course of civilisation in Ireland by preventing the Irish people from having one good look at themselves in my nicely polished looking-glass.[4]

Are then Dublin and Winesburg in these two collections of short stories distinctly mirrored reflections of the real Dublin and the real small town of Midwestern America? Insofar as this question implies factual notation of the life in these communities

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[1]M.A., "A Country Town," New Republic, XIX (June 25, 1919), 257.

[2]Academy, LXXXVII (July 11, 1914), 49.

[3]Letters of James Joyce, I, ed. Stuart Gilbert (London, 1957), p. 62.

[4]Ibid., p. 64.

the answer must be a qualified No. There is much that is real in these two books, but the technique is not of realistic writing, nor is the result realism. Dublin and Winesburg are not represented but re-created in the fiction of Joyce and Anderson.

The difference is that between realistic fiction and imaginative fiction. Realistic fiction, what is usually lumped under the terms 'realism' and 'naturalism', attempts to represent point by point, without any artifice, any kind or number of experiences of life which the writer may desire to incorporate into his work. Imaginative fiction, called by various names such as 'romance', 'symbolism', 'impressionism', 'expressionism', ingests an experience of life and then re-creates it, purposively shaping it in the process. Where the realistic writer is content with chaos (that is, he attempts to transfer his subject matter from 'reality' without ordering it in mediation), the imaginative writer supplies meaning by a purposeful ordering of experience. In the words of Shelley, who like all the Romantics was a high priest to the imagination (and was referred to with admiration by both Joyce and Anderson in their fiction), poetry -- or imaginative writing -- "creates anew the universe, after it has been annihilated in our minds by the recurrence of impressions blunted by reiteration."[5]

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[5]Percy Bysshe Shelley, "A Defense of Poetry," The Complete Works, VII, ed. Roger Ingpen and W.E. Peck (New York, 1965), p. 137.

It is precisely the blunted impressions of the annihilation of the universe that the realistic writer is quite content to represent. The imaginative writer creates anew. Both Joyce and Anderson write in the tradition of imaginative literature, and because of this their fiction is often poetry.

Realistic fiction involves a twofold process: perception and expression. Experience is transferred into fiction. Imaginative writing adds a mediary activity between perception and expression. By the agency of this mediation, experience is translated into fiction. In the Pola Notebook of 1904 Joyce worked out his aesthetic creed, which, as in A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man Stephen Dedalus frankly admits, could be called "applied Aquinas."[6] According to this creed, the apprehension of the beautiful involves three activities: "cognition", "recognition", and "satisfaction", and from this he concludes that, "Practically then the quality of beauty must involve three constituents to encounter each of these three activities."[7] If this be taken one logical step further, it may be stated that as beauty involves three activities in apprehension, so it must involve three activities in creation. What is more, the first two of these activities are identical: cognition, or perception, is the first activity in both cases; the second

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[6] A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man in The Portable James Joyce, ed. Harry Levin (New York, 1966), p. 476. All subsequent quotations from A Portrait are from this edition.

[7] The Critical Writings of James Joyce, ed. Ellsworth Mason and Richard Ellmann (New York, 1965), p. 148.

activity, again in both cases, is recognition by which, in Joyce's own words, "is mean an activity of decision."[8] This is the important activity. The third activity, either re-creation or satisfaction, results from this activity of decision. And herein is the mediation of the imagination. The realistic writer declines decision and represents; the imaginative writer decides and re-creates.

Again in the Pola Notebook, Joyce comments on a famous and controversial passage from Aristotle:

> e tekhe mimeitai ten physin -- This phrase is falsely rendered as 'Art is an imitation of Nature'. Artistotle does not here define art; he says only, 'Art imitates Nature' and means that the artistic process is like the natural process.[9]

That the artistic process is like the natural process for Joyce supports the idea of a threefold activity involved in the creation of beauty (or art) as well as in the apprehension of beauty. In Stephen's conversation about aesthetics with Lynch in A Portrait he touches on the natural process of art in an admission that he has not as yet made the shift from Thomistic apprehension to imaginative creation: "When we come to the phenomenon of artistic conception, artistic gestation, and artistic reproduction I require a new terminology and a new personal experience."[10] As in nature, so in art for the imaginative writer, the jump cannot

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[8]Ibid., p. 147.

[9]Ibid., p. 145.

[10]A Portrait, pp. 476-77.

be made from conception or perception to creation or expression: there must be the shaping of gestation or imagination in the interim. This is what Wordsworth, another great champion of the imagination, meant when he spoke of poetry as being the result of "emotion recollected in tranquillity."[11] This period between perception and expression, when the imagination decides, is all important to the imaginative writer.

Stephen realizes he needs a new personal experience before he can fully participate in artistic creation. As yet he has only been dabbling in the lyrical stage of poetry, but he does recognize the need of the threefold process, and expecially of the all important intervention of the imagination after the initial perception has been made. Not only is the imagination paramount in all artistic creation, it is the very agent whereby the artist is enabled to proceed from lyrical art to narrative art to dramatic art. In Stephen's own words:

> The personality of the artist, at first a cry or a cadence or a mood and then a fluid and lambent narrative, finally refines itself out of existence, impersonalises itself, so to speak. The esthetic image in the dramatic form is life purified in and reprojected from the human imagination. The mystery of esthetic like that of material creation is accomplished.[12]

Life purified in and reprojected from the imagination is the essence

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[11]William Wordsworth, "Preface to the Second Edition . . . of 'Lyrical Ballads'," Poetical Works, ed. Thomas Hutchinson (London, 1967), p. 740.

[12]A Portrait, p. 483.

of the imaginative writer's art, and is necessary to re-create artistic meaning out of the chaos he perceives, in the same way God originally created natural meaning out of the chaos He perceived. As Stephen points out, the "mystery" of Creation and re-creation are similar. Joyce himself used the analogy in an essay on James Clarence Mangan that he delivered before the Literary and Historical Society of University College in February, 1902, when he said:

> the life of the poet is intense -- the life of Blake or Dante -- taking into its centre the life that surrounds it and flinging it abroad again amid planetary music.[13]

Significantly the English poet that Joyce chooses to illustrate his point is Blake, one of the most imaginative of all poets (so too, of course, is Dante), who said, implying Joyce's Romantic metaphor, "I must Create a System, or be enslav'd by another Man's./I will not Reason & Compare: my business is to Create."[14]

When Stephen decides to leave Ireland he has a definite aim: "I go to encounter for the millionth time the reality of experience and to forge in the smithy of my soul the uncreated conscience of my race."[15] This resolution illustrates the working of Joyce's art. He is primarily concerned with the reality of experience, but he is not content to leave it at that. He takes reality into the smithy of his soul (which is a

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[13]The Critical Writings, p. 80.

[14]William Blake, Jerusalem, plate 10, ll. 20-21.

[15]A Portrait, p. 526.

very appropriate image of the imagination), wherein it is purified and from where it emerges in art. Clearly Dubliners is a chapter in the hitherto uncreated conscience of his race, and clearly too, it was forged in the smithy of his imagination, so that Dublin and its inhabitants are re-created and not represented.

In the light of Joyce's faith in the imagination it is less tempting to overemphasize his interest in reality and take his writing as realism. In an essay entitled "Drama and Life" that he delivered before the Literary and Historical Society of University College in January, 1900, he spoke of the literary tendency of that time toward idealistic literature:

> Art is marred by such mistaken insistence on its religious, its moral, its beautiful, its idealizing tendencies. A single Rembrandt is worth a gallery full of Van Dycks. And it is this doctrine of idealism in art which has in notable instances disfigured manful endeavour, and has also fostered a babyish instinct to dive under blankets at the mention of the bogey of realism.[16]

Joyce is here setting the "bogey" of realism against literary idealization, which in the Victorian period often turned into moralizing or otherworld escapism. It is essential to Joyce that art should be completely separated from morality. It is 'moral' writing (or writing for the good of man's ethical behaviour) that Joyce is rejecting in favour of amoral writing, which is its own good and which was so frightening to some of his contemporaries. While in Trieste in 1906 and negotiating

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[16] The Critical Writings, p. 44.

with Grant Richards for publication of Dubliners, he received a letter from Richards in which it was suggested that, as it stood, if the manuscript were published, the publishers and printers might be prosecuted for indecency. Joyce was amazed and indignant:

> I know that some amazing imbecilities have been perpetrated in England but I really cannot see how any civilised tribunal could listen for two minuties to such an accusation against my book. I care little or nothing whether what I write is indecent or not but, if I understand the meaning of words, I have written nothing whatever indecent in Dubliners.[17]

This insistence of Joyce's on the independence of art stems from his aesthetic creed of 'applied Aquinas' in which he says, at one point, "every sensible object that has been apprehended can in the first place be said to have been and to be in a measure beautiful; and even the most hideous object can be said to have been and to be beautiful in so far as it has been apprehended,"[18] or transformed into art, it might be added, for as Saint Thomas says (and Joyce would agree), "an image is said to be beautiful if it perfectly represents even an ugly thing."[19] Life, be it beautiful or ugly, is the stuff from which the artist legitimately draws his raw material. Any question of morality is

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[17]Letters, I, p. 63.

[18]The Critical Writings, p. 147.

[19]Saint Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologica, Part I, q. 39, a. 8 (XIX of the Great Books of the Western World, ed. R. M. Hutchins; New York, 1952), p. 211.

beside the point, so long as the artistic creation is based on reality. Herein his training in Aquinas might be detected, for the philosopher-saint too differentiates between art and prudence: "the good of things made by art is not the good of man's appetite, but the good of those artificial things themselves."[20] This is not to say that art should be a photograph of reality, but simply that art should not be criticized on moral grounds if it happens to portray the sordid, so long as it is portrayed in accordance with the truth of experience. 'Idealized' art is not true to reality, according to Joyce, and this, for him, is a terrible artistic flaw. The art he proposes would be true to reality, but not for a moment does he suggest that it would be realism, in the strict sense. Joyce has too much faith in the imagination to be so rash. Imaginative writing may be idealistic, but so too may it be orientated toward reality, and this is the kind of imagination that Joyce strongly favours. The realistic writer may be said to copy reality, but the imaginative writer may be said to use reality in an effort to shape it into meaning. Neither is necessarily idealism, which, with its overtones of religion and morality, Joyce considers to be a great literary bane. Significantly, the play that Joyce in his youthful essay on "Drama and Life" chooses to illustrate as a peak of dramatic art is The Wild Duck, which though firmly rooted in reality is strongly symbolistic. It might be speculated that a more 'realistic' Ibsen would not have commanded the respect that Joyce reserved for him, but this

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[20] Ibid., Part I-Ii, q. 57, a. 4., p. 38.

is irrelevant.

Dubliners grew out of Joyce's observation of the kind of life all about him, which was admittedly sordid with only touches of beauty; but for him it was poetentially the same as life in a more heroic age:

> Life indeed nowadays is often a sad bore . . . . Still I think out of the dreary sameness of existence, a measure of dramatic life may be drawn. Even the most commonplace, the deadest among the living, may play a part in a great drama.[21]

The deadest among the living drew Joyce's sympathy, and Dubliners tells their stories with an imaginatively tempered compassion that purifies the truth without lifting it out of the drab or gaily coloured streets of Dublin.

Sherwood Anderson's theoretical comments on the technique of writing fiction are certainly more numerous than those of Joyce; in fact, Anderson wrote a great deal in explanation of his own ideas of art (as well as many other things) in his several semi-autobiographical books. From an examination of these writings it is evident that an Anderson poetics is openly, strongly, and consistently in favour of the power of the imagination. For a direct statement of his artistic intent there is this: "I want to put meaning and music into prose."[22] From this it is evident that he considers himself anything but a realist. "My own belief is that

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[21] The Critical Writings, pp. 44-45.

[22] Sherwood Anderson's Notebook (New York, 1925), p. 165.

the writer with a notebook in his hand is a man who distrusts his own imagination."[23] Anderson had a prolific imagination, so active that when used in conjunction with memory, the result was often such statements as caused him to become widely known as a terrible but talented liar. And in everyday life he undoubtedly was a liar, but when writing fiction his imagination enabled him to become a first-rate "story teller," as he liked to call himself:

> I have a confession to make. I am a story teller starting to tell a story and cannot be expected to tell the truth. Truth is impossible to me. It is like goodness, something aimed at but never hit.[24]

Here anderson is confessing his inability to tell the truth about, that is represent in words, his own past. And the same holds true when it comes to writing fiction. He never pretends to be representing life or reality. Speaking of the teller of tales he says:

> While he is a writer nothing happens but that it is changed by his fancy and his fancy is always at work. Really, you should never trust such a man.[25]

Anderson's insistence that he as a story teller is not to be expected to 'tell the truth' possibly has its roots in the fact that he was often praised for (or accused of) doing just that:

> I myself remember with what a shock I heard people say that one of my books, Winesburg, Ohio, was an exact picture of Ohio village life. The book was written in a crowded tenement district of Chicago. The hint for almost every character was taken from my

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[23]"Man and His Imagination," The Intent of the Artist, ed. Augusto Centano (Princeton, 1941), p. 69.

[24]Tar: A Midwest Childhood (New York, 1926), p. ix.

[25]Ibid.

> fellow-lodgers in a large rooming house, many of whom had never lived in a village. The confusion arises out of the fact that others besides practising artists have imaginations.[26]

Many of Anderson's contemporaries thought of him as a realist and linked him with Sinclair Lewis, a union that Anderson did not much like. He felt that Lewis' ironic detachment from his work resulted in an irreparable artistic loss. Basically, he felt that Lewis' caustically humorous fiction stemmed from a non-involved youth. Or at least, that must be the explanation, he argues, for how could he have lived vitally in a small town and written about it later with a negation of subjective sympathy? In his Memoirs Anderson writes:

> Why, oh why, in that town of the American Northwest where Sinclair Lewis spent his boyhood, were there no such evenings among the men and boys! What a different book Main Street might have been had a circus ever come to his town, had his town baseball team ever whipped a team from a neighboring one -- had springs but come -- winter nights under the stars -- had he but kissed some high school girl on a dark porch.....Poor Lewis, he missed a lot![27]

Perhaps Anderson is being unfair to Lewis, but he resented a little the comparison often made between himself and the author of Main Street.

Why would Anderson be thought of as a realist? The answer to this is the same as to the question of Joyce's realism -- he was primarily interested in "life as it is,"[28] embracing the

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[26]"Man and His Imagination," p. 70.

[27]Memoirs (New York, 1942), p. 14.

[28]Hello Towns (New York, 1929), p. 40.

ugliness along with the beautiful. And parts of his own non-fictional writings, if taken out of context or unqualified, would lend support to the most objective realist. "Men are what the civilization in which they live makes them,"[29] he says, writing about the South and the Negro question. And of the story teller he says:

> He is one who has taught himself to observe. He wants, for the purpose of his crafts, to develop to the highest possible pitch his own senses, to constantly see more, hear more, feel more. He is continually watching others, noting the way in which people walk, the way they hold their heads, the shape and meaning of their hands, the clothes they wear and how they wear them. These things all have their significance to the story teller.[30]

But if people are shaped by heredity and environment, and if the artist about to write fiction should observe them closely, neither of these is to say that the artist should forsake his imagination and attempt to express what he perceives without shaping it -- as the realist would do. Anderson is strongly opposed to any such forsaking. The imagination for him is a vital part of consciousness:

> We all live on two planes. There is what we call the world of reality and there is the somewhat unreal world of the imagination. These roads do not cross each other but the road of imagination constantly touches the road of reality. It comes

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[29] Ibid., p. 57.

[30] "Man and His Imagination," p. 40.

> near and it goes away. All of us are sometimes on one road and sometimes on another.[31]

Anderson's acute observation of life as it is and his acceptance of the ugly is where the road of his imagination touches the road of reality. Like Stephen Dedalus, he goes to meet the reality of experience for the millionth time (in Anderson's own words, "the imagination must feed upon reality or starve"),[32] but the meeting (or eating) is not an end. What the imagination does with the reality it confronts and consumes is what counts. Again, in Anderson's words:

> The life of reality is confused, disorderly, almost always without apparent purpose, whereas in the artist's imaginative life there is purpose. There is determination to give the tale, the song, the painting, form -- to make it true and real to the theme, not to life.[33]

Nothing could be more explicitly in favour of imaginative fiction over realistic fiction. To make the work of art true and real to the theme, this is the ultimate goal of fiction according to Anderson. The attention to life as it is is part of the garb he clothes his fiction in; it is not a goal; it is a means rather than an end in the artistic process.

Being true to the theme (or the meaning) of fiction is for Anderson a matter of high seriousness. His keen observations of

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[31] Ibid., p. 44.

[32] Ibid., p. 67.

[33] Ibid., p. 70.

people and the lives they lead is part of this honesty. He wants to make his fictional people appear and act true to life. His imagination is not fully at work here; it is mainly utilized to give meaning to the chaos of life. His characters look and act, for the most part, as real people. The effect of their energies is also the effect of a careful imagination guiding things throughout the story. "The writer in his creative mood is creating figures of people, to be true imaginary figures."[34] True imaginary figures is a phrase that describes perfectly both Anderson's and Joyce's characters. Anderson refers to the artist's responsibility to his imagination. For him the imagination is an awesome power and must be used with wise judgement:

> In our popular stories the impossible is always being done. People are always being violated. What is not generally understood is that to do violence, to sell out a character in the imaginative world, is as much a crime as to sell out people in the real world. As I have already tried to say, this imaginative world of ours, the imaginative lives we live, are as important to us as are our real lives. They may be more important.[35]

To "sell out" a character is the artistic sin that Anderson recognizes; and selling out is the direct consequence of a cowardly and fearful reaction to Joyce's "bogey of realism." Both Anderson and Joyce were often accused of indeecency in their fiction, and neither of them cared a fig for the charge; but a moral responsibility

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[34] Ibid., p. 44.

[35] Ibid., p. 58.

they did recognize was the responsibility to deal honestly with "the fact in nature,"[36] whether encountered for the first or millionth time in the creative process. And this is a heavy obligation, for the imagination is, as Wordsworth called it "That awful Power" risen "from the mind's abyss."[37] In Anderson's own words: "We writers must take the responsibility of the unconscious too -- it seems."[38] The qualifying "it seems" is a typical ironic concession to the popular cult of Freud in the twenties, though he did of course recognize the importance of the subterranean springs of the imagination. Morality, in so far as that word means anything to Anderson (or to Joyce), is important only in terms of artistic honesty; and immorality would only have meaning as betrayal in the imaginative world of reality either for mercenary reasons, which represents a typical Andersonian objection, or for idealistic reasons, which represents a typical Joycean objection. Anderson attaches great importance to the artist's fidelity to his imagination and the truths about life that it might envision:

> I even believe that through the artist's morality there is a chance for all of us to lead something like the good life. I think that we can be priests to the imaginative lives of ourselves and others. I think that is our job. I think that when we lose our own morality and adopt the morality of others we become corrupt, that we are going back on our jobs.[39]

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[36] Ibid., p. 67.

[37] The Prelude, Bk. VI, l. 594.

[38] Tar: A Midwest Childhood, p. xvii.

[39] "Man and His Imagination," p. 79.

Though none of the English Romantic poets would have spoken of the establishment of moral teachings through the power of the imagination as their "job," or would have said that they were "going back" on their job by accepting traditional morality, this idea is inherently Romantic. It is, in fact, a rephrasing in modern American terms of Shelley's famous statement that "Poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the world."[40] The "good life" that Anderson speaks of is, in fact, the Romantic "Jerusalem"[41] of Blake or the "dawn of mind"[42] of Shelley and is far more significant in its implications that the conventional 'American Dream' of the early twentieth century. The idea that artists are "the priests to imaginative lives" is exactly equivalent to Stephen Dedalus' definition of the artist as "a priest of eternal imagination"[43] in A Portrait, and both echo a similar idea of the nature of the artist's function expressed by Wordsworth and the other Romantic poets (e.g., Keats' statement that "a poet is a sage,/A humanist, physician to all men"[44]).

The last word on realism too belongs to Anderson:

> Would it not be better to have it understood that realism, in so far as that word means reality to life, is always bad art -- although it may possibly be good journalism.[45]

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[40] "A Defense of Poetry," p. 140.

[41] "And did those feet in ancient time," Preface to Milton, l. 15.

[42] Laon and Cythna, Canto v, l. 520.

[43] A Portrait, p. 490.

[44] John Keats, The Fall of Hyperion, Canto i, ll. 189-90.

[45] "Man and His Imagination," p. 70.

Thus Anderson rejects the idea of realism as a mode of fiction. It is no wonder that he was indignant with the tag of 'realist' with which the critics often labelled him; for realism allows no exercise of the imagination upon the facts of life, no act of decision, no power of shaping meaning, no ordering of chaos -- in short, no re-creation, and these activities and this aim were essential for Anderson's fiction, and for Joyce's. In his essay on Mangan, Joyce says of poetry (which in its largest sense includes imaginative fiction), "It speaks of what seems fantastic and unreal to those who have lost the simple intuitions which are the tests of reality."[46] The simple intuition, the test of reality, is the imagination, and the reader, and much more so the writer, are lost without it when it comes to the creation and apprehension of beauty, which for Joyce (and equally so for Anderson) includes the sordid and ugly. The imagination is indispensable for these two writers who considered themselves artists, their work, art and mere realism of no higher literary achievement than journalism or reportage.

Having seen that Joyce and Anderson worked with the same smithy-like tools and in the same manner of fiery workmanship, and that Stephen Dedalus' cry, "O! In the virgin womb of the imagination the word was made flesh,"[47] metaphorically fusing the

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[46]The Critical Writings, p. 81.

[47]A Portrait, p. 485.

processes of Creation and re-creation, might be taken as a motto for both of these writers, the next step must be to examine the communities of Dublin and Winesburg, Ohio.

II

DEAR DIRTY DUMPLING AND TWISTED APPLES

Before taking a closer look at Joyce's community, it should be remembered that Dubliners was earliest lauded as a splendid achievement of naturalism. Richard Aldington, an early champion of Joyce, hailed the book as "an excellent example of the Naturaliste method in English fiction."[1] And another early champion, Ezra Pound, saw the book in a similar light: "He gives us Dublin as it presumably is."[2] Apart from the text of Dubliners itself, Joyce's correspondence, particularly with Grant Richards and Stanislaus Joyce, before the book was published might support (at least a little bit) a naturalistic interpretation for later critics. Certainly the letters betray a keen interest in the veracity of detail of his stories. Writing to Stanislaus in September, 1905 he asks his brother for specific information:

> Please send the information I ask you for as follows:
> The Sisters: Can a priest be buried in a habit?
> Ivy Day in the Committee Room -- Are Aungier St and Wicklow in the Royal Exchange Ward? Can a municipal election be held in October?
> A Painful Case -- Are the police at Sydney Parade of the D division? Would the city ambulance be called out to Sydney Parade for an accident? Would an accident at Sydney Parade be treated at Vincent's Hospital?

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[1]Richard Aldington, "The Influence of Mr. James Joyce," English Review, XXXII (April, 1921), 335.

[2]Ezra Pound, "Dubliners and Mr. James Joyce," Egoist, I (July, 1914), 267.

> <u>After the Race</u> -- Are the police supplied with provisions by government or by private contracts?
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> Kindly answer these questions as quickly as possible.[3]

Clearly, Joyce desired his stories to be true to the facts of everyday life, but this of course does not imply that the factual truth of these stories was to be an end in itself. Joyce was attempting to tell the truth about the inner lives of Dubliners and getting the superficial details of his stories correct would help root them firmly in reality (for he hated escapism and idealism in literature -- such as the 'Celtic Renaissance'). Later on in the same letter he speaks of some contemporary writers of the naturalistic school:

> Will you read some English 'realists' I see mentioned in the papers and see what they are like -- Gissing, Arthur Morrison and a man named Keary . . . . I read that silly, wretched book of Moore's 'The Untilled Field' which the Americans found so remarkable for its 'craftsmanship.' O, dear me! It is very dull and flat indeed: and ill written.[4]

Clearly Joyce was not influenced by the greatest English 'realist' of his day, Gissing, for he had not even read him. And as for George Moore, the greatest Irish 'realist', "dull and flat" and most important, "ill written" are Joyce's comments on him.

In the famous letter to Grant Richards in which Joyce outlines his purpose in writing <u>Dubliners</u> ("My intention was to write a chapter of the moral history of my country and I chose Dublin for the scene because that city seemed to me the centre

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[3]<u>Letters of James Joyce</u>, II, ed. Richard Ellmann (New York, 1966), p. 109.

[4]Ibid., p. 111.

of paralysis."), and his structural plan ("I have tried to present it to the indifferent public under four of its aspects: childhood, adolescence, maturity, and public life. The stories are arranged in this order."), he also speaks of his style:

> I have written it for the most part in a style of scrupulous meanness and with the conviction that he is a very bold man who dares alter in the presentment, still more to deform, whatever he has seen and heard. I cannot do any more than this. I cannot alter what I have written.[5]

The last sentence indicates the reason for the preceding argument on "scrupulous meanness," namely, that he was convinced that he had written his stories exactly right, carefully choosing every word, to express his point. He is clearly concerned with <u>how</u> he has chosen to write as much as he is with <u>what</u> he has chosen to write about. And the how and the what are about balanced here. Joyce does not want to 'deform' what Anderson calls "the fact in nature,"[6] but more important, he does not want to change the way he has expressed that fact. This can be seen later on in the same letter when he refers to Richards' objection to the word "bloody" and says that his use of it in "The Boarding House" (". . . if any fellow tried that sort of game on with his sister he'd bloody well put his teeth down his throat, so he would."[7]), is absolutely necessary:

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[5] <u>Ibid</u>., p. 134.

[6] See p. 18.

[7] <u>Dubliners</u> (New York, 1954), p. 83. All subsequent quotations from <u>Dubliners</u> are from this -- the Modern Library -- edition.

> The word, the exact expression I have used, is in my opinion the one expression in the English language which can create on the reader the effect which I wish to create.[8]

Joyce is here openly stating that he is trying to create a specific effect by choosing words. Thus, he argues for "bloody" and the other words and expressions Richards would have him delete on artistic grounds, rather than on any grounds that would suggest that because a real person used a given word in a given situation it should be retained for the sake of realism. Clearly, when he says to Richards that he cannot deform what he has seen and heard, he is arguing for the necessary retention in his fiction of what he knows from experience to be true about Dublin, not what he has noted verbatim. The substance for Joyce belongs to reality, but the way in which he writes about it belongs to the imagination.

Stanislaus Joyce, with whom Joyce consulted and in whom he confided a great deal during the writing of Dubliners, illustrates how his brother's imagination worked intimately with reality by pointing out the origin of many of the stories. For example, " 'A Painful Case' is an imaginary portrait of what my brother thought I should become in middle age."[9] From this it can be seen that Joyce was not referring directly to events (or a notebook), but utilizing his imagination. Similarly, Stanislaus Joyce points out how "The Dead" originated from his having gone to a concert in

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[8]Letters, II, p. 136.

[9]Stanislaus Joyce, "The Backgrounds to 'Dubliners'," Listener, LI (March 1954), 526.

Dublin and heard Plunket Green sing an Irish melody of Tom Moore's entitled "The Dead," and subsequently told his brother in a letter how effective it was because of Green's unusual rendering of the voices of 'the dead' -- all of which impressed Joyce and resulted, according to Stanislaus, in the writing of the concluding story of Dubliners. Again, Stanislaus tells how "The Boarding House" and "Two Gallants" were suggested by everyday events:

> Such trifles awoke a memory of Dublin in his brain; he saw the story clearly and was not at peace until he had put it on paper. In this sense Dubliners is as lyrical a work as Chamber Music.[10]

Stanislaus Joyce is here pointing out his brother's use of creative memory, whereby the imagination broods upon experience and re-creates it (again, Wordsworth's "emotions recollected in tranquillity"). Significantly, Stanislaus points out that this is the lyrical process. It is also the process that caused Anderson to become notorious as a prolific liar. At any rate, it illustrates that Joyce's method of imaginative writing was not a secret to his literary confidant when he wrote Dubliners, though it apparently was to some of his early critics.

But that is not a danger today. In fact, interpretations in which suggestive possibilities are overemphasized are becoming a possible menace in present-day criticism of Dubliners. Before leaving Stanislaus Joyce, it is interesting to note that he saw this threat as early as 1954:

> Still another American critic [Marvin Magalaner[11]]

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[10] Ibid., 527.

[11] See Marvin Magalaner and Richard M. Kain, Joyce: the Man, the Work, the Reputation (London, 1957), pp. 85-86.

> finds in the short story 'The Clay' three levels of significance on which Maria is successively herself, a witch, and the Virgin Mary. Though such critics are quite at sea, they can have the immense satisfaction of knowing that they have dived into deeper depths than the author they are criticizing ever sounded. I am in a position to state definitely that my brother had no such subtleties in mind when he wrote the story.[12]

It would be hard to deny the authoritative position of Stanislaus, and it could be said that whether Joyce knew consciously that he was weaving certain intricate subtleties into his stories does not really matter (and finally, it could be said that some commentators have been indulging in some 'creative' criticism). At any rate, symbolic subtleties and patterns have been pointed out. The first important study in this manner was Richard Levin's and Charles Shattuck's investigation[13] into the Homeric parallels of the stories, showing that the structure of Dubliners, like Ulysses, is based upon the Odyssey. One of the most thorough studies of the symbolic implications of Dubliners has been Brewster Ghiselin's presentation[14] of what he considers to be the unifying aspects of the book, emphasizing patterns of flight and arrest and the symbolic significance of East and West to the Dubliners. And finally, a third

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[12]Stanislaus Joyce, 526.

[13]Richard Levin and Charles Shattuck, "First Flight to Ithica: A New Reading of Joyce's Dubliners, Accent, IV (Winter 1944), 75-99.

[14]Brewster Ghiselin, "The Unity of Joyce's Dubliners," Accent, XVI (Spring 1956), 75-88, (Summer 1956), 196-213.

general study, Florence L. Wazl's "Pattern of Paralysis in Joyce's Dubliners,"[15] investigates the implication of Joyce's famous assertion[16] that Dublin seemed to him "the centre of paralysis" in Ireland. And of course there have been numerous symbolic interpretations of the individual stories, especially "The Dead."

As Stanislaus Joyce stated, such symbolic implications run the risk of being dangerously far-fetched, but the popularity of the critical quest for symbols in Joyce's writing indicates that no longer will the author of Dubliners be praised as a realist solely, though the critics are still eager to point out that his stories are rich in naturalistic details. It is interesting to conjecture whether Dubliners would ever have been considered so symbolically fertile had Joyce never written Ulysses and Finnegans Wake. But at any rate, however legitimate the symbol-searchers' discoveries have been, there can be no doubt that Dubliners -- as well as the later fiction -- was written by an imaginative, rather than a realistic, James Joyce.

But what of Dublin? What is the nature of the community that Joyce re-created. Certainly Joyce's Dublin is the real Dublin. His concern for the accuracy of his details and his use of the real names of places and people are ample evidence of this. But it is nonetheless a mythological Dublin. This dual character has its analogy in the Romantic poets, the great champions of mythopoeic writings: Wordsworth's Nature is at once real and mythological, one of his main concerns being,

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[15]Florence L. Wazl, "Patterns of Paralysis in Joyce's Dubliners," College English, XXII (January 1961), 221-28.

[16]See pp. 23-24.

> How Nature by extrinsic passion first
> Peopled the mind with form sublime or fair[17]

Joyce's mind too was peopled by his surroundings, and his rendering into fiction of these surroundings, his vision of Dublin, passed through his imagination before it reached the page, so that the 'soul' of Dublin ("the expression 'Dubliner' seems to me to have some meaning"[18]), came to be dressed in a design of imagery that comprised the individualistic Joycean myth -- or vision of the human condition. The particulars of the myth are real -- the people, places, and events -- but the meaning of the myth is wrought by the imagination. Dublin is permanent in the fiction of Joyce. The city, and even the inhabitants of the city, are the same in Dubliners as they are in Ulysses. In fact, practically all of the Dubliners appear or are mentioned on "Bloomsday." Stephen Dedalus is brought from childhood to the edge of manhood in A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man, and begins his manhood in Ulysses. In fact, the 'childhood' stories of Dubliners ("The Sisters," "An Encounter," and "Araby") may be regarded as the experiences of Stephen, for Joyce called them "stories of my childhood,"[19] and the boys of these stories all resemble Stephen in character.

The inhabitants of the city are of course more important than the city itself, and quite naturally Dublin in Joyce's fiction is contingent upon the lives of the Dublinerѕ: that is, Dublin

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[17] The Prelude, Bk. I, ll. 544-45.

[18] Letters, II, p. 122.

[19] Ibid., p. 111.

is not recorded as it was at the turn of the twentieth century, but life in Dublin is re-created. Dublin is not described with objective detail (in spite of Joyce's concern for accuracy), but rather it is described as it appeared to its inhabitants. Most often depicted are the streets of the city:

> We walked through the flaring streets, jostled by drunken men and bargaining women, amid the curses of labourers, the shrill litanies of shop-boys who stood on guard by the barrels of pigs' cheeks, the nasal chantings of street-singers, who sang a come-all-you about O'Donovan Rossa, or a ballad about the troubles in our native land. These noises all converged in a single sensation of life for me: I imaged that I bore my chalice safely through a throng of foes.[20]

To the boy of "Araby" the streets of Dublin are vitally alive and challenging. The chaotic thronging of the crowd is not merely noted, it is given a major meaning for the principal character. The combination of evening and milling in the streets is entirely different in "Two Gallants:"

> The grey warm evening of August had descended upon the city, and a mild warm air, a memory of summer, circulated in the streets. The streets, shuttered for the repose of Sunday, swarmed with a gaily coloured crowd. Like illumined pearls the lamps shone . . . .[21]

Still romantic, with its "illumined pearls" of lamps, the streets now carry a "memory of summer;" in more than one way for the prematurely-aged drifter Lenehan, who when alone feels "keenly his own povery of purse and spirit."[22] The gay crowds only serve

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[20] Dubliners, p. 35.

[21] Ibid., p. 58.

[22] Ibid., p. 69.

as an ironic reminder of his own loneliness.

And the empty streets too have a meaning dependent upon the characters. Eveline, in the story bearing her name, sits at her window, "watching the evening invade the avenue."[23] Only to a depressed mind does the evening <u>invade</u> a street outside. Thus in the first sentence of the story Joyce combines the concrete and the conscious and lets the scene reveal the state of the mind which apprehends it. By the third short sentence -- "She was tired" -- the reader already knows that she suffers from more than physical exhaustion. Again, as the crowded streets hold a memory of past gaiety for the lonely Lenehan, so the empty streets hold a remembrance of lost companionship for the restless James Duffy in "A Painful Case":

> He entered the Park by the first gate and walked along by the gaunt trees. He walked through the bleak alleys where they had walked four years before. She seemed to be near him in the darkness.[24]

The cold night, the lights of Dublin which suddenly (and ironically) "burned redly and hospitably," the obscure lovers who mutely scorn him, and finally the silence after a distant train has disappeared -- all these details of scene converge upon him, together with his own regrets, and in the blackened empty park at the top of Magazine Hill, "He felt that he was alone."

Finally, one can traverse the streets of Dublin and be unaware of the reality of the scene. Little Chandler in "A Little

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[23] <u>Ibid.</u>, p. 42.

[24] <u>Ibid.</u>, pp. 145-46.

Cloud" takes leave of his place of employment and walks briskly along a dirty street filled with ragged children:

> He picked his way deftly through all the minute vermin-like life and under the shadow of the gaunt spectral mansions in which the old nobility of Dublin had roistered. No memory of the past touched him, for his mind was full of a present joy.[25]

Here the ugliness of the street is not important to the character involved, but neither is it in itself important to the reader. The value of the description lies entirely in its irony.

The point of all this is that the mere locale of Dublin, the city in its physicality, the visible bones of the sleeping giant of Finnegans Wake, is not rendered into fiction objectively or realistically. Its streets and shops and houses, and the Liffey, are not simply there in meaningless detachment from the life of the inhabitants. Details are not decorations or historical facts or backgrounds, and certainly not 'settings' in any slice-of-life sense. Details for Joyce are telling, significant signs. When the boy in "Araby" tells of the crowded streets of Dublin, he does so because they stand out in his memory with special importance. The first-person narration is almost certain to present the reader with details significant to the narrator, but this does not explain the investiture of detail with meaning, for when Joyce himself tells of the topography of Dublin it is loaded with implications, even when relating a seemingly casual event, as in "The Dead" when on their way home from the party Miss O'Callaghan says to the others as their

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[25] Ibid., p. 87.

cab crosses O'Connell Bridge: " 'They say you nver cross O'Connell Bridge without seeing a white horse.' "[26] To which Gabriel Conroy replies; " 'I see a white man this time,' " and indicates the partially snow-covered O'Connell Monument, to which he "nodded familiarly." The "white man" of the monument is of far more value to the story than as an incidental detail, for it foreshadows the ghost of Michael Furey who has already been recalled so strongly to Gabriel's wife Gretta and who is to be shortly the worker of Gabriel's ultimate undoing -- and redoing.

Similar to the use of exterior description in Dubliners is the use of the interiors of the buildings of Dublin. For the most part, the interiors are more important than the exteriors, and most of the action of the stories takes place indoors. The places where the reader is taken in these stories cover, as do the people he meets, the entire range of Dublin society. Beginning with the home, Joyce shows the reader life in the large, somewhat musty, 'respectable' homes of the elderly and middle-aged, in a cheap restaurant near Rutland Square, in a boarding house for clerks and artistes, in the socially prominent dining rooms of Corless's, in a small business office, in rowdy bars, in the Dublin by Lamplight laundry, in a political committee room, in the Antient Concert Rooms, in a Jesuit church, and finally in a house as old and large as the ones he began with. And once again, descriptions are few and details are pointed, as in the depiction of James Duffy's room:

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[26] Ibid., p. 276.

> Writing materials were always on the desk. In the desk lay a manuscript translation of Hauptmann's Michael Kramer, the stage directions of which were written in purple ink, and a little sheaf of papers held together by a brass pin. In these sheets a sentence was inscribed from time to time and, in an ironical moment, the headline of an advertisement for Bile Beans had been pasted on the first sheet.[27]

It is certain that James Duffy did not have Hauptmann, and later Nietzsche, lying randomly about his room (or at least that Joyce would not have it so). In the sentence about the Bile Beans advertisement Joyce gives his method away by explaining that Mr. Duffy was given to moments of irony, but he was forced into explanation, because implying irony is one thing, but implying a character's self-acknowledged irony is more difficult.

Actually, there is little description of the interiors of the many buildings in which the stories of Dubliners take place. For example the room in which the entire action of "Ivy Day in the Committee Room" takes place is described in a few brief sentences:

> The old man left the hearth, and after stumbling about the room returned with two candlesticks which he thrust one after the other into the fire and carried to the table. A denuded room came into view and the fire lost all its cheerful colour. The walls of the room were bare except for a copy of an election address. In the middle of the room was a small table on which papers were heaped.[28]

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[27] Ibid., pp. 133-34.

[28] Ibid., p. 151.

The barrenness of the committee room certainly says something about the political activity that is being carried on there. And not only is the room bare; it has been "denuded," suggesting that it once was of more elaborate and dignified decoration. The fact that Parnell's anniversary is being commemorated in such a place is certainly significant. Here again is Joyce's imagination forging the meaningful detail and abandoning irrelevancies.

Dubliners too (and A Portrait and Ulysses) has a specific time, namely, the 'Celtic Twilight' and the waning of the movement for Irish Nationalism that seized the imagination of Ireland in the closing years of the nineteenth century, manifested in such people and movements as Parnell, the cultivation of Gaelic, the Sinn Fein ('We Ourselves') political party, the study of folk mythology, and W. B. Yeats and Lady Gregory's National Theatre. It is when dealing with this aspect of Dublin that Joyce's 'realism' seems to appear. A good example of this is the scene in Ulysses where Leopold Bloom drops into the Evening Telegraph office and hears some loafers discussing a newspaper article extolling with blatant euphemism the beauties of Ireland. Joyce entitles the scene, "ERIN, GREEN GEM OF THE SILVER SEA." Ned Lambert reads:

> . . . note the meanderings of some pearling rill as it babbles on its way . . . 'neath the shadows cast o'er its pensive bosom by the overarching leafage of the giants of the forest. What about that, Simon? he asked over the fringe of his newspaper. How's that for high?
>
> -- Changing his drink, Mr. Dedalus said.
>
> Ned Lambert, laughing, struck the newspaper on his knees, repeating:

> -- The pensive bosom and the overarsing leafage. O boys! O boys![29]

Mr. Dedalus' ultimate comment on the article is: ". . . shite and onions! That'll do, Ned. Life is too short."[30] This discussion of the newspaper article is 'realistic' and down-to-earth in its deflating attitude, but it goes beyond the fact and points to a meaning: in an imaginative conversation Joyce exposes the absurdity of the yoking together of the fervour of political idealism with the supposedly factual reportage in a newspaper (an organ highly respected by the 'realists' as a rich resource for fiction). This is Joyce's "bogey of realism"[31] being employed to combat dreamlandish idealism, what Bloom calls "High falutin stuff"[32] and what Stephen has earlier called "those big words . . . which make us so unhappy."[33] But it must be remembered that a bogey is a spirit or a creature of imagination and will not be tied down by facts. The debunking conversation then has an imaginative purpose which transcends its seemingly random everydayness.

The concern of the Dubliners for Irish Nationalism is always undercut with irony, and in this way is a result from and an appeal to the imagination; that is, Joyce always means more than his characters do when they think or discuss the Celtic Twilight. The facts and

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[29] *Ulysses* (London, 1960), p. 157.

[30] *Ibid.*, p. 160.

[31] See p. 9.

[32] *Ulysses*, p. 157.

[33] *Ibid.*, p. 38.

circumstances of their concern are always invested with suggestive value. Little Chandler imagines himself a poet and dreams of the reviews he will get. "The English critics, perhaps, would recognize him as one of the Celtic school by reason of the melancholy tone of his poems; besides that, he would put in allusions."[34] The 'putting in' of allusions indicates that his poetry (or his interest) is not naturally Irish, but it is attractive to be considered one of the Celtic school. But he does not realize the discrepancy. James Duffy tells Mrs. Sinico that he has become disillusioned with the Irish Socialist Party and confidently tells her that, "No social revolution ...would be likely to strike Dublin for some centuries."[35] Surely Joyce himself is not so sure of this; as Stanislaus Joyce says, ". . . my brother, for his part, in so far as he was anything politically, was a socialist."[36] On Ivy Day, or Parnell's anniversary, Mr. Henchy, one of the canvassers for the Nationalist Party, sees no inconsistency in welcoming Edward VII to Dublin: " 'Parnell,' said Mr. Henchy, 'is dead.' Now here's the way I look at it . . . . are we going to insult the man when he comes over here on a friendly visit?"[37] And shortly afterwards Mr. O'Connor solemnly declares: "We all respect him now that he's dead and gone." Again, Mrs. Kearney has musical ambitions for her daughter Kathleen, and "When the Irish Revival began to be appreciable Mrs. Kearney determined to

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[34] Dubliners, pp. 89-90.

[35] Ibid., p. 138.

[36] Stanislaus Joyce, "The Backgrounds to 'Dubliners'," 526.

[37] Dubliners, p. 166.

take advantage of her daughter's name and brought an Irish teacher to the house."[38] Mrs. Kearney has no illusions about Irish Nationalism as such, but the fact that she has no qualms about using it as a means to an end shows her limited understanding and lack of sincerity, which can be said for all the Dubliners when they speak of, or reflect upon, the matters of their time. Perhaps only Miss Ivors in "The Dead" is truly Nationalistic, but she is only a foil to Gabriel Conroy, who retorts to her questioning him as to why he does not take more interest in his own country, " 'O, to tell you the truth .... I'm sick of my own country, sick of it!"[39]

Many of the Dubliners are sick of their lives, because they find themselves living in a decadent society whose traditions and manners are invalid and corrupted. Dublin is indeed "the centre of paralysis," and realization of this stifling and haunting provincialism is enough to congeal the life-blood. As the washerwoman by the Liffey in Finnegans Wake says: "Ireland sober is Ireland stiff."[40] None of the characters of Dubliners are in rhythm with their surrounding institutions. Father Flynn in "The Sisters" is symbolically paralyzed in body and has been so unable to cope with his priestly role since he inadvertantly broke a chalice that he has become slightly irrational.

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[38] Ibid., pp. 172-73.

[39] Ibid., p. 243.

[40] Finnegans Wake, p. 214. Cf. Ulysses: "Ireland sober is Ireland free." (p. 402).

The boy, whom he has been tutoring in the mystery of Church rituals and sacrements, mourns the dead priest, but to his annoyance feels "A sensation of freedom as if I had been freed from something by his death."[41] Perhaps what he is freed from is the traditions of Catholicism. Under Father Flynn's tutelage he has come to feel that, "The duties of the priest . . . seemed so grave to me that I wondered how anybody had ever found in himself the courage to undertake them." Clearly too, the boy has been awed with the responsibility of the office, and on the night of the priest's death he has a dream wherein the priest tries to confess to him as a "simoniac."[42] Even Father Flynn (the 'Father' is important for the boy is an orphan) is not exempt from failure in the terrible responsibility of the holy office. The boy's sense of freedom then is the result of a release from patriarchal tyranny, personified in Father Flynn and abstracted in the Catholic Church, which has aged and become paralyzed. After seeing the death notice on Father Flynn's door, the boy ". . . walked away slowly along the sunny side of the street, reading all the theatrical advertisements in the shop-windows."[43] It is all or nothing in matters of religion for the boy; as it is for Stephen Dedalus who, when asked by the Englishman Haines:

> -- You're not a believer, are you? . . . I mean a believer in the narrow sense of the word.

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[41] Dubliners, p. 11.

[42] Ibid., p. 10.

[43] Ibid., p. 11.

> Creation from nothing and miracles and a personal God.

replies, "There's only one sense of the word, it seems to me."[44] Later, in "Grace," Martin Cunningham speaks of the Jesuit Order, saying, "Every other order of the Church had to be reformed at some time or other but the Jesuit Order was never once reformed. It never fell away."[45] Then, speaking of the Jesuit priest who is to officiate at their planned 'retreat,' he says, "Fine, jolly fellow! He's a man of the world like ourselves."[46] And when Father Purdon comes onto the scene, it is obvious that Martin Cunningham is indeed a fine judge of character, as he is reputed to be, for the priest "came to speak to business men and he would speak to them in a businesslike way."[47] The liberated boy of the first story had always liked the words "paralysis" and "simony" in his mind,[48] and performance of Church officials in Dubliners indicates that his feeling very well might have been intuitive insight. An earnest boy cannot feel in harmony with the awful obligation of holy office, and a group of business men can feel in harmony with the teachings of the Church. There is little doubt that the teacher is the one (ironically) striving to be in harmony.

Similarly, the other traditions that the Dubliners encounter are incompatible with their needs and desires. Public ethical opinion will not allow Bob Doran to escape the trap laid for him by

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[44] Ulysses, p. 23.

[45] Dubliners, p. 208.

[46] Ibid., p. 209.

[47] Ibid., p. 222.

[48] Ibid., p. 7.

Mrs. Mooney and her daughter. He feels obligated to marry Polly because "Dublin is such a small city: everyone knows everyone else's business."[49] Little Chandler feels claustrophobic about a city so conventional, monotonous and insensitive, and reflects that, ". . . if you wanted to succeed you had to go away. You could do nothing in Dublin."[50] The politicians on Ivy Day can only agree on one thing: that the likes of Parnell is no longer with them, and nostalgia replaces hope in their political thinking. The aspiring musician Kathleen Kearney has to perform to unruly audiences, when she has an opportunity to perform, and the final irony is that her mother's ambitious greed ruins her career before it is hardly begun. Nostalgia is prominent in the arts too. At the Misses Morkan's party, Mr. Browne wistfully recalls the old days of opera in Dublin, and Aunt Kate (whom Gabriel later dubs one of "the Three Graces of the Dublin musical world"[51]) recalls as the greatest tenor she has ever heard, a certain Parkinson, whom Mr. Bartell D'Arcy, himself a travelled singer, cannot recognize: " 'Strange', . . . I never even heard of him."[52] Traditions in Dublin have become frozen and those who live by them, paralyzed, and those who do not, tortured.

Dublin in Joyce's Dubliners is a true imaginary city; that is, its people walk in real streets, go into real buildings, and discuss real events, but with this stuff of reality, Joyce re-creates

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[49] Ibid., p. 80.

[50] Ibid., p. 88.

[51] Ibid., p. 262.

[52] Ibid., p. 256.

the city by giving factual detail more sublime meaning than could be gleaned from contemporary newspaper stories (or newspaper-like stories) about the same streets, buildings, and events -- or even the same people.

In the same way, Sherwood Anderson gives to the reader the small town of Midwestern America. Though "M. A." in his review of Winesburg, Ohio had mentioned the readily recognizable quality of Anderson's community,[53] he also said that the book "was in a new mood, one not easily forgotten."[54] Perhaps the word "mood" is the clue to Anderson's 'realism.' He himself said, "I did succeed, I think, in giving the feeling of the life of a boy growing into young manhood in a town."[55] In fact, it is precisely the "mood" and "feeling" of life in Winesburg that is real; and of course real moods and feelings are something quite different from real facts and are achieved in fiction by imagination rather than mere observation. However, few critics today would group him with the realists. In fact, earlier critics were also at times reluctant to do so. Another reviewer, this time anonymous, stated, "It seems probable that he has given a distorted view of life, that he cariacatures even Winesburg, Ohio."[56] Recognizing the reality of the "grotesques" of Winesburg, yet worried about the manner by which this reality is achieved, later

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[53]See p. 3.

[54]M. A., "A Country Town," 257.

[55]Memoirs, p. 289.

[56]Nation, CVIII (June 28, 1919), 1017.

critics have for the most part stressed the non-reality of Winesburg. In a famous article Lionel Trilling, shortly after Anderson's death, stated that the book is over-emotional at the expense of factual sensations, saying that, ". . . there are very few sights, sounds, and smells, very little of the stuff of actuality"[57] in the stories. A few years later Irving Howe stated: "If read as social fiction Winesburg is somewhat absurd."[58] But in 1956, Charles Walcutt placed Anderson in what he calls the "stream" of naturalism. However he limits Anderson's 'naturalism' to ". . . his exploration of character without reference to orthodox moral yardsticks; his questionings, and his quiet suppressed conclusions as to what orders our cosmos and what is man's place in it; and his social attitudes, which are left-wing ...."[59] There is no mention of his treatment of everyday factual matters. The latest tendency has been to examine more closely the manner Anderson used to achieve the literary presentation of his grotesques. Epiphanio San Juan, Jr. has examined some of the imagery of the book,[60] and Benjamin T. Spencer has elected to call Anderson an "American Mythopoeist."[61] As yet the quest for symbols has not

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[57]Lionel Trilling, "Sherwood Anderson," Kenyon Review, III (1941), 298.

[58]Charles Walcutt, American Literary Naturalism: A Divided Stream (Minneapolis, 1950, p. 224.

[59]Irving Howe, Sherwood Anderson (New York, 1951), p. 97.

[60]Epiphanio San Juan, Jr., "Visions and Reality: A Consideration of Sherwood Anderson's Winesburg, Ohio," American Literature, XXV (1963), 137-155.

[61]Benjamin T. Spencer, "Sherwood Anderson: American Mythopoeist," American Literature, XLI (March 1969), 1-18.

become too fervent and far-reaching, but then Anderson did not write any later fiction to compare with Ulysses and Finnegans Wake. But when critical attention is focused on Anderson's imagination, it must be remembered that his own view does not lose sight of reality: "Separate yourself too much from life and you may at moments be a lyrical poet, but you are not an artist."[62] Primarily an imaginative writer, Anderson re-created the small Midwestern town of America, gave meaning to its chaos, as Joyce had done in Dublin. The danger of criticism that banishes Anderson's grotesques to a netherworld is that, while recognizing his use of imagination, it tends to forget that there ever was a small Midwest town for him to re-create.

What of Winesburg, Ohio? What is Anderson's re-created community like? First of all, Winesburg, unlike Dublin, is not literally a real town in Ohio. It is based upon the town of Anderson's youth, Clyde, Ohio, and probably upon several other towns in Ohio, Illinois, and Iowa -- in fact the entire Midwestern area of the United States -- that he may have known during his youth and early manhood, however briefly. Thus, Winesburg has no fixed landmarks that Anderson can refer to at will. He must tell the reader, bit by bit, of the topography of the town. But this is not hard, for Winesburg has the buildings and landmarks and thoroughfares of all small Midwestern American towns. There is Main Street, with branching streets, like Buckeye Street, and more important perhaps, branching unnamed alleyways; and there is the railroad station, the New Willard House, the Winesburg Eagle office, Hern's grocery, Biff

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[62] "Man and His Imagination," p. 67.

Carter's lunchroom, Sinning's hardware store, Sylvester West's saloon, the Waterworks Pond, the Fairground, respectable frame houses, smaller, poorer houses with vegetables and animals in their backyards, Banker White's large brick house, and the surrounding fields of corn and berries that the farmers plant and harvest and that are joined to the town itself principally by Trunion Pike. But all these buildings and landmarks are not introduced in the first story; they simply gradually accumulate until they become familiar to the reader. As William L. Phillips put it, ". . . each scrap of description tended to fill in the environment of Winesburg."[63] Nor does Anderson ever explain the various landmarks of Winesburg, and he casually blends the new ones with the already-mentioned ones as if the reader were familiar with the town. For example, Kate Swift's nocturnal wanderings in "The Teacher" --

> First she went to the end of her own street and then across a pair of hay scales set in the ground before a feed barn and into Trunion Pike. Along Trunion Pike she went to Ned Winter's barn and turning east followed a street of low frame houses that lead over Gospel Hill and into Sucker Road that ran down a shallow valley past Ike Smead's chicken farm to Waterworks Pond.[64]

Kate's walk is reminiscent of Lenehan's in Joyce's "Two Gallants," and Anderson writes of the geographical details of her walk with the same air of assurance that these details will be recognized by the reader as does Joyce, though Ike Smead's chicken farm in Winesburg

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[63] William L. Phillips, "How Sherwood Anderson Wrote Winesburg, Ohio," American Literature, XXIII (March 1951), 18.

[64] Winesburg, Ohio (New York, 1960), p. 148. All quotations from Winesburg, Ohio are from this -- the Viking Press -- edition.

and the City Markets in Dublin are hardly comparable. Nevertheless, the reader does recognize the landmarks of Winesburg, because they are universal.

The first detailed picture of the town of Winesburg comes in "Mother," when a typical view from Elizabeth Williard's room in the New Willard House is given. The scene is an alleyway leading off Main Street:

> At the back door of his shop appeared Abner Groff with a stick or an empty milk bottle in his hand. For a long time there was a feud between the baker and a grey cat that belonged to Sylvester West, the druggist. The boy and his mother saw the cat creep into the door of the bakery and presently emerge followed by the baker who swore and waved his arms about . . . . Sometimes he was so angry that, although the cat had disappeared, he hurled sticks, bits of broken glass, and even some of the tools of his trade about . . . . In the alley the grey cat crouched behind barrels filled with torn paper and broken bottles above which flew a black swarm of flies.[65]

The value of this scene is in its implications, but Anderson does not leave the reader to infer the suggested meaning. He goes on to say,

> .... she did not look along the alleyway any more, but tried to forget the contest between the bearded man and the cat. It seemed like a rehearsal of her own life, terrible in its vividness.

Unlike Joyce, Anderson often comments on the symbolic possibilities of his scene.

Alleys are important in Winesburg, especially at night, for in the dim light they can lead down to the underworld of desire

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[65] Ibid., p. 38.

and experience. George Willard in "Nobody Knows" sets out on his first "adventure" through the black back streets of Winesburg with Louise Trunnion who "was not particularly comely."[66] They walk along a brick sidewalk: "Some of the bricks were missing and the sidewalk was rough and irregular. He took her hand that was also rough and thought it delightfully small." Again, Anderson openly states the connection between the coarseness of the scene and the coarseness of the girl, but the effect of the scene is the opposite of identification of the girl with the scene. George thinks her hand "delightfully small" and in effect apprehends beauty out of ugliness. Here Anderson is subtle, for he does not comment upon his hint that a youthful eager imagination can see beauty in the most commonplace. Later, in "An Awakening," George Willard again wanders through a dark alleyway, this time on a cold January night. Under the stars in the crisp air he gives his imagination free play and suddenly feels that he must get "into touch with something orderly and big that swings through the night like a star."[67] In the alley behind the day labourers' small houses he simply stands and lets his senses take in the smell of manure, the grunting of pigs, the women washing dishes by dim kerosene lamps, the smoke rising into the sky, and the scuffling of feet as men leave for the saloons, and "all of these things made him seem, as he lurked in the darkness, oddly detached and apart from all life."[68] Again, out of ugliness comes a sense of beauty, out of narrowness, a sense of

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[66] Ibid., p. 55.

[67] Ibid., p. 169.

[68] Ibid., p. 170.

immensity, but here Anderson directly states the effect of the scene on George instead of using a metaphor to show the effect or even simply implying the effect by a statement.

Besides using descriptions of Winesburg for their symbolic value, Anderson also (and here he is unlike Joyce) uses such scenes for a different effect. In "The Thinker":

> Seth and Helen walked through the streets beneath the trees. Heavy clouds had drifted across the face of the moon, and before them in the deep twilight went a man with a short ladder upon his shoulder. Hurrying forward, the man stopped at the street crossing and, putting the ladder against the wooden lamp-post, lighted the village lights so that their way was half lighted, half darkened by the lamps and by the deepening shadows cast by the low-branched trees. In the tops of the trees the wind began to play, disturbing the sleeping birds so that they flew about calling plaintively. In the lighted space before one of the lamps, two bats wheeled and circled, pursuing the gathering swarm of night flies.[69]

This paragraph implies nothing whatsoever about Seth and Helen. But its lack of symbolic value does not make it 'realistic' reportage; rather it is poetic in that it creates a scene which in turn evokes a mood in the reader; in short, it is romantic. Seth and Helen continue on until they finally come to the garden behind his mother's house, both in a state of excitement; but they fail to communicate, and the scene suddenly does take on symbolic import: "The garden that had been so mysterious and vast, a place that with Seth beside her might have become the background for strange and wonderful adventures, now seemed no more than an ordinary Winesburg back yard . . . ."[70] Winesburg is hardly Eden.

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[69] Ibid., p. 127.

[70] Ibid., p. 130.

Unlike Dubliners, most of the action in Winesburg, Ohio takes place out of doors but the interiors of buildings are sometimes described. When they are, Anderson (like Joyce) mainly uses significant details, as in the descriptions of Cowley & Son's store in " 'Queer'," where Elmer Cowley is first seen sitting in the shed "that stuck like a burr on the rear of Cowley & Son's store."[71] Everything about the store seems to have this useless, but persistently clinging quality. The goods in the store range from "a chunk of coal as large as an apple barrel, to indicate that orders for coal were taken"[72] to "coat hangers, patent suspender buttons, cans of roof paint, bottles of rheumatism cure, and a substitute for coffee," all sitting there with "patient willingness to serve the public," and all, it might be added, indicative of the cluttered, dusty, and unorganized mind of the proprietor. The interior of the New Willard House, the only hotel in town, is briefly described, here and there, but the details are telling. Elizabeth Willard, the wife of the proprietor Tom Willard who fancies himself an iconoclastic Democrat party worker, lives the life of a recluse in her room which is "tucked away in a corner"[73] of the hotel, and does the work of a servant: "Listlessly she went about the old hotel looking at the faded wall-paper and the ragged carpets and, when she was able to be about, doing the work of a chambermaid among the beds soiled by

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[71] Ibid., p. 175.

[72] Ibid., p. 176.

[73] Ibid., p. 43.

the slumbers of fat travelling men."[74] Like the rooms of the hotel (which she owns), she is faded, ragged, and has known a long procession of travelling men who soil while slumbering. The interior of Doctor Reefy's office, as described in "Death," is "as large as a barn,"[75] but has only two important pieces of furniture: a pot-bellied stove and a huge old table which "was covered with books, bottles, and surgical instruments. Near the edge of the table lay three or four apples left by John Spaniard, a tree nurseryman who was Doctor Reefy's friend, and who had slipped the apples out of his pocket as he came in the door." The combination of books, bottles, and surgical instruments indicates the medical profession, but more important are the seemingly randomly placed apples left by his friend John Spaniard, as a symbolic joke, for in the first story in which Doctor Reefy appears, "Paper Pills," the "twisted little apples that grow in the orchards of Winesburg"[76] have a significant symbolic value:

> Into a little round place at the side of the apple has been gathered all its sweetness. One runs from tree to tree over the frosted ground picking the gnarled, twisted apples and filling his pockets with them. Only the few know the sweetness of the twisted apples.[77]

Doctor Reefy in this story fills his pockets with little round scraps of paper on which he has written little "odds and ends of thoughts,"[78]

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[74] Ibid., p. 36.

[75] Ibid., p. 202.

[76] Ibid., p. 33.

[77] Ibid.

[78] Ibid., p. 35.

which are identifiable with the twisted apples, because both are ultimately symbols of the "truths" spoken of[79] in the initial story, "The Book of the Grotesque," which have been "snatched up" by people and which make them finally into grotesques. In "Paper Pills" it is revealed that Doctor Reefy is in the habit of throwing the paper balls at his friend John Spaniard and calling him a " 'blithering old sentimentalist."[80] But both Doctor Reefy and John Spaniard know the sweetness of the twisted apples. Thus when the tree nurseryman takes the apples out of his pocket and leaves them in Doctor Reefy's office he is in effect repeating the doctor's habit of throwing the paper pills, for both are symbolic gestures. Anderson has casually inserted the detail of the abandoned apples at the end of the book as if it were simply part of the description of the room, but the implications of this detail, when combined with implications of the twisted apples in the early stories "Paper Pills" and "The Book of the Grotesque," are enormously suggestive, so that it has as imaginative value far more sublime than its realistic factitiousness.

The residents of Winesburg, Ohio are very much concerned with nature; in fact, the sky, the changing seasons, the surrounding cornfields, and the trees along the streets are as much a part of Winesburg as the buildings and the train which connects it with the bigger world outside. In Poor White Anderson (with all the room of a novel to philosophize in) speaks of the towns in the Mississippi Valley:

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[79] Ibid., p. 23.

[80] Ibid., p. 33.

> . . . the people who lived in the towns were to each other like members of a great family. The individual idiosyncrasies of each member of the great family stood forth. A kind of invisible roof beneath which everyone lived spread itself over each town.[81]

The "invisible roof," or the sense of community, is manifested in organic imagery in Winesburg, Ohio, specifically in the image of the protecting foliage of tree-tops, which comes to signify a living order, which it is man's desire to be in communion with. George Willard expresses this wish in "An Awakening" when he says to himself: "I must get myself into touch with something orderly and big that swings through the night like a star."[82] At times of intense excitement the people in Winesburg are very often in a certain situation: when Joe Welling and Sarah King, in "A Man of Ideas," go courting, "Under the trees they walked;"[83] when Ned Currie visits Alice Hindman, in "Adventure," "Together the two walked under the trees;"[84] in "The Thinker," "Seth and Helen walked through the streets beneath the trees;[85] when Rev. Curtis Hartman, in "The Strength of God," struggles with himself, "in the darkness under the trees . . . he wandered;[86] and in "Sophistication," when George Willard and Helen White go toward the Fairground, "With hanging heads they walked away along the streets under the

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[81] Poor White in The Portable Sherwood Anderson, ed. Horace Gregory (New York, 1949), p. 156. All subsequent quotations from Poor White are from this edition.

[82] See p. 42.

[83] Winesburg, Ohio, p. 99.

[84] Ibid., p. 103.

[85] Ibid., p. 127.

[86] Ibid., p. 140.

trees."[87] Together with the tree imagery is the imagery of the sky and the rain. The people of Winesburg wish to see the heavens as beneficial in a personal, living way, and their basic drives are for a free and energetic -- living -- involvement in the mystery of life, or in physical-spiritual love, often called, somewhat ironically, "adventure" by Anderson (most notably, in the story by that name). The life of the universe is symbolized for them by the trees, which like the cornfields are comforting and close, and the sky, which is distant but powerful. Alice Hindman and Ned Currie make love in the fields at night, but it is only a momentary adventure, and Alice is left with a haunting memory and a gnawing need to keep the mysterious life of the union alive. In desperation, one night when she can stand her loneliness no longer, she goes out into the rain naked: "She thought the rain would have some creative and wonderful effect on her body. Not for years had she felt so full of youth and courage. She wanted to leap and run, to cry out, to find some other lonely human and embrace him."[88] She feels the rain must be a physical manifestation of the gift of life from the skies, and it is a pagan grace rather than Christian Grace that she seeks. Her impulse to run is a manifestation of the life within her that the rain has stirred. The urge to run in these moments of excitement is a common way in Winesburg of trying to get into rhythm with the living forces of the universe. In "The Untold Lie" Ray Pearson, on his way to town from his farm, suddenly feels moved: "The whole world seemed . . . to

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[87] Ibid., p. 220.

[88] Ibid., p. 110.

have become alive with something,"[89] and "The beauty of the country about Winesburg was too much" for him. His reaction is to begin running across the fields, shouting "a protest against his life, against everything that makes life ugly." Again, Elizabeth Willard, in "Death," remembers an incident that has happened to her in the early years of her marriage: riding in a buggy in the country it began to rain and she whipped the horse on faster and faster, wanting "to drive on and on forever. . . . to get out of town, out of my clothes, out of my marriage, out of my body, out of everything."[90] When the horse could run no longer, she got out of the buggy and ran until she fell. She explains to Doctor Reefy: "I wanted to run away from everything but I wanted to run towards something too." This is what everyone in Winesburg wants, to escape <u>to</u> life, or adventure or meaning. Alice Hindman, Ray Pearson, and Elizabeth Willard (and most of the other people in the town) all fail, running, like Rosiland Westcott, "out of nowhere into nothing," (in the story by that name in <u>The Triumph of the Egg</u>).

But two of the inhabitants of Winesburg do escape and align themselves with the life of the natural world, momentarily at least. George Willard and Helen White in "Sophistication" go to the deserted Fairground in the evening after the fair in late fall and sit "under the roof of the grand-stand."[91] Both have come to the feeling of "the sadness of sophistication," which for George comes through his looking "out upon the world, seeing, as though they marched in procession before him, the countless figures of men who before his time

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[89] <u>Ibid.</u>, p. 190.

[90] <u>Ibid.</u>, p. 208.

[91] <u>Ibid.</u>, p. 221.

have come out of nothingness into the world, lived their lives and again disappeared into nothingness."[92] No longer will he be able to look at the night sky and hope to get in touch with it. Meaning must be sought elsewhere. George and Helen seek each other out and in the grand-stand,

> In that high place in the darkness the two oddly sensitive human atoms held each other tightly and waited. In the mind of each was the same thought. "I have come to this lonely place and here is this other," was the substance of the thing felt.[93]

All the people in Winesburg might be called "oddly sensitive human atoms," and the lonely place to where George and Helen have come is of far greater dimensions than the Winesburg Fair-ground, but they, unlike the other people in the town, feel that "here is this other." On their way home they run too, but they frolic while they run, and become "not man and woman, not boy and girl, but excited little animals."[94] By loving and communing with each other they participate, as no others in Winesburg, in the life of the universe, and make the step from atoms to animals, which is as high on the chain of being as anyone in Anderson's world is likely to get. In fact, in his vertical order, what is human (doubt, loneliness, and frustration mainly) and what is animal (spontaneity, energy, free feeling) have reversed positions on the scale and the traditional conflict between reason and passion comes to be expressed in terms of rational confinement and passionate freedom, again, romanticism; thus to be an animal in Anderson's scheme is often more desirable, and certainly more

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[92] Ibid., p. 215.

[93] Ibid., p. 222.

[94] Ibid., p. 223.

satisfying than to be human.

Because they are as concerned as they are with the out of doors, the people in Winesburg do not have (as the people in Dublin) a great tradition of manners and morals. They are far less concerned with religion, politics, and art than they are with conquering their own despair and loneliness. None of the people in Winesburg are primarily public people; their inner personal lives are far more important to them than their public duties and actions. There is no community of morals and manners. Each individual works out his own world-view of God, man, and nature, and each individual decides what is the best way to act. In moments of decision no reference is made to the Church or to any ethical code of behaviour. When Jesse Bentley and Rev. Curtis Hartman look for manifestations of God, one is unorthodox in his search (Jessie Bentley, building an altar of sacrifice) and the other is unorthodox in his findings (Rev. Curtis Hartman, shouting, " 'God has appeared to me in the person of Kate Swift, the school teacher, kneeling naked on a bed' "[95]). When Ray Pearson runs after Hal Winters to advise him what to do about the girl he has 'got in trouble', ethics or decency has nothing to do with his intended advice; and when he cannot bring himself to **say** anything to the younger man, it is not because of any sense of honour or doing the right thing -- he does not speak simply because, " 'Whatever I told him would have been a lie.' "[96]

The only thing even like a tradition of thought and behaviour

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[95] Ibid., p. 144.

[96] Ibid., p. 192.

in Winesburg is public opinion, which is mixed with a little respectability and a smattering of snobbishness. And even public opinion is ineffectual; about all it amounts to is observation:

> When Sarah King began walking out in the evening with Joe Welling, people shook their heads in alarm . . . . His passionate protestations of love, heard coming out of the darkness . . . were repeated in the stores. Men stood by the bar in the New Willard House laughing and talking of Joe's courtship. After the laughter came silence. The Winesburg baseball team, under his management, was winning game after game, and the town had begun to respect him. Sensing a tragedy, they waited, laughing nervously.[97]

Public opinion, with only the power to laugh nervously, is no more than gossip, but even gossip can exercise a strange influence (though completely unintentional) on a tortured mind. Elmer Cowley resents George Willard -- in fact, despises him -- because, "Did he not represent public opinion and had not the public opinion of Winesburg condemned the Cowleys to queerness? . . . . Might not one by striking his person strike also the greater enemy -- the thing that smiled and went on its way -- the judgement of Winesburg?"[98] Many of the citizens of Winesburg are respectable, but only the minor (almost comic) people are concerned with respectability; such as Mrs. White, the banker's wife, who has the only brass door-knocker in town and who has "organized a women's club for the study of poetry,"[99] and Mrs. Hartman, who while driving through the streets with her husband

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[97] Ibid., p. 99.

[98] Ibid., p. 179.

[99] Ibid., pp. 126-27.

is "afire with secret pride"[100] in their social standing, and Tom Willard who secretly considers himself an important man. The major figures of Winesburg, respectable (like Kate Swift and Rev. Hartman) or not (like Doctor Reefy and Doctor Parcival), never think of respectability, much less public opinion.

This lack of a tradition of morals and manners, what Charles C. Walcutt calls the "rawness and harshness"[101] of the Midwestern town, can lead to a crude literary expression, according to Anderson. In the Notebook, in a little section he calls "An Apology for Crudity," he says:

> For a long time I have believed that crudity is an inevitable quality in the production of a really significant present-day American literature. How indeed is one to escape the obvious fact that there is as yet no native subtlety of thought or living among us? And if we are a crude and childlike people how can our literature hope to escape the influence of that fact? Why indeed should it want to escape?[102]

Perhaps this is a justification of his treatment of what some early critics thought the morbid aspect of American life, but the statement that there is "no subtlety of thought" and that literature must reflect this influence is ironic (whether it is intended to be or not), for his own fiction deals with crudity with superb subtlety.

The time of Winesburg, Ohio is approximately the same as that of Dubliners -- the close of the nineteenth century. The temper of the period in the Midwestern American town is described in Poor White:

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[100] Ibid., p. 136.

[101] Charles C. Walcutt, p. 35.

[102] Sherwood Anderson's Notebook, p. 195.

> . . . it was a time of waiting. The country having been cleared and the Indians driven away into a vast distant place spoken of vaguely as the West, the Civil War having been fought and won, and there being no great national problems that touched closely their lives, the minds of men were turned in upon themselves. The soul and its destiny was spoken of openly in the streets. Robert Ingersoll came to Bidwell to speak in Terry's Hall, and after he had gone the question of the divinity of Christ for months occupied the minds of the citizens.[103]

The talk of the "soul and its destiny" is an ironic detail, for the people in Bidwell (and in Winesburg, of course), are more concerned with the prophetic advice of people like Judge Hanby -- "to get ready for what's coming,"[104] than they are with the breakdown of religion. That is, they are eagerly anticipating the advent of industrialism rather than wailing over the possible disintegration of their heritage. Besides being "a time of waiting" when the mind of the midwest townsman is "turned in" upon itself, it is also the time of the fall of the craftsman and the rise of the man of industry. A minor incident in "The Philosopher" symbolizes the era: "There had been an accident on Main Street. A team of horses had been frightened by a train and had run away. A little girl, the daughter of a farmer, had been thrown from a buggy and killed."[105] The horses, the train that frightens them, and the accidental death of the farmer's daughter are the life of nature being frightened by the technology of man, resulting in the accidental, and potentially tragic death of a young and innocent daughter - perhaps goddess - of the earth. The train is vital to Winesburg, but it is not vital to the

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[103] Poor White, p. 155.

[104] Ibid., p. 161.

[105] Winesburg, Ohio, p. 51.

individuals of the town. It is not even considered as a means of escape. Seth Richmond goes away for a week on an adventure to a fair by stealing a ride on the train, but comes back a week later and admits to his mother," 'I wanted to turn back within an hour after we had started.' "[106] And Elmer Cowley leaps onto a passing train, after pummeling a bewildered George Willard on the station platform, but although he goes away, he does not escape, for he is running from himself. Only George Willard at the end of the book manages to depart from a way of life as well as a town by taking the train. For the most part, the train is merely a whistle in the night for the people of Winesburg.

The time of Winesburg, Ohio is vague; all the stories take place in the same period, but the action is spread over several years. In this long "time of waiting" everybody suffers with introspection during a prolonged dark night of the soul. There is a central time sequence which covers the period of George Willard's late adolescence, and many of the stories involve him directly or take place concurrently with his life in Winesburg. Others involve him in that they are told to him, but the main actions of these stories take place sometime in the past and a sense of the length of the waiting and the suffering of people like Doctor Reefy, Doctor Parcival, and Wash Williams is given. Other stories contain flashbacks that are not told to George Willard, and finally other stories simply take place before George Willard's adolescence (such as Alice Hindman's "adventure" which occurs "when George Willard was a mere boy"[107]); in one instance, "Godliness," the story covers the time

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[106] Ibid., p. 121.

[107] Ibid., p. 121.

span from two previous generations. But all of the adventures, all of the failures, and all of the suffering could have taken place within George Willard's period of growth. The time of Winesburg, Ohio is a great lump covering many years but exhibiting one temper; it is simply more convenient to have some of the people tell their stories to George Willard or to use flashbacks to show the results of past failures.

In describing Willow Springs, the home town of Rosiland Westcott in "Out of Nowhere into Nothing" in The Triumph of the Egg, Anderson says, "Willow Springs was a rather meaningless, dreary town, one of thousands of such towns in Indiana, Illinois, Wisconsin, Kansas, Iowa, but her mind made it more dreary."[108] It might be thought that Anderson purposefully omitted Ohio in his listing of states, but certainly Winesburg is one of these towns. And certainly the minds of the people there, like Rosiland Westcott's, make the town what it is in Anderson's fiction. Winesburg, Ohio appears in the book to the reader as it appeared in life to the people who lived in the small towns of Midwestern America toward the end of the nineteenth century; that is, it is tempered by the feelings and thoughts of its residents, rather than objectively reported. And above all, Winesburg, Ohio has passed through Anderson's imagination, which has given it meaning, before it ever reached the printed page: in short, Winesburg, Ohio (like Dublin) is mythological.

James Joyce in Dubliners and Sherwood Anderson in Winesburg, Ohio (and both authors in their later fiction as well) re-created the communities they knew best. Both worked in the same literary manner:

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[108] The Triumph of the Egg (New York, 1921), p. 175.

taking primarily the stuff of reality and forging this material in their imaginations so that the resulting works of art are down-to-earth and at the same time have the meaning that is conveyed by images and symbols. Descriptive details are chosen by both Joyce and Anderson and used so as to signify by suggestion meanings greater than the facts. Joyce uses irony more freely in his significant details than does Anderson, who seldom goes above his characters with his imagination, preferring a "surrender of self"[109] and a "real humbleness before life," as he calls it: ". . . no matter how skilfully you present your characters, there is always the realization that you yourself share in their weaknesses, their absurdities, their pretensions." But ironic or sympathetic, both use the imagination as the primary agent of literary art. Of course, Dublin and Winesburg, Ohio are different: Dublin is the real name of a real city, while Winesburg is an invented prototype of almost countless similar small towns; Dublin has a longstanding tradition of public life, while Winesburg has neither a tradition nor a public life of any significance; Dublin is in a period of dying twilight and is in the paralyzing grip of civil death, while Winesburg is in a period of purgatorial waiting; Dublin searches for the new life indoors by cultivating religion, the arts, and politics, while Winesburg seeks the new life out of doors by looking to the life of nature for sustenance. But both Dublin and Winesburg are communities in which the free, creative, energetic inclinations of their inhabitants are continually frustrated by their given place and time; and perhaps more important, for

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[109] "Man and His Imagination," p. 43.

both Dublin and Winesburg, their geneses and their literary presentation in the fiction of Joyce and Anderson are identical.

What is needed next is a focusing of critical scrutiny on the inhabitants of Joyce's and Anderson's communities. A shift must be made from the method of presentation and the general scenes to the most important elements of all the stories -- the individual lives of the people who populate Dubliners and Winesburg, Ohio.

III

THE GESTURE AND THE GIFT OF TONGUES

That the residents of Dublin and Winesburg, Ohio are cut off from a vital sustenance is obvious; that they are alone and lonely, as well as frustrated and fearful in their isolation, is equally clear. The reason for their grotesqueness is simple: they cannot communicate with each other. They are all, even the most seemingly talkative among them, inarticulate in that they cannot talk meaningfully to each other. There is a lot of talking in Dubliners and Winesburg, Ohio, but almost no communication. Most of the revealed words belonging to the characters are either never spoken, remaining in the subterranean depths of intense consciousness, or else stop at the ears of the insensitive listeners and become part of the background noise of life.

Throughout Dubliners the people are inarticulate. Some do not say anything, some talk a lot but do not reach beneath the surface of their listeners' understanding, and none is able to communicate to another person what is most alive in the depths of his vitality. This accounts for the "paralysis" of the Dubliners. Brewster Ghiselin has pointed out that, "The idea of a moral paralysis is expressed sometimes directly in terms of physical arrest,"[1]

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[1]Brewster Ghiselin, "The Unity of Joyce's 'Dubliners' " 77.

but the inability to act is not nearly so much an evidence of paralysis in Dublin as the inability to speak decisively, for most often the spoken word of communication is what is needed.

In the very first scene in the book, in "The Sisters," there is a tension developed from what is not said: old Cotter is speaking about Father Flynn who has just died:

> "No I wouldn't say he was exactly . . . but there was something queer . . . there was something uncanny about him. I'll tell you what my opinion . . ."[2]

But old Cotter does not tell what his opinion is. The ellipses are more telling than the words. There is an aura of mystery about Father Flynn, and the attempt to express it in words is always awkward. When his sister Eliza reminisces, she is reluctant to say what she thinks:

> "It was that chalice he broke . . . . That was the beginning of it. Of course, they say it was all right, that it contained nothing, I mean. But still . . . . They say it was the boy's fault. But poor James was so nervous, God be merciful to him!"[3]

And the boy's aunt too is reluctant: "I heard something . . . ." Earlier, she had also resorted to silent implication; arriving at the sister's house, she asked: "Did he . . . peacefully?"[4] Death is a large part of the mystery surrounding Father Flynn, and his suspected madness and/or sin accounts for the rest of it. But it is all unmentionable. The fact that the child relates the story does not completely explain the inability of the older people to talk openly. No doubt they are somewhat timid for fear of 'corrupting' the boy

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[2] Dubliners, p. 7.

[3] Ibid., p. 18.

[4] Ibid., p. 15.

with sordidness, but this is not the only reason. After all, the boy knows about death and it is openly stated that the priest's mind was affected, and why it was. The inarticulateness is mainly an inability to deal directly, in words, with the vital concerns of life, specially the less pleasant of the mysteries of life, such as madness and death. Appropriately, the story ends with a quotation, which ends with an ellipsis:

> "Wide-awake and laughing-like to himself . . . So then, of course, when they say that, that made them think there was something gone wrong with him . . . . "[5]

Throughout the story words have not been said; what better way to end than with yet one more meaningful silence?

In "Araby" a boy undergoes the tortures and delights of first love. The girl he secretly admires exists to him in a state of distant vapourized "Eastern" enchantment, removed above the mild squalor of North Richmond Street where they both live. His adoration is silent: "I had never spoken to her expect for a few casual words, and yet her name was like a summons to all my foolish blood."[6] Dreaming of her in a vague state of ecstasy, he dares not speak, and furthermore, it does not matter, for the dream itself is intoxicating:

> I thought little of the future. I did not know whether I would ever speak to her or not or, if I spoke to her, how I could tell her of my confused adoration. But my body was like a harp and her words and gestures were like fingers running upon the wires.[7]

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[5] Ibid., p. 19.

[6] Ibid., p. 35.

[7] Ibid., pp. 35-36.

Her words and gestures, the means of communication and initiation, promise fulfillment for the desires of his "foolish blood," yet they remain remote from him. It seems almost too good to be true that he might hope to share words and gestures with her, yet the day does come: "At last she spoke to me. When she addressed the first words to me, I was so confused that I did not know what to answer."[8] In a state of excitement he promises that he will bring her something from the bazaar Araby, when she asks **him** if he is going there. From then on, the bazaar on Saturday night is all that he can think about. The initial words have been spoken, the veil separating him from her enchanting being has been partially rent; what remains is for him to bring her a token or a symbol of his love, which he has already imagined to be in the form of a chalice which he bears "safely through a throng of foes"[9] amid the sordid streets of the neighbourhood. But when he arrives late at Araby he can find nothing to buy; instead he overhears the 'love' talk of a young saleswoman and two gentlemen friends:

> "O, I never said such a thing!"
> "O, but you did!"
> "O, but I didn't!"
> "Didn't she say that,"
> "Yes. I heard her."
> "O, there's a . . . fib!"[10]

In an agonized flush of shame he realizes the terrible irony: that the communication between 'lovers' might be no more sacred or elevated than the meaningless chatter of these idlers. What is so shocking to the boy is the realization that there is yet a harder and deeper-reaching pain to be endured than not being able to communicate with the young enchanting woman of his adoration: the

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[8] Ibid., p. 36.

[9] See p. 30.

[10] Dubliners, p.41.

fear that could he speak to her, could he share words and gestures with her, there would be nothing to say that could lift them into the kind of fervent ecstasy that he has already known in his mute dreams of her. The final fear is that his dreams were in vain.

Eveline, in the story by that name, does not say one word, even though she is shown in the most crucial moment of her life. Painfully torn between loyalty to the familiar but tyrannical home of her father and escape to life and love across the sea in a new world with a sailor who offers her a new freedom and a new home, she cannot decide. Even in her reminiscences, she is speechless. Her father rants, her superintendent at work scolds, her mother exclaims irrationally, and her fiancé sings -- all in her memory, but she remains silent. Then when the crisis of decision comes, her lover pleads with her to come with him aboard the ship, but she still cannot speak, though she is experiencing a turmoil within her mind:

> No! No! No! It was impossible. Her hands clutched the iron in frenzy. Amid the seas she sent a cry of anguish![11]

Her passionate cry goes no further than the seas of her own emotions, which she feels will "drown" her, because her lover is "drawing her down into them,"[12] down into the underworld of her being where she is desperately afraid of going. At last, even gestures fail; as he leaves her behind, she does not even move her body, let alone speak:

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[11] Ibid., p. 48.

[12] Ibid.

"Her eyes gave him no sign of love or farewell or recognition."[13] Communication has been completely foiled, and love has lost, because fear will not allow even a denial of love to be uttered.

Neither of the "Two Gallants," Lenehan nor Corley, is gallant. Their alliance in a common pursuit is based on a provider-parasite relationship. Corley is "burly" with a "large, globular and oily" head that "sweated in all weathers"[14] and replies to Lenehan's questions by swinging his head to and fro "as if to toss aside an insistent insect."[15] And the minds of these two gallants might be represented by the same metaphorical paradigm: Corley is slow-witted and simple, while Lenehan is quick, subtle, and careful. Though allegedly friends, they cannot talk to each other. They do talk, but it is not meaningful conversation. The first thing disclosed about Corley is that he is "just bringing a long monologue to a close," and in the first sentence about Lenehan, it is revealed that he "wore an amused listening face."[16] The fact that Lenehan 'wears' a listening expression suggests that he is not really listening, and this is soon made certain at the beginning of the next paragraph: "When he was quite sure that the narrative had ended he laughed noiselessly for fully half a minute."[17] Lenehan's major attribute though is his skill in talking:

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[13] Ibid.

[14] Ibid., p. 61.

[15] Ibid., p. 64.

[16] Ibid., p. 58.

[17] Ibid., p. 59.

> His tongue was tired for he had been talking all the afternoon in a public-house in Dorset Street. Most people considered Lenehan a leech but, in spite of this reputation, his adroitness and eloquence had always prevented his friends from forming any general policy against him. . . He was a sporting vagrant armed with a vast stock of stories, limericks, and riddles.[18]

Talking to entertain, rather than to communicate, is Lenehan's talent. But through his subtlety, he transcends Corley's achievement with the monologue: "To save himself he had the habit of leaving his flattery open to the interpretation of raillery."[19] He uses words to further his wishes, and his friendship with Corley is purely mercenary (as Corley's with him is purely for self-aggrandizement). In a way the two gallants complement each other, but their respective mercenary and egotistical motives are hardly conducive to genuine friendship or conversation. And there certainly is none in the story. They are so jaded that women become equated as tokens in a game without rules, and hence without meaningful rewards. Lenehan's dream of a better life is centred on the hope of finding "some good simple-minded girl with a little of the ready."[20] It is no wonder that for such a dreamer (whose major skill is 'talking' it must be remembered) communication in words with a lover -- and love itself -- is imagined as nothing more sublime than a profitable verbal conquest.

"The Boarding House" tells the story of a union of lovers in Dublin. In the preceding stories the young men and women have

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[18] Ibid.

[19] Ibid., p. 62.

[20] Ibid., p. 70.

been unable to get together and share the words and gestures of love. The boy in "Araby" is shown at the height of youthful imaginative affection for a young woman. Love is for him a religion, but its potential beauty is sadly shattered. Never again in the book will a lover tremblingly murmur "O love! O love!"[21] or anything remotely like it. Eveline is afraid to love and Lenehan cannot even distinguish between love and money (which may be taken as the bottom of the decline from the incantation to love in "Araby"). Bob Doran and Polly Mooney illustrate what happens when timid and mercenary people do get together. Like the Dubliners in the stories before them they too are unable to talk to each other. Their love, as remembered with mixed feelings by Bob, is completely wordless. Hushed late dinners in the "sleeping house,"[22] hot punch prepared by Polly on cold, damp nights, tiptoing upstairs together, delirious kisses -- all these things come back to Bob, but no words. And their communication in the crisis they face is once again totally comprised of gestures. Neither Bob nor Polly say what is in their minds: his revealed fear and her implied satisfaction with a job well done. They both assume the role expected of them by society in the moment of truth:

> While he was sitting with her on the side of the bed Mary came to the door and said that the missus wanted to see him in the parlour. He stood up to put on his coat and waistcoat, more helpless than ever. When he was dressed he went over to her to comfort her. It would be all right, never fear. He left her crying on the bed and moaning softly: "O my God!"[23]

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[21] Ibid., p. 36.

[22] Ibid., p. 82.

[23] Ibid., p. 82.

They make ready for marriage -- "reparation" for both Mrs. Mooney and Bob,[24] and for Polly, "what she had been waiting for"[25] -- without ever having spoken one vital or true word to each other. For the Dubliners, who do not include meaningful talk in their dreams of love or their courtships, such a wordless, non-communal marriage is the logical culmination of a process of inarticulate relationships.

The next four stories continue to present people who cannot communicate to each other what really matters to them. The amount of talk is increased in these stories, especially in "A Little Cloud" and "Counterparts," but it is still talk of the same genus as the talk between Lenehan and Corley; that is, it is mostly monologue, or at best dialogue in which nothing important is shared. Little Chandler in "A Little Cloud" feels himself to be a poet, but he cannot express his 'poetic' moods in words. In fact, Chandler as a mute poet may be taken as a symbol of the Dubliners who are all sensitive but inarticulate people. His conversation with his old friend Ignatius Gallaher, who is visiting Dublin from London, is little more than a performance by Gallaher designed to impress the timorous Chandler. The would-be poet realizes this and it angers him because it seems unfair that anyone as vulgar as Gallaher should have achieved success, while he lives in mediocrity:

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[24] Ibid., pp. 78, 82.

[25] Ibid., p. 84.

> What was it that stood in his way? His unfortunate timidity! He wished to vindicate himself in some way, to assert his manhood. He saw behind Gallaher's refusal of his invitation. Gallaher was only patronising him by his friendliness, just as he was patronising Ireland by his visit.[26]

Chandler's conversation with his old friend has only served to make more acute his feeling of the hopeless failure of his life. Nothing has been exchanged; Chandler may as well have been to the theatre and seen a play that reminded him of his own situation. He goes home in a remorseful mood and is encountered there by his wife and child. Again he cannot say what he feels. Only when he is left alone with his infant son, and the baby has begun to cry, can he utter one vital word: a shouted "Stop!"[27] that frightens the child. His wife returns from the store and grabs the baby away from him in anger. He is unable to explain, and she speaks only to the infant. There is absolutely no verbal communication in Little Chandler's world. Neither is there in Farrington's world in "Counterparts." Yet his crowning achievement in the story is a spoken retort to his overbearing boss, who asks him, " 'Tell me . . . do you think me a fool? Do you think me an utter fool?' " to which he answers, unexpectedly and from his unbearable rage, " 'I don't think, sir, . . . that that's a fair question to put to me.' "[28] This incident is a major triumph for Farrington, because it gives him an excellent story to tell to his friends in the pub, where he goes immediately after work. By this time his retort has become a well-considered

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[26] Ibid., p. 99.

[27] Ibid., p. 104.

[28] Ibid., p. 112.

witticism in his mind, rather than the angry outburst it really was. His anecdote is received well, as is his generosity which their praise and laughter encourage. Again, friendship in Dublin has its price; people are useful rather than valuable to others. The exchange of laughter and flattery for free drinks is hardly communication.

In "Clay" and "A Painful Case" there are few spoken words. Rather, conversations are, for the most part, presented indirectly. Whether there is an intended implication in this method or not, a certain edge is taken off spoken words by summarizing them, and the inference is inevitable that these words are not worth relating in the story. Except for a general, " '<u>O, here's Maria</u>!' "[29] when she enters, a " 'Thanks, Maria,' " from the children for her gift of cakes (a thanks they are "made" to say, suggesting mildly that their excitement is not what it might be), and a " 'Do, please, Maria!' "[30] from Mrs. Donnelly urging her to sing, the conversation at the Donnelly's Hallow Eve party is totally summarized. This gives the effect that the talk is not really important, that it is superficial rather than in any way deeply significant to the talkers. In fact, a vital question causes only trouble and it is quickly smoothed over:

> . . . they sat by the fire talking over old times and Maria thought she would put in a good word for Alphy. But Joe cried that God might strike him stone dead if he ever spoke a word to his brother again and Maria said she was sorry she had mentioned the matter . . . . But Joe said he would not lose his

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[29] <u>Ibid.</u>, p. 128.

[30] <u>Ibid.</u>, p. 131.

> temper on account of the night it was and asked his wife to open some more stout.[31]

Talking over old times is a ritual that can be repeated as often as old friends get together. But it is like listening to a phonograph record: what is said is already complete. It is not a living, growing conversation. In talking over old times, a few words may change, but what is expressed is always the same, and it is complete. Joe's brother Alphy matters to Maria, because when they were boys she mothered them both; but Joe will not talk about it, he will not 'spoil' the party by breaking the phonograph-record-conversation, he will not exchange vital words with Maria. Ironically, the only meaningful words Maria gets to say are not her own, but those of the song she sings; and ironically, Joe is touched by her words, which bring back the past in a more living, important way than idle reminiscing ever could. Again, in "A Painful Case" the conversations between Mr. Duffy and Mrs. Sinico are summarized rather than presented directly, largely because, it might be suspected, they are not communicating when they talk to each other:

> Little by little he entangled his thoughts with hers. He lent her books, provided her with ideas, shared his intellectual life with her. She listened to all.[32]

He provides her with ideas and shares his intellectual life; he talks on this rarefied plane and she listens. But soon their meetings "emotionalized his mental life"[33] and he finds himself saying things which he can hardly understand:

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[31] Ibid., p. 130.

[32] Ibid., p. 137.

[33] Ibid., p. 138.

> . . . as he attached the fervent nature of his companion more and more closely to him, he heard the strange impersonal voice which he recognized as his own, insisting on the soul's incurable loneliness.[34]

By participating in Mr. Duffy's "mental life" Mrs. Sinico draws him into her emotional life. She has listened to his talk, the time comes for him to receive a vital expression from her, and this takes the form of a gesture of affection. But Mr. Duffy does not have Mrs. Sinico's sympathy; she has accepted the attempted communication of his intellectual vitality, but he cannot accept the attempted communication of what most matters to her. Words and gestures both fail, they fail to reach each other by mutual means, and they both remain alone.

In the next three stories the amount of talk is greatly increased, but there is still no significant verbal communication. "Ivy Day in the Committee Room" is almost all conversation, but the dialogue is most often back-to-back monologues. Each speaker has his own thing to say and he says it very well. But there is no real open-minded exchange of opinion. Each speaker takes the stage for a moment and says his part. He is followed by another speaker and another opinion. Even when arguing, the opposing men do not meet on any common ground; instead both combatants deliver speeches from their own castle-like seclusions. This can be seen in the argument about the two most important people in the story, both of them absent, Parnell and Edward VII; Mr. Lyons and Mr. Henchy are talking:

> "And what about the address to the King?" said

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[34] Ibid., pp. 138-39.

Mr. Lyons, after drinking and smacking his lips.

"Listen to me," said Mr. Henchy. "What we want in this country, as I said to old Ward, is capital. The King's coming here will mean an influx of money into this country. The citizens of Dublin will benefit by it. Look at all the factories down by the quays there, idle! Look at all the money there is in the country if we only worked the old industries, the mills, the shipbuilding yards and factories. It's capital we want."

"But look here, John," said Mr. O'Connor. "Why should we welcome the King of England? Didn't Parnell himself . . ."

"Parnell," said Mr. Henchy, "is dead."[35]

Clearly, neither Mr. Henchy nor Mr. Lyons (nor Mr. O'Connor who comes to his aid) is interested in what the other person is saying. Mr. Henchy gets to say more simply because he is more domineering ("Listen to me") than the other men, not because he makes more sense. Politics (especially Irish politics) is always susceptible to conversations of this kind, but the fact remains that Mr. Henchy is talking about the present with an eye to the future, while the other two men are talking about the present while recognizing tradition. Their failure to talk within a common frame of reference makes their conversation longwinded and insignificant. Mr. O'Connor calms things down finally by saying of Parnell, "We all respect him now that he's dead and gone."[36] Joe Hynes comes in and reads his poem, "The Death of Parnell," and the respect softens into nostalgia. Here the story ends with no exchange of ideas having been made (let alone agreement) for all the discussion and conversation.

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[35] Ibid., pp. 165-66.

[36] Ibid., p. 167.

Kathleen Kearney in "A Mother" gets to say only three words in the whole story, and even then she has to speak emphatically and in spite of her mother: "Now, Mr. Bell,"[37] she says to the singer she is supposed to accompany, and urges him onto the stage at the Antient Concert Rooms. She at least has this one opportunity to perform before her mother ruins her musical career by stubbornly arguing over money with Mr. Holohan and the other organizers of the concert. Mrs. Kearney is so insistent and the committee so surprised and vague that no agreement can be reached. Kathleen is replaced and the Kearney family is finally reduced to a pantomimic seene of rage:

> She stood at the door, haggard with rage, arguing with her husband and daughter, gesticulating with them . . . . She stood for an instant like an angry stone image . . . .[38]

What they are saying does not matter, for their words have absolutely no effect: Mrs. Kearney has failed to intimidate the committee, while feeling frustrated that she "can't get a civil answer"[39]; Mr. Kearney has nothing to say anyway; and most important of all, Kathleen has failed to assert herself and avoid the ruin that her mother has caused.

"Grace" is another story, like "Ivy Day in the Committee Room," that is comprised almost entirely of talk. But, like the talk about politics in the earlier story, the talk about religion in this story is mostly a succession of monologues. But one

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[37] Ibid., p. 185.

[38] Ibid., p. 188.

[39] Ibid.

person dominates the conversation, and there are no heated arguments. Martin Cunningham, who "was the very man for such a case"[40] as talking the intemperate Tom Kernan into going to a retreat, carries the conversation when he and his friends go to visit Mr. Kernan, who is convalescing after having (symbolically) bitten off part of his tongue while in a drunken stupor. Mr. Kernan cautiously tries to catch Martin Cunningham on a matter of theology:

> "Tell me, Martin," he said. "Weren't some of the popes -- of course not our present man, or his predecesor, but some of the old popes -- not exactly . . . you know . . . up to the knocker?"
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> There was a silence. Mr. Cunningham said:
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> "O, of course, there were some bad lots . . . . But the astonishing thing is this. Not one of them, not the biggest drunkard, not the most . . . out-and-out ruffian, not one of them ever preached ex cathedra a word of false doctrine. Now isn't that an astonishing thing?"
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> "That is," said Mr. Kernan.[41]

Martin Cunningham will not allow himself to be tripped up, and Mr. Kernan is, at any rate, too foggy in his thinking to contend for long with him. The plot of Mr. Cunningham and his friends to attempt to rehabilitate Mr. Kernan is successful, and the success is due largely to the former's talent for oratory: "Mr. Cunningham's words had built up the vast image of the church in the minds of his hearers."[42] But Mr. Kernan is not so much motivated by Mr. Cunningham's speeches about the church as he is by a desire to be in on what's happening, when he agrees to make a retreat. Once again, Mr. Cunningham's talk, and that of Mr. Power and Mr. McCoy, is a performance

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[40] Ibid., p. 199.

[41] Ibid., p. 214.

[42] Ibid., p. 216.

(after all, they are working on a plot), rather than a conversation in which an exchange of words communicates what lives within individual consciousnesses.

"The Dead," the last story of Dubliners, completes the cycle of tales about "the deadest among the living."[43] The cycle ends, as it has begun, with the subject of death. In this story the dead are finally faced. But this does not come until the end of a very long short story, and there is a great deal of typical Dublin talk leading up to it, during which a great deal is said, but nothing is communicated. The conversation at the Misses Morkan's party is lively and generally high-spirited, but it is mainly a social form. Even when the subject is an idle, but ominous, curiosity, there is a failure to exchange vital meanings. At the dinner table Mr. Browne is shocked to hear that a certain order of monks sleep in their coffins:

> He asked what they did it for.
>
> "That's the rule of the order," said Aunt Kate firmly.
>
> "Yes, but why?" asked Mr. Browne.
>
> Aunt Kate repeated that it was the rule, that was all. Mr. Browne seemed still not to understand. Freddy Malins explained to him as best he could, that the monks were trying to make up for the sins committed by all the sinners in the outside world. The explanation was not very clear for Mr. Browne grinned and said:
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> "I like that idea very much but wouldn't a comfortable spring bed do them as well as a coffin?"
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> "The coffin," said Mary Jane, "is to remind them of their last end."[44]

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[43] See p. 12.

[44] Dubliners, p. 258.

Sleeping in a coffin is symbolic and portentious of the truth about the Dubliners. Ironically, Mr. Browne does not understand, and at this point in the story, neither does anyone else. Gabriel Conroy speaks of the dead during his after-dinner speech, but they are only "those dead and gone great ones whose fame the world will not willingly let die."[45] This is rhetoric rather than poetry, and nostalgia rather than vision. His words do not communicate the truth of living, organic expression, or of poetry, the truth that is, in Wordsworth's words, ". . . carried alive into the heart by passion."[46] Rather, his words present a sentimental notion with well-turned phrasing to strengthen his listeners' idealized memories. His evocation of the dead is stylized rather than imaginative, and because of this he does not reach the deeper places of his listeners' understanding. No more than anyone else at the party does he communicate any vital meaning, and part of the reason is simply that he has not yet felt any vital truth about the dead in his own consciousness. But he is sensitive. Later, when he is alone with Gretta in their hotel room, he is very much alive: he wishes to communicate his sudden vitality to her. But he cannot speak:

> "Gretta!"
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> She turned away from the mirror slowly and walked along the shaft of light toward him. Her face looked so serious and weary that the words would not pass Gabriel's lips. No, it was not the moment yet.
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> "You looked tired," he said.
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> "I am a little," she answered.
>
> "You don't feel ill or weak?"
>
> "No, tired: that's all."

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[45] Ibid., p. 262.

[46] "Preface to the Second Edition . . . of 'Lyrical Ballads,' " p. 737.

She went on to the window and stood there, looking out. Gabriel waited again and then fearing that diffidence was about to conquer him, he said abruptly:

"By the way, Gretta!"

"What is it?"

"You know that poor fellow Malins?" he said quickly.

"Yes. What about him?"

"Well, poor fellow, he's a decent sort of chap, after all," continued Gabriel in a false voice. "He gave me back that sovereign I lent him, and I didn't expect it, really. It's a pity he wouldn't keep away from that Browne, because he's not a bad fellow, really."

He was trembling now with annoyance. Why did she seem so abstracted? He did not know how he could begin. Was she annoyed, too, about something? If she would only turn to him or come to him of her own accord! To take her as she was would be brutal. No, he must see some ardour in her eyes first. He longed to be master of her strange mood.

"When did you lend him the pound?" she asked, after a pause.

Gabriel strove to restrain himself from breaking out into brutal language about the sottish Malins and his pound. He longed to cry to her from his soul, to crush her body against his, to overmaster her. But he said:

"O, at Christmas, when he opened that little Christmas-card shop in Henry Street."[47]

This scene is the archetype of the inability of the Dubliners to communicate love. The speech-maker is utterly inarticulate when he faces his wife and aches to share his passionate feelings with her. And shortly after this, the truth about the dead is at last realized. The reason for Gretta's abstraction is the dead boy Michael Furey who has long ago died of love for her by recklessly waiting in the winter rain while sick to say farewell to his sweetheart who was leaving for Dublin. When Gretta tells the story,

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[47] Dubliners, pp. 278-79.

sobbingly, for the first and only time in Dubliners is a living truth from the underworld of the heart communicated in words. Gabriel then realizes the deeper meaning of death and life:

> One by one, they were all becoming shades. Better pass boldly into that other world, in the full glory of some passion, than fade and wither dismally with age.[48]

His wife's words have awoken in him the truth about his life and the lives of others in Dublin: that he has been sleeping in a coffin -- indeed, one of the "deadest among the living."

Inarticulateness is a condition of the Dubliners rather than a unifying pattern of the stories. The fact that these people cannot communicate with words the most vital and living things about their subterranean lives is not primarily symbolic, though it is of course emblematic of their isolation and loneliness; rather it is simply the form of the "paralysis" of Dublin. But structural and thematic patterns do affect what the Dubliners talk about and what they try to communicate. The amount of dialogue is gradually increased throughout the book in a roughly direct proportion. "The Sisters" contains some conversation, but it is reserved and restrained, and the most important parts of the story are disclosures of the boy's thinking. The next story with a lot of dialogue is "Two Gallants," but here, though the talk is more free, there is no attempt to discuss such important issues as the first story had done. There is a decline of both vitality and attempted communication from "The Sisters" and "Araby" to "Two Gallants," and this corresponds to the falling of adolescent hopefulness into disillusionment. "Two

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[48] Ibid., p. 287.

Gallants" establishes the kind of talk which has fallen to the lot of the inarticulate Dubliners, and which will continue to be used in maturity and public life. The frequency of dialogue increases throughout the stories of maturity and public life; significant issues are faced, but this time with a Lenehan-Corley, unfeeling style rather than the laborious but sensitive manner of Eliza of "The Sisters." By the time of "The Dead," conversation greatly outweighs introspection in the sheer bulk of words. The pattern of spoken words in the stories is simple, and it follows Joyce's design of "childhood, adolescence, maturity, and public life"[49]: the older people get, the more they talk, and the less they regard words as vital extensions of themselves. As words cease to be organic agents of communication, then communication itself dies. As the boy in "Araby" fears, words lose their communicative power by the end of adolescence, which is represented by Lenehan and Corley. In the conversation in "Two Gallants," and in any subsequent talk, about however significant a subject, nothing deeply meaningful is exchanged between the Dubliners (that is, of course, until Gretta's story to Gabriel).

The love-death theme is paramount in Dubliners. Love is of course what the people in the stories most want to communicate, and the dead cannot communicate, however deeply they love. That the Dubliners are dead in all but their bodies is implicit throughout the book and explicit in the last story. Death is introduced in "The Sisters" and love is introduced in "Araby:" each as an

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[49]See p.

inviting mystery. As the living dead go their rounds about Dublin, death does not concern them as much as love (or even politics, religion, and the arts which figure more and more in their lives as they grow older and more public-minded). Eveline, Lenehan, Bob Doran and Polly Mooney, James Duffy and Mrs. Sinico -- all these people want to love, but they remain locked in their own isolation, sleeping in their own coffins, because they cannot reach the person they would reach by either words or gestures. When the breakthrough does come, at the end, it is in a way tragic. Gabriel Conroy, who at the moment wishes desperately to communicate love to his wife, does share a subterranean truth with her, but ironically it is the truth about death. The mystery of love and death is finally revealed in the long-awaited communication: love in the narcotism of an inarticulate and indecisive Dublin is but a poor imitation of the (paradoxically) ever vital and powerful love of those who have spoken and acted, though now they are dead. When the dead speak more living words than those who are alive, something is wrong: namely, the inarticulateness of the Dubliners.

The inhabitants of Dublin cannot be left without mention of loquacious Leopold Bloom and some of the other Dubliners of Ulysses. That Bloom talks a great deal is one of his chief characteristics; and what he mostly talks about is 'scientific' explanations of almost every and almost any of the varied phenomena of life. As the narrator of the "Cyclops" incident in the saloon puts it:

> I declare to my antimacassar if you took up a straw from the bloody floor and you said to Bloom: Look at it, Bloom. Do you see that

> straw? That's a straw. Declare to my aunt he'd talk about it for an hour so he would and talk steady.[50]

And in Molly Bloom's words, "he never can explain a thing simply the way a body can understand it."[51] Bloom is a great talker, but he communicates very little to other people. Especially he cannot communicate love -- "that that is really life"[52] -- and this is what most matters to him. He worships women devoutly (as Molly says, "I liked him because I saw he understood or felt what a woman is"[53]), but he cannot share with them his deepest feelings, because words fail. The "Nausiicaa" [sic] incident, when Bloom abuses himself looking at the beauty of the slightly exhibitionistic Gerty MacDowell, symbolizes this inability to communicate. Later, in the "Circe" episode, the failure of words is lamented:

> BLOOM: (Shakes Cissy Caffrey's shoulders) Speak you! Are you struck dumb? You are the link between nations and generations. Speak, woman, sacred lifegiver.
> CISSY CAFFREY: Alarmed, seizes Private Carr's sleeve) Amn't I with you? Amn't I your girl? Cissy's your girl. (She cries) Police!
> STEPHEN: (Ecstatically, to Cissy Caffrey)
> White thy fambles, red thy gan
> And thy quarrons dainty is.
> VOICES: Police!
> DISTANT VOICES: Dublin's burning! Dublin's burning! On fire, on fire![54]

Bloom's desperate urgency reveals both his intense apotheosizing of womanhood and his realization that if a woman is in fact "the link between nations and generations," then words must be given to

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[50] *Ulysses*, p. 410.

[51] *Ibid.*, p. 893.

[52] *Ibid.*, p. 432.

[53] *Ibid.*, p. 932.

[54] *Ibid.*, p. 694.

her and received from her. But his insistency only frightens Cissy Caffrey (and amuses Stephen), and she calls for the police, while the distant voices cry out the fall of Dublin which this failure of speech symbolically causes, (and which is reminiscent of the refrain of Dante Gabriel Rossetti's "Troy Town" -- "O Troy's down,/Tall Troy's on fire!"[55] -- tying the incident in with the Odysseus theme).

Stephen Dedalus too feels the failure of words to communicate. Walking with Lynch (a favourite or favoured listener of Stephen's it would seem) in "nighttown" he flourishes his ashplant amid the sordidness surrounding them, "shivering the lamp image, shattering light over the world."[56] This repetition of Creation (in fact, a re-creation in the imagination) is followed by an explanation:

> So that gesture, not music, not odours, would be a universal language, the gift of tongues rendering visible not the lay sense but the first entelechy, the structural rhythm.

Instead of the "Let there be light"[57] and "In the beginning was the Word"[58] of Creation, Stephen substitutes (ironically) the gesture for the gift of tongues in his re-creation, indicating that the spoken word has lost a power it once had. A "universal language" of gesture may be all that Stephen feels is left to modern man, but he would wish for more. Later, in the brothel, his mother's ghost appears to him

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[55] Dante Gabriel Rossetti, "Troy Town" (from the Poems of 1870).

[56] Ulysses, p. 564.

[57] Genesis 1:3.

[58] John 1:1.

and he asks her, "Tell me the word, mother, if you know now. The word known to all men."[59] The word he wishes to hear from the dead is love. If love can be expressed in words then gesture need not replace the gift of tongues. But Stephen cannot communicate with his mother; nor with his spiritual father Bloom, who has lost his son. Stephen has dissociated himself from his own father, but he will not assume a filial relationship to Bloom, for he cannot communicate any better with him than he can with his own father. In the cab-shelter, over cups of coffee, they talk about Ireland (always a favourite topic in Dublin), and they cannot agree. Stephen ends by saying, "--We can't change the country. Let us change the subject."[60] If they cannot discuss Ireland meaningfully, then they cannot hope to communicate.

Finally, Molly Bloom does not say a word in the novel. She typifies the life of the Dubliners of Ulysses in that her words are not spoken, but run in a torrent through her mind. Bloom and Stephen too are most eloquent in their own thoughts. The Ulysses, Telemachus, and Penelope of modern times not only lack their ancestors' epic activities but also their epic verbal prowess -- though of course they do possess epic feelings, which are most important of all. But with neither the opportunity to act heroically, nor the ability to speak with imaginative significance the epic spirit of the Dubliners must go on suffering the frustration of not being fulfilled.

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[59] Ulysses, p. 682.

[60] Ibid., p. 748.

The inhabitants of Winesburg, Ohio are also inarticulate. Throughout the book person after person attempts to communicate with another human being, and time after time words fail them. When words well up from the depths of a suffering, lonely resident of Winesburg, they cannot be said, or if the words are uttered, no one listens. Words growing out the underground springs of vitality seldom pass into the open air, and when they do, they most often die in the too rarefied atmosphere: never do they sink into the underworld of another person and remain alive. The inarticulateness of the people of Winesburg, Ohio has long been noticed -- in its most obvious manifestations at least. A brief notice in Dial upon the appearance of the book called the stories ". . . interrelated studies of half-articulate people who do not know what they want."[61] In later years, these "half-articulate" people have been examined more closely. John C. Mahoney emphasized the lack of conversation in the book, stating that ". . . the peculiar effect of the stories in Winesburg, Ohio is due in large part to the fact that the speeches in the stories are essentially soliloquies."[62] Edwin Fussell, who would not agree with Mahoney that "the role of George Willard . . . is nothing more, essentially, than to be a good listener,"[63] has seen George Willard as an artist and the other members of Winesburg as the inarticulate society: "Each in turn comes forward to offer his secret (the

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[61]"Books of the Fortnight," Dial, LXVI (June 28, 1919), 666.

[62]John C. Mahoney, "An Analysis of Winesburg, Ohio," Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism, XV (December 1956), 250.

[63]Ibid., 249.

material of art) and to give up whatever fragmentary wisdom he possesses toward the development of the artist who will be the spokesman for everyone."[64] Finally, Glen A. Love has commented on the "lack of verbal communication between characters"[65] in the book, emphasizing the contrast between the communication of words and that of "non-words" or "purposeful silence."[66] That the residents of Winesburg, Ohio have difficulty expressing themselves in words is evident, but they are not simply "half-articulate," nor simply fond of soliloquizing (and not too fond of listening), nor simply disposed towards silence rather than words: they are all (even the 'artist' George Willard) inarticulate in that they (like the Dubliners) cannot reach each other's deepest lives with words. And this is calamitous, for without the ability to speak what they feel, these people are destined for loneliness and despair no matter how fervently they seek "adventure."

The inarticulateness is everywhere. In "Mother" George Willard and his mother Elizabeth attempt to talk about something they both feel secretly and cannot express. The tension that leads to Elizabeth's thoughts of murdering her husband (who has spoken to George "as though an understanding existed between them"[67]) is an outgrowth of this lack of understanding between her and her son. Her first spoken words in the story are a whispered prayer: " 'I will take any blow that may befall me if but this my boy be allowed

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[64] Edwin Fussell, "Winesburg, Ohio: Art and Isolation," Modern Fiction Studies, VI (Summer 1960), 110.

[65] Glen A. Love, "Winesburg, Ohio and the Rhetoric of Silence," American Literature, XL (March 1968), 52.

[66] Ibid., 56.

[67] Winesburg, Ohio, p. 41.

to express something for us both.' "[68] The something that she feels they share, " 'the thing I let be killed in myself,' "[69] is an imaginative love of life which should naturally be fulfilled in "some big definite movement,"[70] or in another, common Andersonian, word -- adventure. Elizabeth feels that Winesburg and her husband have caged this energy within her until it has died, and it is to protect George from having the same experience that she grabs her sewing scissors in a plot of vengeance. It is all a misunderstanding; if she and George could only talk about the thing inside, she would know that he indeed does share it with her and that he is not influenced by his father's practical advice. In the end George comes to his mother's room and tells her that he feels he must " 'go away and look at people and think.' "[71] This pleases his mother because she fears he wishes to go away simply to make money. The need to brood upon life, she instinctively knows, is the first step in a liberated use of the imagination. But she still cannot speak:

> In the room the silence became unbearable to the woman. She wanted to cry out with joy because of the words that had come from the lips of her son, but the expression of joy had become impossible to her. "I think you had better go out among the boys. You are too much indoors," she said. "I thought I would go for a little walk," replied the son stepping awkwardly out of the room and closing the door.[72]

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[68] Ibid., p. 37.

[69] Ibid., p. 40.

[70] Ibid., p. 42.

[71] Ibid., p. 44.

[72] Ibid.

The story ends with an understanding, but no real communication. The closing speeches of mother and son are repetitions of a stylized routine -- almost a ritual -- that is familiar to them and that has replaced living words that could keep alive the thing they share without the constant heartbreak of suspicion and misunderstanding.

Doctor Parcival, in "The Philosopher," is a talker, but he amazes his listener, George Willard, rather than enlightening him. Like all the Winesburg grotesques, he has a secret "truth"[73] living (or dying) deep within him and his most anxious desire is to make someone else understand. He seeks out George Willard, because he feels (like Elizabeth Willard and several other residents of Winesbrug) that the young man too has the inner, gnawing feeling. This young man, he thinks, might find the words to release the unknown truth of his life to the world. But George Willard does not understand. He listens to Doctor Parcival, but the old man's story does not take shape in his youthful imagination:

> The tales that Doctor Parcival told George Willard began nowhere and ended nowhere. Sometimes the boy thought they must be all inventions, a pack of lies. And then again he was convinced that they contained the very essence of truth.[74]

George broods upon the related experience of life but he does not re-create it into the meaning of realization, much less into the meaning of communicative words. But the doctor hopes that he will, and the story ends with the doctor revealing his truth and saying, " '. . . perhaps you will be able to write the book that I may never get written.' "[75]

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[73] Ibid., pp. 23-24; (See pp. (50-51).

[74] Ibid., p. 47.

[75] Ibid., p.52

"Godliness" is a long story without George Willard. The principal characters are a grandfather, a daughter, and a grandson, none of whom understands or talks meaningfully with the others. Jesse Bentley, who wishes to be an Old Testament man of God, on the night of his daughter's birth runs through the fields of his farm praying for a son. Throughout the story he talks only in prayer, completely neglecting his daughter, and seeing his grandson only as a token in his lifelong scheme to have a son like the Biblical David. "The old thing in him"[76] drives him blindly in his world in which only he and God exist vitally, and other human beings are only minor actors in the great drama. His "truth" makes him totally inarticulate as far as other people are concerned. Rejected by her father, Louise Bentley feels absolutely isolated. But she does find courage enough to write down on a piece of paper the meaning of the energetic impulse within her secret being (and it is the most common subterrenean force in Winesburg): " 'I want someone to love me and I want to love someone.' "[77] Passing this note to John Hardy, she then waits. Soon they come together and eventually are married, after a courtship of gestures rather than words. After the marriage, she attempts to talk, but it is no use:

> All during the first year Louise tried to make her husband understand the vague and intangible hunger that had led to the writing of the note and that was still unsatisfied. Again and again she crept into his arms and tried to talk of it, but always without success. Filled with his own notions of love between men and women,

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[76] Ibid., p. 72.

[77] Ibid., p. 85.

> he did not listen but began to kiss her upon the lips.[78]

The living thing within still cannot find release and she becomes so depressed that she simply resigns herself to isolation. Even her son David does not ease the torment, for she cannot talk with him either. Only once is there communication between them: he has run away from home and on his return he finds his mother in the house alone; she comforts him with murmured endearments: "On and on went her voice. It was not harsh or shrill as when she talked to her husband, but was like rain falling on trees."[79] Louise's most eloquent words in a lifetime of inarticulateness are not given by Anderson. Instead he links her voice with the rain (implying the giving of life[80]) and the wordless ministrations of nature. The buried energy within her flows forth as a living force, and Anderson's deliberate refusal to give the reader her words suggests that her voice speaks more in animal sounds than in recognizable language. To David, his mother is transformed into another woman by her voice -- a woman much more lovely and gentle than the mother he has always known. Again, at the opposite extreme, Jesse Bentley, whom David has always known as a kind old man, is transformed before the boy by his wildly insistent callings upon God when the two have gone out into the country together:

> He did not believe that the man who turned up his face and in a harsh voice shouted at the sky was his grandfather at all. The man did not look like

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[78] Ibid., p. 87.

[79] Ibid., p. 70.

[80] Cf. Alice Hindman's "adventure" in the rain; see p.53 .

> his grandfather. The conviction that something strange and terrible had happened, that by some miracle a new and dangerous person had come into the body of the kindly old man, took possession of him.[81]

The thing that scares David in his grandfather is the same thing that has awed him in his mother: the "truth" or secret impulse that dwells down deep in the unseen, unheard regions of a person. His mother's imaginative energy is beautiful to him and his grandfather's is frightening, but that is all that they have communicated to him. Their words have conveyed to him only two separate moods, or clouds -- one light and one dark; they have not conveyed the clarity of bright light (to continue the metaphor for purposes of distinction) that is needed for an understanding that can be grasped by the intellect. This is the heritage of young David Hardy, a 'modern' resident of Winesburg. With two generations of inarticulate people in his background, it is little wonder that for him the gesture (running away) has replaced the gift of tongues.

Joe Welling in "A Man of Ideas" is another talker; but while Doctor Parcival is selective, choosing only George Willard for a listener, Joe Welling is indiscriminate about whom he talks to:

> He was like a tiny little volcano that lies silent for days and then suddenly spouts fire. No, he wasn't like that -- he was like a man subject to fits . . . . He was beset by ideas and in the throes of one of his ideas was uncontrollable. Words rolled and tumbled from his mouth.[82]

Indeed, Joe Welling is a little volcano who erupts with the underground imaginative force of ideas and overflows with the lava of hot

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[81] Winesburg, Ohio, p. 78.

[82] Ibid., p. 94.

uncontrollable (mostly incoherent) words. But for all his talk, he too is inarticulate. The fact that his "truth" sometimes emits words from beneath the surface, does not mean that he has the power to communicate with others. His words have not been tempered and shaped before they escape him; the strength of his buried energy simply forces them into the open air before they are ready and they fall only to the surface of his listener, and remain there cooling, as if they were curious half-formed fragments of subvolcanic stone. But a volcano erupting is something rare to be seen, and Joe Welling always has the power of dumbfounding his listeners, whether on the baseball field or when talking to the mean and inarticulate father and brother of the woman he has been walking about with. Joe Welling's one predominant characteristic is his ability to spout words, yet he says nothing with organic meaning.

Alice Hindman, in "Adventure," at the age of sixteen, with the imaginative strength of youth, speaks of her subterranean desire to her lover Ned Currie, asking him to take her with him away from Winesburg. She succeeds, for he understands and is touched by her words. He determines to preserve the purity of her love, but youthful courage and determination is not enough when they meet on the eve of his departure: "The moon came up and they found themselves unable to talk."[83] Instead they make love. Having once voiced her strongest impulse, she speaks no more to anyone else. All her years of waiting for Ned to return are silent. The only words she utters are in prayers

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[83] Ibid., p. 104.

that she will not be left alone, such as her words on the night of her "adventure:"

> . . . she could not sleep. With staring eyes she looked into the darkness. Her imagination, like a child awakened from long sleep, played about the room. Deep within her there was something that would not be cheated by phantasies and that demanded some definite answer from life.
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> Alice took a pillow into her arms and held it tightly against her breasts. Getting out of bed, she arranged a blanket so that in the darkness it looked like a form lying between the sheets and, kneeling beside the bed, she caressed it, whispering words over and over, like a refrain. "Why doesn't something happen? Why am I left here alone?" she muttered.[84]

This is a typical Winesburg scene. Alice's "truth," here openly called her imagination, cries out for an answer to her loneliness; but the words (which are, in effect, the same ones Louise Bentley writes on her note) are uttered in an empty room with no one even to hear, much less to understand; and she (like everyone in Winesburg) hears no answer. Her imagination is so strong, however, that it drives her outdoors naked into the rain, but still there is no answer. Ironically, the man she calls to on the sidewalk is partially deaf and does not even hear the voice of her loving impulse, and the implication is that no one in Winesburg can hear.

Seth Richmond, in "The Thinker," despises talk, for he can never find anything to say himself. He and George Willard are friends, but he regards George as a fool. When George asks him to tell Helen White that he is in love with her, Seth is furious, for he himself thinks he loves her. George, he feels, is only superficial

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[84] Ibid., p. 109.

in his thoughts and emotions:

> A wave of resentment directed against his friend, the men of the town who were, he thought, perpetually talking of nothing, and most of all, against his own habit of silence, made Seth desperate. "Aw, speak to her yourself," he burst forth and then, going quickly through the door, slammed it sharply in his friend's face.[85]

He seeks out Helen White to talk to her himself, but when he finds her, he cannot express the tender feeling he has for her. Instead he tells her of his resolution to leave Winesburg and his impatience with the people of the town and their constant talking. In the end he is sorry he has said anything, for he knows she did not understand the restlessness within him, which he feels will never be understood:

> "She'll be embarrassed and feel strange when I'm around," he whispered to himself. "That's how it'll be. That's how everything'll turn out. When it comes to loving someone, it won't never be me. It'll be someone else -- some fool -- someone who talks a lot -- someone like that George Willard."[86]

Seth Richmond's buried vitality of ideas, which he cannot express in words, is one more "truth" that destroys its habitation because it is restrained from passing naturally into the larger world of communication.

Reverend Curtis Hartman, in "The Strength of God," is another inarticulate Winesburg townsman with an underground force striving to make itself heard and understood. Though he is a preacher, he worries about his ability to communicate the truth of

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[85] Ibid., pp. 124-25.

[86] Ibid., p. 131.

God to others. Because he worries, he goes to the bell tower of the church late on Saturday evenings to pray. One night he sees Kate Swift, the school teacher, in her bedroom next door, and is shocked to see her smoking a cigarette. The next morning, during his sermon, all he can think of is the woman of 'sin,' and he preaches as he has never done before:

> The sermon attracted unusual attention because of its power and clearness. "I wonder if she is listening, if my voice is carrying a message into her soul," he thought and began to hope that on future Sunday mornings he might be able to say words that would touch and awaken the woman apparently far gone in secret sin.[87]

Reverend Hartman's "truth" is his desire to be a great bearer of the message of God, and his struggle to keep from secretly looking upon Kate Swift's body is seemingly a struggle to keep alive that truth. But in the end the two desires merge as he sees the naked woman praying, and when he bursts in on George Willard late at night in the Winesburg Eagle office and tells his story (without bothering to wait for an answer), he believes his faith and his desire to be a messenger have been renewed. Ironically, when he tries to explain his message, George Willard (who is already in a puzzled mood) is completely baffled and thinks that the minister has lapsed into insanity.

The next story, "The Teacher," explains George's puzzled mood: the reason is that he has recently had several conversations with Kate Swift, and he has not understood what she has been saying to him. She believes that he might possibly have a talent for writing and she wishes to aid him with what she considers to be

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[87] Ibid., pp. 137-38.

crucial advice about writing. What she most wants to communicate to George is the secret meaning of her own most vital feeling, but her advice is actually the truth about all the Winesburg "truths:"

> "If you are to become a writer you'll have to stop fooling with words," she explained. "It would be better to give up the notion of writing until you are better prepared. Now it's time to be living . . . . You must not become a mere peddlar of words. The thing to learn is to know what people are thinking about, not what they say."[88]

What people are thinking about and not what they say is a genuine dichotomy in Winesburg (as it is in Dublin), for Kate Swift and her neighbours seldom say what they are thinking about, or if they do attempt to do so (as Kate Swift is doing here), no one understands what they are talking about. George Willard tries to understand. That tempestuous night after he has gone home, he broods upon the chaos of her and Reverend Hartman's statements, but he cannot forge them into meaning in his imagination. " 'I have missed something,' "[89] he laments to himself, but the fact that he has tried to understand and re-create is a great step in his development as a writer, for it is the first time in the book that he has realized that there may be a buried meaning beneath all the stories that the grotesques of Winesburg have been telling him.

In "An Awakening," George Willard's experience in the alley behind the day labourers' houses, wherein he is overcome with a desire to be in harmony with the order of nature as signified by

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[88] Ibid., p. 150.

[89] Ibid., p. 153.

the motion of the stars,[90] gives rise in him to an urge to understand the meaning of both life and the words that Kate Swift has told him he has been using idly and carelessly:

> The desire to say words overcame him and he said words without meaning, rolling them over on his tongue and saying them because they were brave words, full of meaning. "Death," he muttered, "night, the sea, fear loveliness."[91]

The brave words encourage him to believe that he has been initiated into the mystery of life, and he seeks out Belle Carpenter with a new-found confidence in his powers of persuasion and his dignity.

His elation leads him into a comic situation:

> Belle Carpenter did not resist. When he kissed her upon the lips she leaned heavily against him and looked over his shoulder into the darkness. In her whole attitude there was a suggestion of waiting. Again, as in the alleyway, George Willard's mind ran off into words and, holding the woman tightly he whispered the words into the still night. "Lust," he whispered, "lust and night and women."[92]

The words he whispers to Belle Carpenter are not from the depths of his own consciousness, but are conventional 'big' words which he mistakes for the agents of meaning. He is still peddling words, though admittedly he is now aware of the power of words and the living meanings they may convey. But instead of opening the resources of his own underworld, he relies on the standard meanings of standard words off the surface of his mind to express his growing sureness of the value and hopefulness of life. But he still does not

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[90] See pp. 47, 52.

[91] Winesburg, Ohio, pp. 170-71.

[92] Ibid., p. 173.

understand; he is still brooding. The final touch of the little comedy comes when Ed Handby appears on the scene and, unable and unwilling to put what he feels into words, promptly thrashes George at the height of his raptured eloquence and claims the waiting Belle Carpenter for his own.

In "The Untold Lie" Ray Pearson, a middle-aged farm hand, and Hal Winters, his young working companion, share a moment of understanding, and words of communication almost flow between them. Hal Winters tells Ray Pearson that he got a young woman 'in trouble' and asks for the older man's advice. Ray has just been thinking of his own forced marriage and knows what is going on in the younger man's mind. Their "truths" are sympathetic and identical: they both have a common feeling and a common knowledge. But they cannot connect their ideas with words and attempt to solve the problem of the agony that these buried forces are causing them. Ray cannot reply to Hal's question; he finds himself completely inarticulate:

> He . . . walked straight away toward the barn. He was a sensitive man and there were tears in his eyes. He knew there was only one thing to say to Hal Winters, son of old Windpeter Winters, only one thing that all his own training and all the beliefs of the people he knew would approve, but for his life he couldn't say what he knew he should say.[93]

Ray goes home to his wife (and six children), but when he meets her on the path and they walk silently toward the house, the beauty of the autumn day, the same beauty that had earlier awoken in him memories of his youth and his marriage, overcomes him and he suddenly wants to

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[93] Ibid., p. 189.

"shout or scream or hit his wife with his fists or something equally unexpected and terrifying."[94] His simmering sensitivity to the beauty of life rebels against the smothering ugliness of circumstance. His wife sends him to town for supplies, and on the way he explodes, shouting as he runs through the fields, now on his way to catch Hal:

> "There was no promise made," he cried into the empty spaces that lay about him. "I didn't promise my Minnie anything and Hal hasn't made any promise to Nell. I know he hasn't. She went into the woods with him because she wanted to go. What he wanted she wanted. Why should I pay. Why should Hal pay? Why should anyone pay?[95]

But when he reaches Hal, he cannot tell him what he has shouted to the fields, and ironically Hal tells him never to mind with advice, because he has decided he wants to marry Nell. On the way back, Ray thinks of the good times he has had with his family, and decides that any words he might have used in an attempt to release his deepest feelings would have failed anyway. Though it is sometimes possible in Winesburg to have an understanding without an exchange of words, the truth of the thing shared is frozen by this kind of insight (in fact, it becomes a "truth"). To keep the understood thing alive, the communication of words is needed. This is what the people of Winesburg lack, for when the truth of an underground vital impulse becomes a restrained and covered "truth," words are always in danger of becoming lies. The words of communication must spring up from the very wells of vitality, for the words on the surface are merely floating relics.

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[94] Ibid.

[95] Ibid., p. 190.

In "Death" and "Sophistication" George Willard matures. Throughout the earlier stories he has been ingesting the life of Winesburg; he has opened the doors of his imagination and taken in many stories and many impressions, which he has not been able to comprehend as meaningful, but upon which he has been ruminating. Finding the meaning within his own mind's resource is his coming of age as a possible writer. His mother's death (which symbolically comes at the end of six days of speechless paralysis during which she desperately tries to tell George of the money she has hidden for him) is the event of which he first has some understanding, vague though it is. In the death-room with his mother's body, George is at first half-annoyed because her ultimely death has prevented him from seeing Helen White that evening, but the longer he stays the more he realizes the importance of the situation; especially when he looks at the body:

> The body under the sheets was long and in death looked young and graceful. To the boy, held by some strange fancy, it was unspeakably lovely. The feeling that the body before him was alive, that in another moment a lovely woman would spring out of the bed and confront him, became so overpowering that he could not bear the suspense.[96]

He cannot face the finality of death. Rather, he sees the future -- a young woman -- emerging from the death of the past. He does not understand that the future and the past are linked, that the young woman he imagines under the shroud is both a future girlfriend and the youth of his own mother. He only knows, as he hurries into the

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[96] Ibid., p. 212.

hall, " 'That's not my mother. That's not my mother in there.' " He does not understand what he imagines, but the basic fact of the loss that is death is realized.

Elizabeth Willard's death akes place in the early spring of George's eighteenth year. His "moment of sophistication"[97] comes in the autumn of the same year. This at last is the time when all the chaotic impressions of Winesburg life have fused into a meaning that rises from within his own mind. The truth is sudden and sad:

> Suddenly something happens; he stops under a tree and waits for a voice calling his name. Ghosts of old things creep into his consciousness; the voices outside of himself whisper a message concerning the limitations of life. From being quite sure of himself and his future he becomes not at all sure. If he be an imaginative boy a door is torn open and for the first time he looks out upon the world . . . .[98]

The door that is torn open is the furnace door of the imagination. What is apprehended is the world outside the self -- life in abstraction -- as beheld by a vision tempered by the smoldering fires of imagination. For George Willard the truth he now sees about Winesburg is that he (like everyone else) is "merely a leaf blown by the wind through the streets of his village."[99] Now that his imagination has finally freed him from the cloud of bewilderment about the grotesques that surround him, he seeks out Helen White for he wishes to communicate his sudden vision to her. The same

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[97] Ibid., p. 216.

[98] Ibid., p. 215.

[99] Ibid.

thing has been happening to her and, going to the empty Fairground, they embrace and understand each other. But not a word is said. They share a "spell"[100] which their new-found "sophistication" casts over them by contemplating the ghosts that surround them in the darkness and realizing that they too are windblown beings. Just to be together is enough to communicate their love for each other, and after a little they go home "chastened and purified by the mood they had been in."[101] They have joined their imaginations and communicated a feeling by the harmony of their moods; but it is a momentary union of impulses and runs the risk of being frozen into a memory, because, without words, they lack the power to continue the communication:

> For a moment during the walk back into town the spell that held them was broken. Whey they had come to the crest of Waterworks Hill they stopped by a tree and George again put his hands on the girl's shoulders. She embraced him eagerly and then again they drew quickly back from that impulse. They stopped kissing and stood a little apart. Mutual respect grew big in them. They were both embarrassed and to relieve their embarrassment dropped into the animalism of youth.[102]

Once the mood is in danger of dissolving, they cannot keep alive the communication between them, simply because they are inarticulate when it comes to speaking of vital things. Earlier, in the summer, George had walked out with Helen and tried to tell her of his ambitions, but he failed to explain his feelings. Then on the autumn night at the Fairground they find the way into each other's deepest

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[100] Ibid., p. 221.

[101] Ibid., pp. 222-23.

[102] Ibid., p. 222.

affections, without speaking a word. "Man or boy, woman or girl, they had for a moment taken hold of the thing that makes the mature life of men and women in the modern world possible."[103] The thing they take hold of is the power of the imagination to see the meaning of life so clearly that its truth is felt as well as known, and so strongly that when two people share it there is communication. The implication is that this silent union of imaginative moods is the only communication possible in the modern world and that words have lost their power to unite the underground streams of people's lives.

There is no pattern of inarticulateness in Winesburg, Ohio; everybody in the book is inarticulate in the same basic way: they all have a desire in the underworld of their lives to reach out to another person and share the vitality of this impulse, and they are all unable to translate this force into the words that would empower them to make this communication. Many of these people do talk profusely, but no one understands them. Doctor Parcival, Joe Welling, and the people who talk to George about themselves try to put what they feel into words, but George does not understand. And neither does any other listener in Winesburg, where everybody is like the deaf man Alice Hindman shouts to in the fever and agony of her imaginative impulse. Words always fail to communicate in Winesburg, for they are almost never grasped; and if they are (as are Alice Hindman's words to Ned Currie or Hal Winters' to Ray Pearson), they are never answered in equally powerful words by the listener. The underground forces -- the "truths" -- that try to get expressed in words are of two basic sorts: first, and most insistent, is the

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[103] Ibid., p. 223.

urge to unite in love with another person, of which Louise Bentley's words " 'I want someone to love me and I want to love someone' "[104] (which she can write but cannot say) is a prototype; and second is the urge to communicate ideas of the world-view magnitude, such as Doctor Parcival's excited statement (which is not understood by George Willard) that " '. . . everyone in the world is Christ and they are all crucified.' "[105] The people of Winesburg have something to say, they are sensitive to the most meaningful things in life, they have the sweetness of the twisted apples,[106] but they are twisted in such a way that they cannot say what they feel so deeply.

Though there is no design of inarticulateness, which is like a blanket rather than a mosaic, in the book, there is a pattern involving words: this is the growth of George into maturity as a young man and as a writer. As Edwin Fussell put it:

> . . . Winesburg composes as a Bildungsroman of a rather familiar type the "portrait of the artist as a young man" in the period immediately preceding his final discovery of métier.[107]

Winesburg, Ohio presents the development of the artistic temper in George Willard as an awakening of the imagination and a realization of a responsible artistic use of words. Throughout the stories George is a rather glib and easy talker, but his words have only superficial importance. In "A Mother," Elizabeth Willard hears him talking to himself and is pleased to think that he is struggling

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[104] See pp. 50-51.

[105] Winesburg, Ohio, p. 52.

[106] See pp. 50-51.

[107] Edwin Fussell, "Winesburg, Ohio: Art and Isolation," 108.

with an internal vitality: " 'He is not a dull clod, all words and smartness.' "[108] It is true George does have sensitivity, but his talk is (ironically) all words and smartness. During his first adventure with Louise Trunnion in "Nobody Knows," in the moment of decision, "A flow of words burst from George Willard."[109] All meaningless words, it might be added. Actually, it is no wonder that Seth Richmond thinks that George is only a foolish talker. But with Kate Swift's advice about words (and a simultaneous growth of his imaginative process to realize that the life of his neighbours is more than merely a matter of curiosity), George Willard realizes that he has been careless in his use of words. His amusing grandiloquence in "An Awakening" is his first attempt to discover the most meaning that he can in words to correspond with his awakened sense of the immensity of life. But when his imagination finally sees the significance of his life, he can find no words to communicate the meaning. The union between Helen and him is speechless. Of course, here he is not writing, but he is using his imagination to re-create the chaos of Winesburg and the world, and the images of meaning in his mind do not become the words of meaning on his tongue. If Helen were not in the same state of mind, there could be no communication between them. Appropriately for the community of Winesburg, the only union of two streams of vitality to take place there is wordless and momentary.

It should be mentioned that just as the plight of the Dubliners is consistent in Joyce's fiction, so the inarticulateness of

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[108] Winesburg, Ohio, p. 40.

[109] Ibid., p. 55.

the Midwestern townsman is consistent in Anderson's fiction. Winesburg, Ohio is undoubtedly the most artistic presentation of such a town and such people in Anderson's writing, but it presents by no means the only inarticulate small town re-created by his imagination. Words and the inability to say them are a major concern of most of the characters and most of his fiction. A few representative instances will suffice to show how many of his characters might easily have lived in Winesburg, Ohio. As the painter LeRoy in "Seeds" from The Triumph of the Egg says, regarding an inarticulate woman from Iowa who has lived in the same boarding house with him: " 'To be sure she is a grotesque, but then all the people in the world are grotesques. We all need to be loved.' "[110] In the same book, Anderson puts into the mind of Rosiland Westcott in "Out of Nowhere Into Nothing" an elaborate realization of the origin and importance of words:

> A new world of thought had opened itself before her. After all human beings might be understood. It might be possible to understand her mother and her mother's life, her father, and the man she loved, herself. There was the voice that said words. Words came forth from lips. They conformed, fell into a certain mold. For the most part the words had no life of their own. They had come down out of old times and many of them were no doubt once strong living words coming out of the depths of people, out of the bellies of people. The words had escaped out of a shut-in place. They had once expressed living truth. Then they had gone on being said, over and over, by the lips of many people, endlessly, wearily.[111]

Here it is explained in a manner almost too explicit, too theoretical for fiction that words must originate in the subterranean

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[110] The Triumph of the Egg, p. 23.

[111] Ibid., pp. 196-97.

regions of the imagination, in "the bellies of people"-- an image suggesting depth and vitality -- if they are to express "living truth," instead of merely tiring both the tongue and ear with archaic dead meaning. The people in Winesburg, Ohio and elsewhere in Anderson's world never realize this fact, or if they do, they remain silent rather than attempting to call up words from the depths of their consciousness.

Rosiland Westcott's own moment of communication with Walter Sayers is mostly silent, until he begins to sing, and "It was for her a moment of triumph. He had crept up to her out of a dark place, out of the dark cave of defeat. It had been her hand reached down that had given him courage."[112] Again, in The Triumph of the Egg, Mary Cochran and her father Doctor Cochran of Huntersburg, Illinois in the story "Unlighted Lamps" cannot talk to each other, mainly because Doctor Cochran has never used words to express what most matters to him. Because of his seeming insensitivity his wife has left him, and now that he knows he is about to die, he wonders about his failure to speak to his wife and to his daughter: "I told myself she should have understood without words and I've all my life been telling myself the same thing about Mary. I've been a fool and a coward."[113] Most of Anderson's Midwestern townsmen feel that people should understand the most important things about them without words to explain, and they reserve the use of speech for idle amiability. Such people are inarticulate when the need to express the deepest

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[112] Ibid., pp. 250-51.

[113] Ibid., p. 85.

meanings of their experiences comes upon them, and the people who cannot even engage in the town chatter are all the more shut off from 'life.' Such a person is Hugh McVey in Poor White:

> An alert talkative people saw among them one who could not talk and whose long face was habitually serious, and could not think of him as having daily to face the same kind of minor problems as themselves.[114]

One who could not talk is a phrase that might describe any of Anderson's grotesques, and in Winesburg, Ohio, in Willow Springs, Iowa, in Huntersburg, Illinois -- or in any Midwest town where Anderson takes the reader -- such sensitive and tortured people may be found.

Both James Joyce and Sherwood Anderson have peopled their communities of Dublin and Winesburg, Ohio with inarticulate people. The residents of these communities are every one of them lonely and isolated in the shells of their own bodies, particularly in their skulls which house imaginations bubbling with love and ideas having their roots down along the veins and nerves of the entire sensible body. The reason for their loneliness is simply that these people are unable to voice these inner impulses and escape their shells by the communication of words with another sensitive individual. But both Joyce and Anderson give the reader communities too comprehensive and integral to eliminate the talkers of Dublin and Winesburg: without Martin Cunningham and Joe Welling there would be something missing. Yet these two people blend in with the total scheme of inarticulateness, because their words have only superficial value. Regardless of the amount of talk in any of the stories of either

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[114] Poor White, pp. 178-79.

Dubliners or Winesburg, Ohio, there is never any communication concerning the most meaningful, vital interests of the residents, such as the need to love and be loved and the meanings of both life and death; that is, except for Gretta's story in "The Dead" and George Willard and Helen White's reverie in "Sophistication," both at the end of the respective books. Here is a good place to point out that there are naturally differences in Joyce's and Anderson's presentations of their inarticulate people. A major difference is that, for the most part the Dubliners do not utter a word about their buried desires and most of their talking is a ritual-like performance (such as Maria and Joe Donnelly "talking over old times" or Mr. Henchy speechmaking about Parnell and Edward VII), while quite often the people of Winesburg attempt to communicate their impulses in words only to be met with a blank wall of bewilderment (as when Reverend Curtis Hartman declares his discovery to the baffled George Willard or when Louise Bentley attempts to communicate with her insensitive husband). In other words, Joyce emphasizes the inability of his people to talk about vital matters, while Anderson emphasizes the difficulty not only of speaking out but also of finding sympathetic understanding for words once they are uttered. This difference is connected organically with another difference between the people of Dublin and the people of Winesburg: the Dubliners' old world (and indoor) cultural heritage and the people of Winesburg's new world (and outdoor) lack of tradition.[115] The effects of these backgrounds account somewhat for the behaviour of the people in Dublin

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[115] See p. 56.

and Winesburg within the framework of manners and morals, and part of this behaviour is how they talk. The difference is the Dubliners are more conscious of the social significance of what they say (hence their loquacity on the subjects of religion, politics, and the arts) and are reluctant to say what is boiling up inside them -- Little Chandler is a good example -- while the people in Winesburg, who do not regard social conventions so seriously, do not have this weight upon the volcanoes of their minds and find it easier to break through into words, though they meet with no more success than do the Dubliners. This also accounts for the more sensational actions of the people in Winesburg (it is difficult to conceive of a woman in Dublin running into the street naked or a mother grasping a pair of sewing scissors in a plot to kill her husband). A final difference is the isolated instance of communication in each book. Gretta Conroy finds the words and her husband the sympathetic understanding for the communication of truth to flow between them; but George Willard does not find the words to speak to Helen White and their communication is fortuitous rather than a voluntary achievement of the will in the shape of the spoken word. This leads back to the fundamental similarity of the Dubliners and the people of Winesburg, Ohio: though Joyce implies that the gift of tongues, or the power of meaningful speech, might yet be found and the forces of love and the mystery of life and death might again be uttered, and Anderson implies that the gesture, or the power of communicative action, might best replace words, they both present a community that has lost the ability to articulate the most living aspects of their usually dreary lives.

What is needed now is a look at the public lives of the people in Dublin and Winesburg, for in spite of their inarticulate isolation from one another, it might be possible for them to achieve an understanding of the purpose of their lives if the institutions of their communities are able to provide the necessary guidelines to a way of life. But, of course, if the public life of their communities cannot provide this traditional vitality, then they must explore other means.

IV

THE MUSEYROOM AND THE HOUSE OF CORN

Joyce's Dubliners and Anderson's Winesburg, Ohio not only re-create two communities in which the inhabitants are unable to communicate anything more meaningful than superficial civility to each other, they also present Dublin and Winesburg as places in which the people have become separated from a source of meaning traditionally supplied by religion, politics, and the arts. Not only are their private lives enclosed in shells that allow no communication between individuals, their public lives tend to harden the shells because they can find no evidence of a surviving religious, political or artistic vitality. And only in a natural bond between individuals and institutions are such inarticulate people as live in Dublin and Winesburg likely to be able to receive a sustaining meaning and purpose of life without having to participate verbally in any great degree. It might be possible, if Dublin and Winesburg were alive as complex communal societies, for a person who cannot communicate intimately with another person to secure a channel for his energies in a devotion (or at least a commitment) to religion or politics or art. But when the vitality that should be inherent in these institutions is absent, then nothing can be gained by either silent listening or silent working. This is the case in both Dublin and Winesburg where public utterances are as idle as private chatter,

and the mystery of life, traditionally veiled with specially significant words, has been replaced by the hopelessness of life, currently revealed with almost every spoken word.

Dublin is paralyzed to the extent that the city is dead in all but physical life. The inhabitants go about the streets and in and out of buildings as if they were strolling through fossilized catacombs. Everywhere about them is evidence of a past life of achievement, and these wanderers about the city seem slightly disappointed to realize that they are left alone to continue the deeds of the dead, which so vividly remain in memories associated with the topography and architecture all about them. As Padraic Colum put it: "The stories that give colour to 'Dubliners' have all to do with death."[1] But in spite of the revered recollections that haunt the precincts of the public rooms in Dublin, these chambers are always empty of significant words (though not necessarily empty of bodies).

"Ivy Day in the Committee Room" presents a typical political scene in Dublin. The concerns of the party workers are not always directly focused upon either the ideology or the practical groundwork of the political campaign in which they are nominally engaged. In the course of the story, the entire range of Irish political thinking is represented by the various people who gather in the committee room on Parnell's anniversary: Joe Hynes, the labour party supporter; Mat O'Connor, the middle-ground pacifier; Mr. Henchy, the outspoken pragmatic fence-sitter; the pro-Irish Mr.

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[1]Padraic Colum, "Dublin in Literature," Bookman, LXIII (July 1926), 561.

Lyons; and the conservative Mr. Crofton. All these, men of diverse opinions, are with the exception of Joe Hynes, working for a certain Richard Tierney, whose political thinking and direction of leadership are somewhat obscure. In fact, it is not even certain how Mr. Tierney regards the most important sore point of the immediate political future: the proposed visit of Edward VII to Dublin. Joe Hynes (who supports the underdog labour leader Colgan) suggests to Mr. O'Connor that Mr. Tierney is untrustworthy and gives him the nickname "Tricky Dicky;"[2] to which Mr. O'Connor merely agrees " '. . . perhaps you're right.' " Shortly after, when Joe Hynes again brings up the name, Mr. Henchy agrees wholeheartedly -- and for a very definite reason:

> "O, he's as tricky as they make 'em," said Mr. Henchy. "He hasn't got those little pig's eyes for nothing. Blast his soul! Couldn't he pay up like a man instead of: 'O, now, Mr. Henchy, I must speak to Mr. Fanning . . . . I've spent a lot of money'? Mean little schoolboy of hell! I suppose he forgets the time his little old father kept the hand-me-down shop in Mary's Lane."[3]

That Mr. Tierney commands little respect from his own party workers is obvious. Both Mr. O'Connor and Mr. Henchy express concern over the fact that they have not yet been paid by their candidate to the extent that it becomes clear that their campaigning means only a soft job to them. Political ideas in abstraction are not nearly so important as is the notion of little easy money. Joe Hynes' description of Mr. Tierney: " 'This fellow you're working for only wants to get some job or other' "[4] also might well describe the

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[2] Dubliners, p. 153.

[3] Ibid., p. 155.

[4] Ibid., p. 152.

interests of Mr. Tierney's loyal followers. While soliciting votes for their candidate Mr. Henchy has outlined Mr. Tierney's standpoint:

> . . . I got Ward of Dawson Street. Fine old chap he is, too -- regular old toff, old Conservative! 'But isn't your candidate a Nationalist?' said he. 'He's a respectable man,' said I. 'He's in favour of whatever will benefit this country. He's a big rate-payer,' I said. 'He has extensive house property in the city and three places of business and isn't it to his own advantage to keep down the rates? He's a prominent and respected citizen,' said I, 'and a Poor Law Guardian, and he doesn't belong to any party, good, bad, or indifferent.' That's the way to talk to 'em."[5]

The one thing Mr. Henchy says that his candidate <u>is</u> for has to do, characteristically, with money. He tactfully avoids any mention of the question of Edward VII's proposed visit, for a decisive opinion on that issue might offend the prospective voter. With a comfortable assurance, Mr. Henchy himself advocates a comfortable reaction, namely calm reception, to the question of the royal visit. Clearly "Tricky Dicky" Tierney offers no dynamic political leadership for the Dubliners gathered in the committee room. The man with a definite viewpoint, the labour leader Colgan, is not really taken seriously by anyone but Joe Hynes. But it is Hynes' conviction of the ability of Colgan: " 'The working-man is not going to drag the honour of Dublin in the mud to please a German monarch,' "[6] that provides an ironic contrast to Tierney's apparent complacent attitude. Obviously, Colgan, regardless of his specific opinions, is more in the tradition of iconoclastic decisive political thinking

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[5] <u>Ibid.</u>, p. 165.

[6] <u>Ibid.</u>, p. 152.

that has been established by Parnell than is anyone else in the election. The fact that he is all but ignored on Ivy Day is typical of the paralysis that has stricken the cultural heritage of not only politics, but also of religion and the arts in Dublin.[7] Joe Hynes' poem commemorating the death of Parnell only reminds Mr. Henchy and the others that the living political figures all stand very small beside the remembered stature of "the Chief."[8] Thus the committee room has memories of the days when politics in Dublin was alive with idealistic energy and determination, when even an inarticulate person could receive something more than money from his work in the cause of a candidate: namely, an inner satisfaction that has to do with dignity and pride and that results from an involvement with another **abstraction** -- the <u>idea</u> of political statehood (with all its ramifications of brotherhood, loyalty, and patriotism). But one's country (or capital city) has to be living to emanate such social meaning and bestow it upon its citizens. Dublin, as a great coffin in which the inhabitants sleepwalk from haunted building to haunted building, has no such vitality to offer those of her people who would seek the meaning of life in political devotion.

"A Mother" takes the reader into the Antient Concert Rooms of Dublin. The very name of this place suggests a history of great artistic performances. But the <u>artistes</u> who perform in the series of concerts arranged by Mr. Holohan are definitely not in the tradition of the great singers of the past, and neither is the audience finely appreciative of accomplishment in singing. The concerts are

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[7]See pp. 38-42.

[8]<u>Dubliners</u>, p. 167.

in fact a coming together of mediocrity and vulgarity and the exchange of money is far more important to all concerned than is an exchange of talent for appreciation. Kathleen Kearney finds no meaningful fulfillment in the Antient Concert Rooms, but only an atmosphere of mercenary greed (generated mainly by her own mother) and an undiscerning patronage (though she is well received). To succeed in the Antient Concert Rooms amid such circumstances is no great achievement. With fellow performers such as the bass Mr. Duggan, who had once sung in grand opera, and ". . . with great feeling and volume and was warmly welcomed by the gallery; but unfortunately, . . . marred the good impression by wiping his nose in his gloved hand once or twice out of thoughtlessness,"[9] and a whistling, stamping, shouting audience the unfortunate and timid Kathleen finds little to inspire her to throw off her mother's domination. Like the committee room in the Royal Exchange Ward, the Antient Concert Rooms have a tradition of community significance, but the cause with which Kathleen becomes involved (in spite of the title of her role -- accompanist at "four grand concerts"[10] of the Eire Abu Society) is a rather poor descendent of this tradition. Clearly, the artistic career in Dublin is but another dead limb of a once vital public life.

"Grace" adds a church to the committee room and the concert room, and the religious service that goes on there is but an echo of former devotional activities. In the course of the execution of the plan by Martin Cunningham and his friends to get Tom

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[9] Ibid., p. 179.

[10] Ibid., p. 173.

Kernan to go to a retreat the name of Father Burke, a former priest of the Jesuit Church in Gardiner Street, comes up, and all present fondly reminisce over his fine manner of preaching. Even Tom Kernan recalls a sermon he once heard Father Burke preach: " 'Upon my word it was magnificent, the style of the oratory. And his voice! God! hadn't he a voice!' "[11] Mr. Kernan and the others all appreciate oratory in a religious service (as they and their neighbours appreciate a fine delivery of words in political speechmaking and in singing). To them a message is communicated in direct proportion to the style of the sermon (or speech or song). Their rememberance of Father Burke's preaching is a remembrance of vitality in the pulpit. The retreat that they go to in the Gardiner Street Jesuit Church is presided over by Father Purdon, whose style of oratory and message itself betray a deadened messenger of vitality. Most of Father Purdon's sermon is merely paraphrased by Joyce, and the two chief <u>verbatim</u> bits that he does give the reader show no evidence of remarkable oratorical talents, nor is there any indication of his manner of delivery or the effect of his words upon the audience. However, there can be no doubt that neither Mr. Kernan nor anyone else will compare Father Purdon's preaching with Father Burke's. There is equally little doubt that they will be inspired with the vitality of religious meaning that the holy office of a priest traditionally supplies for a congregation. Once again, the public life of Dublin affords no opportunity for the inarticulate citizen to receive meaning in reward for energetic devotion

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[11] <u>Ibid.</u>, p. 210.

to an institution. This is the saddest of all the failures of Dublin's public traditions, for when the pulpit is inhabited by a money-minded priest, and Mammon gains influence in religion as well as in politics and the arts, then the Dubliners' most significant link with the community meaning of life, not to mention the personal meaning, is severed.

The residents of Dublin thus have no means of linking their lonely lives with an external vitality. Their inarticulateness prevents them from communicating with each other, and the paralysis of Dublin as a social body prevents them from receiving a feeling or knowledge of the meaning of life by (energetically but inarticulately) taking part in traditional religious, political, and artistic activities. But the people in Dublin do not all go through the dreary routines of their lives without ever realizing the truth about themselves and their world. Where does this realization come from? If the meaning of life does not come from communication with others, nor from community institutions, the only resource remaining is the depths of the individual imagination. This is the realm of art, for it is the artist who takes the life he experiences into his imagination, purifies it by brooding, and creates new meaning from the disorganization of life. Without this artistic temperament life in Dublin might go on forever in a mere numbness of routine. The extent to which the imagination plays a part in the lives of the Dubliners varies, of course, from person to person, but most of them use this power from time to time in a (sometimes desperate) attempt to understand the loneliness and futility of their lives.

What the imagination takes within its furnace doors to a certain extent determines what will emerge created anew. Thus, the life of the Dubliners takes them through ancient streets and into ancient buildings, which have a history of memories populating them, and it is these scenes of a dying city that become imprinted upon the walls of their imaginations and that provide the passageways through which the searchings of the imagination wind and from which the fiery power ultimately shapes a new meaning. When the people of Dublin engage their imaginative energies then, they are directed through and along the familiar surroundings of the city itself, so that a descent into a Dubliner's imagination is a tour through the crowded thoroughfares and buildings, private and public, of the ancient city.

When the boy in "Araby" is in the heights of his ecstatic adoration for the young woman who lives across the street, his imagination couples them in various scenes ("Her image accompanied me even in places the most hostile to romance"[12]), a particularly evocative one being the crowded, jostling, loud streets of his own neighbourhood where his dreaming mind can concoct wonderful adventures: "I imagined that I bore my chalice safely through a throng of foes." The significance of this is simply that when the boy uses his imagination, it is his own city that he explores in his quest for adventure. Of course, the everyday streets and the people in them are given heroic roles in the boy's quest for adventure, but it is still a crowded street that he envisions. His imagination does

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[12] Ibid., p. 35.

not take him and his beloved into a completely different scene; rather, it exaggerates the streets of Dublin into a stage where dramatic events are taking place.

James Duffy in "A Painful Case" wanders through the Park on the night he reads of Mrs. Sinico's violent death, and is overcome with a sense of loss. His imagination goes out to the lights of Dublin:

> He turned his eyes to the grey gleaming river, winding along towards Dublin. Beyond the river he saw a goods train winding out of Kingsbridge Station, like a worm with a fiery head winding through the darkness, obstinately and laboriously. It passed slowly out of sight; but still he heard in his ears the laborious drone of the engines reiterating the syllables of her name.[13]

Once again the everyday scenes of Dublin are exaggerated by the imagination, this time into a surrealistic but vital complex which mocks Mr. Duffy's own paralysis of feeling. And these images that flash in his mind are pathetically ironic: the Liffey (which is also the "Missisliffi"[14] or all rivers) and the train, both of which are, because of their motion, symbols of the flow of life. Thus his imagination makes more acute and painful the question he has just asked himself -- "Why had he withheld life from her?" -- by showing him the city he has always considered dull and meaningless as a huge personification of life itself.

This tendency of the Dubliners to direct their imaginations upon the streets and buildings and traditions of their city can also have comic results. When the imagination is focused upon politics

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[13] Ibid., p. 146.

[14] Finnegans Wake, p. 159.

in Dublin, a scene like the one in "A Mother" might take place:

> . . . a little crowd of people would assemble after mass at the corner of Cathedral Street. They were all friends of the Kearneys -- musical friends or Nationalist friends; and, when they had played every little counter of gossip, they shook hands with one another all together, laughing at the crossing of so many hands, and said good-bye to one another in Irish.[15]

Or, when the imagination is directed toward artistic matters, the kind of thing that happens in Little Chandler's mind in "A Little Cloud" is typical:

> It was a pity his name was not more Irish-looking. Perhaps it would be better to insert his mother's name before the surname: Thomas Malone Chandler, or better still: T. Malone Chandler. He would speak to Gallaher about it.[16]

And finally, when the imagination works upon religious tradition, the result can be both sad and humorous, as is the all-too-frequent tendency of the Dubliners to make Christianity an exclusively Irish institution. As Leopold Bloom triumphantly puts it, remembering his retort to the Nationalistic "citizen" in the saloon:

> The most vulnerable point too of tender Achilles, your God was a jew, because mostly they appeared to imagine that he came from Carrick-on-Shannon or somewhere about in the county Sligo.[17]

Such imaginings, comic though they are, only serve to further illustrate that the people of Dublin dwell upon the geography and culture of their heritage when they attempt to use their imaginations for insight.

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[15] Dubliners, p. 173.

[16] Ibid., p. 90.

[17] Ulysses, p. 766.

The subterranean vaults of a Dubliner's mind resemble in exaggerated forms the streets and buildings and monuments of Dublin itself, and the ghosts (such as Michael Furey and Parnell) that have only a chronicled life of permanence above ground have a living permanence in the imaginative underworld. When a Dubliner looks at the world through the vision of his imagination, he sees a more meaningful Dublin, in fact a new world in which a visit is (like Joyce's most imaginative fiction) a "commodius vicus of recirculation,"[18] and which resembles, more than anything else, a museum come alive.

The residents of Winesburg, Ohio too are separated from any public sources of vitality. Like the Dubliners, they cannot relieve their inarticulate loneliness by devoting themselves to religion, politics, or art. In fact, their lack of cultural heritage[19] has destined them to suffer a void in community life. None of the people in Winesburg is concerned with attending a Church service, a political meeting, or a concert of any kind. Of course there is a clergyman, and George Willard, the central character, is an aspiring writer, and his father Tom Willard is even a political worker on the village level; but no one is concerned with religion, politics, or the arts as institutions. Without such public organizations, the community life of the people in Winesburg is almost nonexistent. In fact, there are no scenes whatsoever of public life in Winesburg depicted in the stories. Thus the residents of Winesburg are in even a worse social state than the

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[18] Finnegans Wake, p. 3.

[19] See pp. 56-58.

Dubliners, for they do not even have the remnants of a once vital traditional community complex embracing the people's need for (at least a passive) involvement with religion, politics, and the arts. Without the longstanding streets and buildings and monuments of a community history Winesburg does not even have a place for vital and memorable ghosts to haunt, and because of this, the inhabitants cannot receive a meaningful inspiration from a past and significant way of life, not to mention from present institutions.

With no inherited world-view, the people in Winesburg are forced to interpret the world in personal terms. Imagaination is then, quite naturally, very active in the town, for none of the people exhibit a dead acceptance of the conventional dreariness of life as do some of the Dubliners. In fact, the inarticulate condition of the residents of Winesburg and the lack of public life there forces them (like the Dubliners) to use their imaginations in order to understand the meaning of life. And, as in Dublin, the familiar scenes of their everyday lives are what the people in Winesburg take into their imaginations and forge into an understanding. But, of course, the everyday scenes of life in Winesburg are not principally streets and buildings, but rather the night sky, trees, fields, and rows of corn. These are the things that are imprinted within the minds of the people in Winesburg, and it is with these images that they fuse their individual myths.

First, a perfect example of how an inhabitant of Winesburg seizes upon meaningfulness is the story of Doctor Parcival. He is inarticulate and so is isolated, and he has no concern whatsoever with public life (even his own practice), but he is convinced that

he knows the secret truth about life. And the source of this insight is his imagination. The main incident in the story, the death of the farmer's daughter and his refusal to go to examine the body, triggers his imagination:

> Do I not know what will happen? Word of my refusal will be whispered about. Presently men will get together in groups and talk of it. They will come here. We will quarrel and there will be talk of hanging. Then they will come again bearing a rope in their hands.[20]

This growth in his mind of his inevitable fate fuses the knowledge of the truth (actually a "truth") of life and even gives rise to an epigrmmatic utterance of his vision or imagination forged world-view: " ' . . . everyone in the world is Christ and they are all crucified.' "[21] No doubt this single event alone did not give him this realization (in fact, he has long been intending to write a book about it), but it is the type of event and the type of reaction that first formed the notion in his mind. Thus do the people in Winesburg achieve an understanding of life through the only resource left to them in their isolation -- the imagination.

Though Doctor Parcival's imagination does not work with images of nature, the usual Winesburg imagination does. Jesse Bentley in "Godliness" mixes his Biblical training and his greed as a landowner into a fantastic vision of the meaning of his life:

> Into Jesse's mind came the conviction that all of the Ohio farmers who owned land in the valley of Wine Creek were Philistines and enemies of God. "Suppose," he whispered to himself, "there should come from among them one who, like Goliath the Philistine of Gath, could defeat me and take from me my possessions." In fancy he felt the sickening

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[20] Winesburg, Ohio, p. 51.

[21] Ibid., p. 52.

> dread that he thought must have lain heavy on the heart of Saul before the coming of David. Jumping to his feet he began to run through the night. As he ran he called to God. His voice carried far over the low hills. "Jehovah of Hosts," he cried, "send to me this night out of the womb of Katherine, a son."[22]

The fields of his farm are not simply fields to him, they have been invested with Biblical significance. His imagination has seized upon the notion that he is a special farmer, one designated by God to guard the land, and the fertile valley of Wine Creek becomes the valley of Elah in his mind.

Alice Hindman in "Adventure" seeks the rain when her imagination demands an answer to her loneliness, and it is her imagination -- which blossoms in the rain so that she momentarily has the courage to call out to and run after another presumably lonely resident of Winesburg -- and which finally forms the sad understanding in her mind that ". . . many people must live and die alone even in Winesburg."[23] Again, Ray Pearson's imagination in "The Untold Lie" is triggered by a natural scene:

> He was in a sad, distracted mood and was affected by the beauty of the country. If you knew the Winesburg country in the fall and how the low hills are all splashed with yellows and reds you would understand his feeling. He began to think of the time, long ago when he was a young fellow living with his father then a baker in Winesburg, and how on such days he had wandered away to the woods to gather nuts, hunt rabbits, or just to loaf about and smoke his pipe.

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[22] Ibid., p. 66.

[23] Ibid., p. 110.

> His marriage had come about through one of his days of wandering. He had induced a girl who waited on trade in his father's shop to go with him and something had happened.[24]

The autumn scene awakens in Ray Pearson the vitality of his youth, and his imagination superimposes fragments of the past upon the present. It is as if the brilliantly coloured fields were a doorway to the buried days of youth, whose most intense moments lie yet alive in the memory-filled depths of the imagination, as if to look at the fields were to look at the interior passageways of the mind itself. The fields indeed present an open door to Ray Pearson, and as his mind goes out and along these fields it goes back through time until the scene before him catches fire with insight: " 'Tricked by Gad, that's what I was, tricked by life and made a fool of.' "

Thus the people in Winesburg (and in all the similar small towns in the American Midwest) must make a descent into their own imaginations, down through scenes of the natural world that have been re-created in their minds through years in which their memories have collected and constructed an inner world corresponding, however fantastically, to the outer world that has most impressed them. The young Tom Edwards in "An Ohio Pagan" from Horses and Men dwells so much in his imagination in an attempt to understand life that his visions -- in fact his mythmaking -- combine all facets of the mystery of life into a single apotheosis of the power of instinctual life. As a boy of sixteen Tom earns a man's place in his society

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[24] Ibid., p. 188.

by becoming a top race-horse driver, and the experience is exhilarating:

> That was a life! Round and round the track they went, young colthood and young manhood together, not thinking but carrying life very keenly within themselves and feeling tremendously.[25]

But the authorities of the town, Bidwell, Ohio, insist that he go to school, so Tom runs away from Tom Whitehead's farm where he has been living. In his travels he becomes associated with a family of travelling harvesters who go about from farm to farm with a threshing machine. From the father of this family Tom gets an introduction to Christianity by overhearing, from the hayloft of the barn where he sleeps, the older man praying for good weather. But for Tom religion is a matter of earth-life, rather than spiritual life, and Christ is to him "The god Jesus" who "walked away over the land, and with a wave of his hand summoned the smiling days."[26] Like Jesse Bentley in Winesburg, Ohio Tom integrates Biblical tradition with his own view of life so that his pagan myth is in fact inhabited by Christ. His prayer is a typically Midwestern lonely utterance:

> . . . he muttered, half-timidly, certain words, that were half a prayer, half an appeal to some spirit of the night. "Jesus, bring me a woman," he whispered.[27]

The need for a mate is of course the most common desire of the inarticulate Midwestern townsman, but instead of appealing to the dark immensity of the night, as do Alice Hindman and others in Winesburg, Tom directs his prayer specifically to Christ, integrating Christian heritage with his lusty innocent love of life. Finally, after his loneliness has become unbearable, his imagination fuses his underground desire and the appearance of nature into one grand, and

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[25] Horses and Men (New York, 1923), p. 322.
[26] Ibid., p. 327.
[27] Ibid., p. 339.

fantastic, vision:

> Women became to him something different than anything else in nature, more desirable than anything else in nature, and at the same time everything in nature became woman. The trees, in the apple orchard by the barn, were like the arms of women. The apples on the trees were round like the breasts of women. They were the breasts of women -- and when he had got on to a low hill the contour of the fences that marked the confines of the fields fell into the forms of women's bodies. Even the clouds in the sky did the same thing.[28]

His imagination first encompasses the natural scene; and once inside, the scene is purified, transformed, and finally projected outward with a newly invested significance. This is the typical process of the Midwestern townsman in Anderson's fiction when the meaning of life is being desperately sought. Time and again these people dwell upon a scene in nature until it has undergone a change in the seas of their imagination and comes to signify a truth of world-view importance.

Finally, the imagination of Elsie Leander in the story "The New Englander" from The Triumph of the Egg might be cited as the archetype of the imaginative lives of Anderson's Midwestern grostesques. Coming from a rocky, mountain-bound farm in Vermont, Elsie, who is in her thirties, moves with her father and mother to the Middle West where her brother and his family live. Her father purchases a small farm which borders a much larger farm. Elsie who was used to sitting by a rock in the orchard looking at the mountains in Vermont, now has endless rows of corn to look at from her new secluded spot, the lonely back steps of the house. From her inarticulate isolation, Elsie

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[28] Ibid., p. 344.

watches the pagan vitality all about her. On Sundays her brother and his family come to visit, and Elsie watches her adolescent niece Elizabeth cavort through the corn with her younger brothers:

> She wanted to walk demurely along the rows through the corn but she was afraid her brothers would laugh and in desperation outdid the boys in roughness and noisiness. She screamed and shouted and running wildly tore her dress on the wire fences as she scrambled over in pursuit of the dogs. When a rabbit was caught and killed she rushed in and tore it out of the grasp of the dogs. The blood of the little dying animal dripped on her clothes. She swung it over her head and shouted.[29]

The bacchanalian frenzy of the young girl provides an ironic contrast for the rock-bound silence of Elsie, and as the day wears on, she too ventures out into the rows of corn which have lately taken on a special meaning for her:

> Immediately she got a sense of release. She could not see over the corn but she could see under it. The corn had long wide leaves that met over the rows. The rows became long tunnels running away into infinity. Out of the black ground grew weeds that made a soft carpet of green. From above light sifted down. The corn rows were mysteriously beautiful. They were warm passageways running out into life.[30]

Elsie's adventure in the corn rows is seemingly nothing more than a mischievous hiding from authority and convention, but for her it is a first courageous step in her search for meaningfulness. The corn rows, the "long tunnels running away into infinity" and "warm passageways running out into life," provide for her the stairway for her

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[29] The Triumph of the Egg, pp. 149-50.

[30] Ibid., p. 145.

descent into the underworld of her own being. In fact the corn rows are the symbolic signposts of her quest for the meaning of her life, and the farther along the rows she goes the deeper into her own mind she descends. Finally, deep within "the house of corn"[31] she feels detached at last from the rocky limitations of the life she has always known.

The people in Winesburg -- and throughout the Midwest -- all must face the fact of their double isolation: from each other because of their inability to communicate and from society as a complex organic unit because of the failure of social institutions to remain in a position of mediation between meaning and chaos. Because of these two concentric walls about them, separating them from "life," the residents of Winesburg must symbolically burrow into the rich Midwestern earth in an attempt to find vitality, the same way that the people in Dublin are forced to wander through the catacombic recesses within the (again twofold and concentric) walls of their ancient city. The imagination becomes all important to the Midwestern townsman, for it has the power to transform the natural world, which has been living in his subterranean memory since childhood, into a meaningful place -- at least momentarily.

Both Joyce and Anderson present the problem of a lack of public life in their re-created communities. The difference is again a matter of the old world of tradition and the new world of youthful searching. Dublin's religious, political, and artistic heritage is paralyzed and dying, while Winesburg's social complexity of religion,

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[31] Ibid., p. 160.

politics, and art has not yet been born. The effect upon the inhabitants of the two communities is, however, identical. For these already inarticulate people there is no gift of understanding to be received from the social organism. In both Dublin and Winesburg enlightenment must come from within the individuals themselves. To achieve this the imagination must be released from the depths of isolation, the doors must be opened for fresh impressions to be ingested and, as the culmination of the imaginative process, for newly created meaning, or re-created life, to rise into sudden sight before the understanding of the intellect. Again, in both Dublin and Winesburg the external world of the community has been long since re-created (though of course in surrealistic proportions) within the deep underworld of the imagination of each individual inhabitant. Memory has collected familiar scenes from earliest life and gradually molded the imagination, or the volcanic world within the skull, so that it resembles the community which has provided the limitations of life. That is, the imaginations of the people in Dublin and Winesburg have been in sympathy with the impressions they receive from these communities, and thus these impressions have been imprinted upon their memories, which are of course important treasure rooms in the houses of their imaginations. So, when a Dubliner seeks the meaning of his life by liberating his imagination, he is actually descending into a cultural and historical "museyroom;"[32] and when an inhabitant of Winesburg departs upon a similar quest he is actually burrowing earthward into the

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[32] Finnegans Wake, p. 8.

pagan house of corn.

The next step must be to investigate the findings of the people in Dublin and Winesburg when they enter into the life of the imagination in search of a purposeful significance for the weariness and dreariness of their existence. Since the vision of the imagination is the realm of the artist, and since both Joyce and Anderson employ primarily this literary method, the lives of the artists of Dublin and Winesburg seem to demand special attention.

V

THE SONG OF THE MISSISLIFFI

The idea of the sudden revelatory powers of the imagination, and particularly the notion of the literary artist as a man who captures such moments of stirring imaginative insight and preserves them on paper are inherently Romantic. In fact the English Romantic poets all wrote poems which <u>are</u> sudden manifestations of meaning growing out the caverns of the imagination, and they also often theorized about this artistic process. Wordsworth called such fragments of vision "spots of time"[1] and emphasized their retention in the memory and the renovating power of these moments for a despairing spirit. Shelley has given an eloquent elaboration of the importance of these poetic flashes of inspiration:

> Poetry thus makes immortal all that is best and most beautiful in the world; it arrests the vanishing apparitions which haunt the interlunations of life, and veiling them, or in language or in form, sends them forth among mankind, bearing sweet news of kindred joy to those with whom their sisters abide -- abide, because there is no portal of expression from the caverns of the spririt which they inhabit in the universe of things.[2]

And, Dante Gabriel Rossetti presented such a quick-dissolving moment in sonnet form, the first ten lines of which set the scene and the

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[1] <u>The Prelude</u>, Bk. XII, l. 208.

[2] "A Defence of Poetry," <u>The Complete Works</u>, VII, p. 136.

last four lines of which comment on the value, and speechlessness,

of such an experience:

> So this winged hour is dropped to us from above.
> Oh! clasp we to our hearts, for deathless dower,
> This close-companioned inarticulate hour
> When twofold silence was the song of love.[3]

Whenever the imagination is revered as a power of extra-mundane understanding, and such reverence began with the Romantics, revelation is inevitably an organic outcome of a functioning of this trust. A literature that depends upon the imagination depends also, if the imagination be totally loosed, upon a vision which erupts like a volcano and which reaches to the stars, or to the order of the universe.

James Joyce and Sherwood Anderson are writers who rely, as did the Romantic poets, heavily upon the imagination. In their fiction they re-create the communities of Dublin and Winesburg, Ohio, or the archetypal small town of Midwestern America, and their imaginative understanding of these communities makes the characters who inhabit them totally dependent, in their isolation, upon the resources of their own imaginations in order to realize the meaning of their seemingly meaningless lives. Thus Joyce and Anderson employ the imagination to re-create people who also utilize this underground energy: the Dubliner in the haunted city of his memory and the Winesburg townsman in the rich earthy fields of his mind. Both these communities are forced into a reliance upon the imagination, but still not all the residents of Dublin and Winesburg receive illumination in the netherworld; in fact, some never even make the descent. But Joyce

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[3] The House of Life, "XIX. Silent Noon," ll. 11-14.

and Anderson always put the stories they are relating through their artistic imaginations, and the result is always a flash of insight hidden in the words that crystallize their characters' unenlightened experiences. So, whether or not the person in Dublin or Winesburg experiences a poetic revelation, the "epiphany" or the "moment of sophistication" is inevitable in the short stories of Joyce and Anderson.

Since Stephen Dedalus is the youthful poet in Dublin (and of course since he is a portrait of Joyce as a young man), the place to begin is with Stephen's own definition of the epiphany, which is found in Stephen Hero, the earlier manuscript version of A Portrait:

> By an epiphany he meant a sudden spiritual manifestation, whether in the vulgarity of speech or of gesture or in a memorable phase of the mind itself. He believed that it was for the man of letters to record these epiphanies with extreme care, seeing that they themselves are the most delicate and evanescent of moments.[4]

At once it is evident that the epiphany is for Stephen an ironic revelation (as of course his use of the name epiphany -- taken from the Church feast day celebrating the manifestation of Christ to the Magi -- would indicate), for his spiritual manifestation takes the form of vulgarity of speech or gesture. In fact, for Stephen illumination is disillusion, whether the illusion be apparent beauty veiling ugliness or apparent ugliness veiling beauty. While liberating the imagination, in the act of creative vision, a vital message is grasped from the seemingly disorganized life all around. To illustrate the functioning of the (saving) power of the creative process amid the

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[4] Stephen Hero (London, 1944), p. 188.

deadened inhabitants of Dublin two of Stephen's own epiphanies might be examined. Since it has been argued[5] (and it is hardly a disputed point) that the boys in the first three stories of Dubliners are in fact Stephen, then surely it will be permissible to take for the first of these epiphanies the experience of the boy in "Araby." The epiphany in this story -- the overheard conversation of vulgarity between the young woman attendant and her two gentlemen friends -- is of course the sudden vision of the sordidness that lies behind the romantic veil of the young boy's idealization. This is an archetypal first epiphany: in the earliest and most frantic dream of adolescent love (a love which recalls the sexual initiation into the secret meaning of life common to the ancient mystery religions of the East), the boy reaches the climax of his quest for a love symbol to capture and return to the castled princess of his heart's devotion as a token of faithful service and a gift of commitment, perhaps even betrothal. At this point of near success, he realizes that the temple of his search is actually a market place, and that the princess for whom he has been adventuring is not really a princess and will probably inherit, instead of a jewelled coronet, or a chalice, a stall in the market place. And worst of all, he realizes that he is not a knight but a boy who must face the danger of growing up to be as insipid as the two young men who haunt the market place. Disillusionment with a boyish romantic world-view is the first imaginative revelation.

After such a disappointment often comes adolescent cynicism. From a devotion to the beauty of dreams, the fall is made into a

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[5]See p. 29.

state of fascination with reality. Beauty then seems unreal, perhaps even childish, and ugliness and despair claim all the belief of the youth. Included in this may be a self-conviction of sinfulness. Stephen in A Portrait banishes himself to hell, in the ultimate adolescent imaginative fall from Paradise. He has just listened to a sermon in the chapel:

> He could not grip the floor with his feet and sat heavily at his desk, opening one of his books at random and poring over it. Every word for him! It was true. God was almighty. God could call him now, call him as he sat at his desk, before he had time to be conscious of the summons. God had called him. Yes? What? Yes? His flesh shrank together as it felt the approach of the ravenous tongues of flame, dried up as it felt about it the swirl of stifling air. He had died. Yes. He was judged. A wave of fire swept through his body: the first. Again a wave. His brain began to glow. Another. His brain was simmering and bubbling within the cracking tenement of the skull like a corolla, shrieking like voices:
> Hell! Hell! Hell! Hell! Hell![6]

This is the climax of the youthful reaction to the first realization of the possible ugliness of life, for hell is, after all, the limit of the unpleasant. But the mind's descent into hell is also the descent into the volcano of the imagination, and the "simmering and bubbling within the cracking tenement of the skull" will continue until the doors of vision are finally burst open and the smothered energy is released. This occurs to Stephen later at the beach when his mind finally breaks out of hell and preoccupation with the ugly truth of everyday life:

> A girl stood before him in midstream, alone and still, gazing out to sea. She seemed like one whom magic had changed into the likeness of a strange and beautiful seabird. Her long slender bare legs were delicate as a crane's and pure save where an emerald trail of seaweed had fashioned itself as a sign upon the flesh. Her thighs, fuller and softhued as ivory,

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[6] A Portrait, p. 380.

were bared almost to the hips where the white fringes of her drawers were like featherlings of soft white down. Her slateblue skirts were kilted boldly about her waist and dovetailed behind her. Her bosom was as a bird's soft and slight, slight and soft as the breast of some dark-plumaged dove. But her long fair hair was girlish: and girlish, and touched with the wonder of mortal beauty, her face.

She was alone and still, gazing out to sea; and when she felt his presence and the worship of his eyes her eyes turned to him in quiet sufferance of his gaze, without shame or wantoness. Long, long she suffered his gaze and then quietly withdrew her eyes from his and bent them towards the stream, gently stirring the water with her foot hither and thither. The first faint noise of gently moving water broke the silence, low and faint and whispering, faint as the bells of sleep; hither and thither, hither and thither: and a faint flame trembled on her cheek.

-- Heavenly God! cried Stephen's soul, in an outburst of profane joy.[7]

This is a <u>second</u> archetypal epiphany, and is a reversal of the first, for it is the ascent out of the pit up to the new world, the vision of beauty amid the ordinariness of everyday life, and the affirmation of a truth formed by the imagination which transcends the facts of reality. The girl's "mortal beauty" and Stephen's "profane joy" indicate that his vision is of the old world (of Dublin which he has always known) made new. His new world -- "fantastic, dim, uncertain as under sea, traversed by cloudy shapes and beings"[8] -- gradually, because it is reaching a climax in the imagination, becomes crystal clear, "trembling and unfolding, a breaking light, an opening flower."

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[7]<u>Ibid.</u>, pp. 433-34.

[8]<u>Ibid.</u>, p. 435.

His new world is earthbound, but because it is viewed with the imagination it regains Paradisial beauty -- or, in Stephen's aesthetic: "wholeness, harmony and radiance."[9] And Stephen realizes with joy the importance of his "magic" revelation:

> Her image had passed into his soul forever and no word had broken the holy silence of his soul's ecstasy. Her eyes had called him and his soul had leaped at the call. To live, to err, to fall, to triumph, to re-create life out of life![10]

This is the initiation of Stephen into the secret (because it is mature) understanding of the process of artistic creativity. Stephen's listing of the spiritual progress of man -- "To live, to err, to fall, to triumph, to recreate life out of life" -- adds a level of experience exclusive to the user of the creative imagination. Living, erring, falling, even triumphing are common experience to all mankind, but re-creating life out of life is the experience of the artist or of the lover. Re-creation is the <u>highest</u>, or most God-like act possible for mankind, and it is achieved when the imagination is liberated from the netherworld and allowed, not only to triumph, but to soar. In realizing the nature of the artistic experience Stephen is ready to begin his career as a poet. He later describes this experience of imaginative vision to Lynch; in explaining Saint Thomas' <u>quidditas</u> he says:

> This supreme quality is felt by the artist when the esthetic image is first conceived in his imagination. The mind in that mysterious instant Shelley likened to a fading coal.[11]

Stephen's choice of Shelley's metaphor is very appropriate, for

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[9] <u>Ibid.</u>, p. 479.

[10] <u>Ibid.</u>, p. 434.

[11] <u>Ibid.</u>, p. 481.

Shelley indeed describes exactly what Stephen calls an epiphany: ". . . the mind in creation is as a fading coal, which some invisible influence, like an inconstant wind, awakens to transitory brightness; this power arises from within . . . ."[12] Of course, Shelley is here referring to the composition of poetry, but the mood is the same: the moment of imaginative vision.

The epiphany is for Stephen one of the basic conditions of artistic expression, for it is through the experience of the epiphany that he has come to maturity as a person and as an artist. The epiphany of the boy in "Araby" (who, it must be stressed, is Stephen or the mythopoeic James Joyce as a young man) is the shocking realization of youth that the world is not Paradise, and the subsequent fall from innocence and preoccupation with the terriblenss of reality, and any accompanying sense of sin, is a direct result of this sudden shattering of the dream of youth. The epiphany of Stephen on the beach is the glorious realization that the world is not hell. The cycle of spiritual progress has completely revolved, and Stephen has in fact soared out of orbit into a detached position from where he is able to re-create the cycle because he has passed through it. The epiphany is important to Stephen (and of course to Joyce) because it gives meaning to life and it is the function of the artist, as he sees it, to communicate this most vital and too often wordless joy -- Shelley's "caverns of the spirit" without any "portal of expression," Rossetti's "close-companioned inarticulate hour" and Stephen's "holy silence of . . . ecstasy" -- to others who cannot find the words in

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[12]"A Defence of Poetry," The Complete Works, VII, p. 135.

the depths of their isolation.

The Dubliners, because of their inarticulateness and the coffin-quality of their public buildings, are forced to delve into their own imaginations for knowledge of the world beyond the self. This necessary and desperate reliance upon the undermind and the manner of literary creation used by Joyce (the genesis of which becomes apparent in A Portrait and Stephen Hero), make the epiphany inevitable in Dubliners. But not everyone in the stories experiences such a revelation; in fact very few do. Commenting upon the fact that "Araby" and "The Dead" end with such moments, Peter K. Garrett has pointed out that "Most of the characters of Dubliners are incapable of this degree of consciousness . . . . Joyce's epiphanies are primarily revelations for the reader, rather than for the characters."[13] But it is not merely chance that the boy in "Araby" and Gabriel Conroy in "The Dead" experience epiphanies; the reason is simple (but important): they both have, potentially at least, the artistic character. That is, they have (again potentially) active imaginations and they are not afraid to descend into their minds. Others in Dublin are not so courageous. Those who are not artists, or not concerned with art, do not experience a revelation of meaning. "Clay" is a good example of such a story in which the truth is not revealed to the central character. Maria, in remembering her youth while dressing in front of the mirror, decides that she has -- and is -- "a nice tidy little body."[14] And she considers herself happy:

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[13]Peter K. Garrett, ed., "Introduction," Twentieth Century Interpretations of Dubliners (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1968), p. 14.

[14]Dubliners, p. 126.

> . . . she had her plants in the conservatory and she liked looking after them. She had lovely ferns and wax-plants and, whenever anyone came to visit her, she always gave the visitor one or two slips from her conservatory.[15]

She does not do any imagining that will disturb the placidity of her trivial world. In fact, she does not want to dive too deeply into the long years of her memory and imagine what might have been. She has done such a good job of sealing over her womanly and motherly energies that hardly a tremor disturbs the superficial routine of her life. But the desires are still alive, in spite of her refusal to deal with them. The irony of her tidy world shows in the tea table conversation at the laundry before she leaves for the Donnelly's party:

> Lizzie Fleming said Maria was sure to get the ring and, though Fleming had said that for so many Hallow Eves, Maria had to laugh and say that she didn't want any ring or man either.[16]

She <u>had</u> to say she did not want any ring. This and her wish that Joe and Alphy Donnelly would be good friends, as they were years ago when she cared for them, is as close as she ever comes to realizing the truth about her spinsterhood: that she would have made a very good wife and mother, that her natural sympathy has been wasted, and that her life is pathetic. The sentimental song that she sings does, however, affect Joe, and so strongly does he realize the significance of her plight that momentarily he cannot see to find the corkscrew to open another bottle of stout. The epiphany is there: Joe's reaction

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[15] <u>Ibid.</u>, p. 127.

[16] <u>Ibid.</u>, p. 125.

to the song is a symbolic gesture that indicates how the reader should react.

Most of the other stories of Dubliners have similar epiphanies (but usually without the symbolic realization by one of the other characters). Eveline does not realize the telling consequences of her fear; Jimmy Doyle in "After the Race" does not understand that his carousing is not "life" any more than his parents' conformity is; neither of the "two gallants" experiences a revelation of their degeneracy; none of the loafers in the committee room realizes the lack of living community integrity in their political thinking; Mrs. Kearney does not realize the meaning of her greedy and vulgar behaviour in the Antient Concert Rooms; and Martin Cunningham, Tom Kernan and the others go to Father Purdon's retreat and listen to his wishy washy sermon with all the seriousness of pious hermits. None of these people experience the insight of a "memorable phase of the mind" which is an epiphany. But nonetheless, the epiphanies are implicit in the texture and structure of the stories themselves.

Besides the boy in "Araby," only three others in Dubliners experience an epiphany. Little Chandler, the timid (and inarticulate!) poet in "A Little Cloud," realizes with anger when his infant son cries while he is trying to read, that "It was useless, useless! He was a prisoner for life."[17] James Duffy, the intellectual recluse in "A Painful Case" who reads and translates Hauptmann, experiences a revelation which disintegrates his conception of himself as a solid individual when in the darkness on the night he reads of Mrs. Sinico's

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[17] Ibid., p. 104.

death, "He felt that he was alone."[18] And finally, Gabriel Conroy, who teaches at a college, understands the truth about his own life by realizing for the first time the significance of the dead. It is certainly not coincidental that all these people whose imaginations give them vision are sensitive to artistic creation, for the epiphany is the climax of the imaginative process and only those Dubliners who descend into the museums of their minds can ever hope to see, outward through the roofs of their skulls, their relation to the universe. Because these people keep the chambers of their imaginations accessible, the scenes of their everyday lives in Dublin -- whether a crowded North Richmond Street, the sunset view along the quays from Grattan Bridge, the lights along the Liffey, or the snow on the sleeping city -- any scene in the city can become a complexity of symbols in their minds and reveal a meaning to them. Of course everybody in Dublin has an imagination, but most of them are, like Eveline, afraid of drowning should they go down into it or have simply forgotten about it and feel foolish, like Mr. O'Connor in the committee room, when something reminds them of what is stored beneath the surface of their consciousnesses. Thus, though the imagination is the only remaining resource in Dublin for a lonely inhabitant to break through the walls of his isolation, few -- only the naturally artistic -- ever enter within this inner city of the mind and see the manifestation that awaits there.

Sherwood Anderson too used the moment of revelation in his

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[18] Ibid., p. 147.

fiction, for he also felt that such a moment was the culmination of the artistic process. George Willard, or the mythopoeic Anderson as a young man, is not nearly so aware of the theoretical implications for art that grow out of his imagination as Stephen Dedalus is, but it must be remembered that George's life is only re-created up to the point of Andersonian maturity. To compare the lives of George and Stephen: if the last chapter of A Portrait and of course Ulysses had not been written then George and Stephen would, as presented in fiction, be nearer to the same point of development. George does experience the epiphany which frees his imagination to see beyond the commonplace, but he does not philosophize upon the artistic possibilities of his moment of insight. However, Anderson himself does discuss the importance of the writer's experience of revelation. In his Memoirs he is explicit on this matter:

> The short story is the result of a sudden passion. It is an idea grasped whole as one would pick an apple in an orchard. All of my own short stories have been written at one sitting, many of them under strange enough circumstances. There are these glorious moments, these pregnant hours and I remember such hours as a man remembers the first kiss got from a woman loved.[19]

If the idea of a short story is like an apple picked in an orchard, then it also might be like a twisted apple with an eccentric sweetness, or a "truth." In fact, the bit of sweetness is a perfect metaphor for the moment of revelation interred in the whole of the everyday apple or story. Anderson goes on to describe the "pregnant hours"

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[19] Memoirs, p. 341.

of the writer:

> There is this curious absorption that at the same time permits a great awareness. You are, as you are not at other times, aware of all going on about you, of the color and shapes of the clouds in the sky, of happenings along a street, of people passing, the expression of faces, clothes people wear . . . all of your senses curiously awake . . . .[20]

This time of intensified vision is for Anderson the particular mood for the writing of the story: "The writing of the long story, the novel, is another matter," for there is "a great gulf separating the two arts."[21] And it is precisely this gulf that Anderson may never have spanned. Of course, in the writing of his novels he still probably experienced these "glorious moments," and his characters most certainly had such periods of awareness. Unlike Joyce, Anderson did not analyze, either in fiction or in autobiographical writing, the significance of the visionary insight in terms of the cyclic progression of the soul or of the spiritual development of the artistic quidditas. For Anderson the epiphany, when he (or any of his characters) felt "half a god who knew all, felt all, saw all"[22] -- which is a fair metaphorical definition comparable to those of the Romantics or of Joyce -- was simply something that happens, something to be entered into without any cognitive reservations, something to be felt. In the Andersonian moment of revelation images rather than thoughts are known to be true and meaningful. Consequently an aesthetic theory developing from a suddenly clear view of the world is not to be expected from George Willard. Perhaps even if he were shown in

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[20] Ibid., p. 342.

[21] Ibid., p. 344.

[22] Ibid.

Anderson's fiction at a later period in his life, after he has left Winesburg, and is, say, walking the streets of Chicago with a fellow "workman" (as Anderson liked to call himself and other artists) during the "renaissance" there, -- even then it is highly unlikely that he would be heard to utter philosophical statements about artistic creativity. Anderson simply did not place the experience of imaginative vision in relation to a process of psychic development. It would be very startling to hear George Willard exclaim in his moment of sophistication: "To live, to err, to fall, to triumph, to re-create life out of life!"

George Willard does however pass through a period of development of his imaginative powers, from bewilderment to brooding to vision as he gradually re-creates the chaos of Winesburg into an understanding.[23] During this development George, like Stephen, experiences two revelations of archetypal magnitude which loosely correspond to Stephen's epiphanies. Winesburg like Dublin is not obviously Paradise, but as the boy in "Araby" dreams Dublin might really be a place of Eastern luxury, so George Willard early in his adolescence dreams that Winesburg might be a garden. His first Eve is Louise Trunnion in "Nobody Knows." He leads her out into a field where they make love, and on his return home, after leaving Louise, George feels uncertain:

> On the sidewalk of Winny's Dry Goods Store where there was a high board fence covered with circus pictures, he stopped whistling and stood perfectly still in the darkness, attentive, listening as

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[23] See pp. 108-109.

> though for a voice calling his name. Then again he laughed nervously. "She hasn't got anything on me. Nobody knows," he muttered doggedly and went on his way.[24]

The voice he listens for is one of reproof, perhaps even condemnation, but he does not feel evil or fallen and concludes that his little town is becoming more Paradisial if anything. George has already decided to become a writer, but both his desire and his ability are vague because he has not matured imaginatively (or any other way) and writing -- like love -- is an idealistic dream for him. In "The Thinker" he combines these desires:

> In George Willard's room . . . Seth Richmond sat in a chair and looked at the floor. George Willard who had been sitting for an hour idly playing with a lead pencil, greeted him effusively. "I've been trying to write a love story," he explained, laughing nervously. Lighting a pipe he began walking up and down the room. "I know what I'm going to do. I'm going to fall in love. I've been sitting here and thinking it over and I'm going to do it."[25]

George thinks he can fall in love with Helen White or write a story at will, without feeling inside the driving turmoil of imagination in one case, or of passion in the other. He is still uncertain about life and does not even brood seriously until he hears both sides of the Kate Swift-Reverend Hartman story and Kate Swift's advice about writing. His first epiphany comes in the appropriately titled "An Awakening." In this story the Winesburg scene suddenly expands in George's mind to cover life in general. The romantic dream of adolescence is inflated to its most taut limit. In the ironic scene in the alleyway George sees what he is convinced must be the meaning of existence:

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[24] Winesburg, Ohio, p. 56.

[25] Ibid., p. 124.

"The law begins with little things and spreads out until it covers everything. In every little thing there must be order, in the place where men work, in their clothes, in their thoughts. I myself must be orderly. I must learn that law. I must get myself into touch with something orderly and big that swings through the night like a star. In my little way I must begin to learn something, to give and swing and work with life, with the law."[26]

With this notion in his head and with "big words" flowing out of his mouth, he goes to see Belle Carpenter -- his second Eve -- but his humiliating (and humorous) fight with Ed Handby drags his imagination down from the skies:

> As he crept down the hillside his heart was sick within him. He hated himself and he hated the fate that had brought about his humiliation. When his mind went back to the hour alone in the alleyway he was puzzled and stopping in the darkness listened, hoping to hear again the voice outside himself that had so short a time before put new courage into his heart. When his way homeward led him again into the street of frame houses he could not bear the sight and began to run, wanting to get quickly out of the neighbourhood that now seemed to him utterly squalid and commonplace.[27]

From the stars to the bushes and backyards is certainly a fall -- and a fall which is of course symbolic of the descent of imaginative vision from beauty and order (the romantic dream of a boy) to ugliness and chaos. This is a first epiphany: the realization of the disorder of reality. Like the boy in "Araby," George discovers that love is neither necessarily nor always a matter of grand and reverent language; rather, it is often vulgar and rough.

Thus the first flight of the youthful artistic imagination, aimed toward beauty and expressed in an overflow of abstract words,

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[26] Ibid., p. 169.

[27] Ibid., p. 174.

sees instead that beauty and big words might be no more than a veil. Despair naturally follows, and the world becomes disgusting -- in fact, hellish -- to the aspiring writer. Winesburg is now hopelessly chaotic in George's mind, and no longer does a beautiful meaning seem immanent behind the clouds of bewilderment. But the meaninglessness does not last much longer. His third Eve, Helen White, helps him triumph. Together they share a second epiphany and ascend from Winesburg the pit to Winesburg the new (perhaps "modern" would be better for Anderson's people) American community. In her earlier adolescence she too has thought that her town might be a Paradise. With Seth Richmond in his mother's back yard, she feels first adventurous, but then, when he has attempted to communicate to her, she feels let down:

> The garden that had been so mysterious and vast, a place that with Seth beside her might have become the background for strange and wonderful adventures, now seemed no more than an ordinary Winesburg back yard, quite definite and limited in its outlines.[28]

Though not exactly a fall, this is a slip in the direction of ugliness and chaos. Later when George courts her he does not help her reshape her dream; rather, he boasts (as Seth has done earlier) of what he is going to do when he goes away from Winesburg. But for all his vague dreaming, George does see a glimpse of definite meaning, and even finds the words to express his fragmentary vision: " 'I want you to be a beautiful woman.' "[29] She however does not understand him until later, after she has gone away to college in Cleveland.

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[28] Ibid., p. 130.

[29] Ibid., p. 217.

Then, in the autumn, while he is in Winesburg and she in the city they each experience a "moment of sophistication."[30] Helen's second epiphany is not re-created, but George's is: "Memories awoke in him. To his mind his new sense of maturity set him apart, made of him a half-tragic figure."[31] The nature of the epiphany itself Anderson universalizes -- George, in fact, becomes "every boy" at the threshold of manhood:

> If he be an imaginative boy a door is torn open and for the first time he looks out upon the world, seeing, as though they marched in procession before him, the countless figures of men who before his time have come out of nothingness into the world, lived their lives and again disappeared into nothingness. The sadness of sophistication has come to the boy. With a little gasp he sees himself as merely a leaf blown by the wind through the streets of his village. He knows that in spite of all the stout talk of his fellows he must live and die in uncertainty, a thing blown by the winds, a thing destined like corn to wilt in the sun.[32]

George's moment of triumph is more feeling than thought and more imagistic than linguistic. It is both a pagan and a tragic triumph, because the vision of the imagination sees meaning within the widening gulf of death. Again, it is the triumph of resignation, and is only triumphant at all in that it is a vision of enlightenment. In this mood, George does not think of himself as a writer; in fact, he

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[30] Ibid., p. 216.

[31] Ibid., p. 315.

[32] Ibid.

neither thinks nor speaks words at all, but seeks out Helen White and they go to the Fairground and communicate silently in the night. Unlike Stephen's epiphany, George's moment of sophistication is not an apotheosis -- George does not feel deified by what he understands with his imagination, therefore it is natural that he does not think in terms of God-like re-creation, but instead seeks understanding and perhaps even consolation. Life in Winesburg is no longer meaningless to George, but the new community he sees with his imagination is only more pleasant than chaos in that people can love there -- if only momentarily and silently -- but then, in Winesburg even that is a major triumph.

Others besides George Willard and Helen White have active imaginations in Winesburg. Nearly all the grotesques are driven by their loneliness and frustration down into their own minds. But self-realization is rare in Winesburg. As in Dubliners, most of the epiphanies in Winesburg, Ohio are never realized by the characters themselves. The reason is not so much that the inhabitants of Winesburg are afraid of entering their imaginations or are paralyzed so they have forgotten them (as are the Dubliners), but that they take only one insight from their imaginations and refuse to see any qualifying visions. This is in fact the genesis of the "truths" that make the people in Winesburg grotesque:

> . . . in the beginning when the world was young there were a great many thoughts but no such thing as a truth. Man made the truths himself and each truth was a composite of a great many vague thoughts. All about in the world were the truths and they were

all beautiful.[33]

But the beauty of imaginative visions -- truths formed by vague and burning brooding -- is distorted once a person chooses one truth and locks the doors of the imagination. Thus most of the residents of Winesburg have in the past visited the underworld of their minds and have picked one insight as the only meaning of life. Doctor Reefy with his paper pills is a perfect illustration of such a person. So too are Doctor Parcival with his vision of futility, Jesse Bentley with his conviction that he is a modern Patriarchal man of God, Wash Williams with his hatred of women, Elmer Cowley with his fear that everyone in Winesburg is ridiculing him, and even Elizabeth Willard with her all encompassing vision of Winesburg as a great cage. But there are a few people in the town who receive new illumination in the course of their stories, and who may be said to undergo an epiphany. Alice Hindman's "adventure" is the most notable of these revelations, and the Reverend Hartman-Kate Swift episode is another. And these three people's experiences, though they do not even speak to each other, are actually linked together thematically. Reverend Curtis Hartman's epiphany is caused by what is undoubtedly (though it is not described) an epiphany in the mind of Kate Swift, and her moment of vision suggests Alice Hindman's revelation. To elaborate, what Reverend Hartman sees is Kate Swift in her bedroom -- naked, lying on her bed, pounding the pillow with her fists, then rising to her knees and praying -- this in itself is not more than an implication that an epiphany is taking place in the mind of the desperate woman. But when

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[33] Ibid., p. 23.

the mute scene she acts out before Reverend Hartman, and the reader, is grouped with the experience of another naked young woman in her bedroom: namely, Alice's realization that ". . . many people must live and die alone, even in Winesburg," then the pounding of her fists and her praying -- together with the subsequent portrayal of her frustration -- indicate that she too is seeing with anguish the meaning of her lonely life. The significance of the scene to Reverend Hartman is that the sight of the "woman of sin" kneeling in prayer renews in him the feeling of "the strength of God."[34] Thus a naked woman, a symbol of pagan vitality, is paramount in all three of these epiphanies. Both Alice Hindman and Kate Swift wish for regeneration, and their nudity is symbolic of this desire. This is common for Anderson's woman characters; Rosiland Westcott in "Out of Nowhere into Nothing" runs away from Willow Springs, Iowa which she is visiting, with a definite urge:

> Rosiland began to run. She had thrown off the town and her father and mother as a runner might throw off a heavy and unnecessary garment. She wished also to throw off the garments that stood between her body and nudity. She wanted to be naked, new born.[35]

Though Rosiland Westcott, by throwing off her town, might indeed be born anew into love in the manner of George Willard and Helen White, neither Alice Hindman nor Kate Swift have the courage to achieve rebirth into love. Their visions are of their failure to escape from isolation. Their painful restlessness -- Alice's timid attempt to run through the streets and Kate's nocturnal and aimless wandering

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[34] Ibid., p. 144.

[35] The Triumph of the Egg, p. 266.

through those same streets -- is symbolic of their frustrated vitality, which they can express no better by action then they can with words. It is precisely this vibrant pagan life that Reverend Hartman sees in the beauty of Kate Swift which inspires his epiphany, and which he interprets as a Divine manifestation. Ironically, he does not realize that what he understands to be the strength of God is sexual energy. The moments of revelation in Winesburg are all visions of the pagan nature of the world: from George Willard and Helen White's wordless communication as two windblown atoms in the vastness of space and time, to Alice Hindman's desire to be in rhythm with the forces of nature and her sad realization that the only meaningful hope in such a cyclic but out-of-nowhere-into-nothing world is to be always withheld from her, to Reverend Curtis Hartman's revelation of Christian spirituality in the form of living pagan beauty.

Of these few people who do experience an epiphany in Winesburg only George Willard is involved in the artistic process of the imagination. But the only obvious thing separating his artistic potentiality from the others is his fondness for words and his desire to be a writer. That is, the epiphany, as the climax of the descent into the imagination, is not exclusive to the person involved with the arts in Winesburg (as it is in Dublin). George Willard simply <u>happens to be</u> a potential writer. His imagination reveals a meaning which is, though perhaps more clearly defined, not a bit different in kind from the vision which convicts the not especially artistic Alice Hindman of her hopelessness. Again, Helen White who shares

the moment of sophistication with George is not in the least concerned with the arts. George and she, when caught in the house of corn by an arresting manifestation of the secret of life, are before anything else simply man and woman at an elevated pitch of awareness -- lovers rather than artists. In fact, the message of the epiphany in Winesburg is always indicative of pagan love: seize the day, for love and beauty and meaning are passing away into nothingness. The only subtle difference between George and the others is that he will no doubt go on having moments of insight whereas the vision of Reverend Hartman is certainly solitary, and that of Alice Hindman probably so, and each involves the risk of changing from truth to a "truth." But then, George's open imagination defines the creative writer by Anderson's (and Joyce's) standards.

Before moving on, it is interesting to take a brief look at a story from The Triumph of the Egg which has so often proved to be useful as a compendium of Andersonian Midwestern American characteristics from outside the community of Winesburg itself. This is, of course, the very long short story "Out of Nowhere into Nothing." Rosiland Westcott, the central figure of the story, is in love with Walter Sayers, who is her employer in Chicago and a married man. She returns home to tell her mother and she meets Melville Stoner, her next door neighbour whom she has always thought to be insensitive. But his talk convinces her that she has been wrong. He tells her of his strange experience in an orchard outside of town:

> In the fall when I had walked there the ground was covered with ripe pears. A fragrance arose from them. They were covered with bees that

> crawled over them, drunk, filled with a kind of ecstasy. I had remembered the fragrance. That's why I went there and put my face in the frozen grass. The bees were in an ecstasy of life and I had missed life.[36]

Melville Stoner seeks life underground, and so do the other characters.

Walter Sayers, whose wife has a garden and a Negro gardener, listens to the young man singing on a summer night:

> It was a sad song, filled with race sadness. There was something in the ground that wanted to grow, buried deep in the ground.[37]

The song of the Mississippi, transplanted from the rivers of Africa, carries an obscure promise of meaningfulness for Walter Sayers, who also believes that " 'The red men, although they are practically all gone still own the American continent. Their fancy has peopled it with ghosts, with gods and devils.' "[38] He believes that the Negro and the Indian are aware and make use of the life of the soil, and of the imagination, and thus retain a natural vitality. The song of the river is an expression of the message of the Midwestern countryside, which the people there must find among the re-created natural landscapes of their minds, the same way that the song of the Liffey (". . . lapping as though her heart was brook: Why, why, why! Weh, O weh! I'se so silly to be flowing but I no canna stay"[39]) is an expression of the message of Dublin, which the Dubliners must find among the streets and buildings -- and river! -- in their minds.

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[36] Ibid., p. 193.

[37] Ibid., pp. 229-30.

[38] Ibid., p. 245.

[39] Finnegans Wake, p. 159.

Rosiland too knows there is life in the underground of both the earth and the mind. She has a favourite spot in Willow Springs -- a nearby orchard -- and it is there she goes to seek an answer to her problem:

> Rosiland's body was soft but all her flesh was firm and strong. She moved away from the tree and lay on the ground. She pressed her body down into the grass, into the firm hard ground. It seemed to her that her mind, her fancy, all the life within her, except just her physical life went away. The earth pressed upward against her body. Her body was pressed against the earth. There was darkness. She was imprisoned. She pressed against the walls of her prison. Everything was dark and there was in all the earth silence. Her fingers clutched a handful of the grasses, played in the grasses.
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> Then she grew still but did not sleep. There was something that had nothing to do with the ground beneath her or the trees or the clouds in the sky, that wanted to come to her, come into her, a kind of white wonder of life.
>
> The thing couldn't happen . . . . where was the wonder of life? It was not within herself, not in the ground. It must be in the sky overhead. Presently it would be night and the stars would come out. Perhaps the wonder did not really exist in life. It had something to do with God. She wanted to ascend upwards, to go at once up into God's house, to be there among the light strong men and women who had died and left the dullness and heaviness behind them on earth.[40]

Rosiland instinctively searches for the "wonder of life" in the earth and in herself. When she cannot find the wonder there she fears that it may not exist, and, though she wishes to ascend to God, she stops trying to find it. She longs for an epiphany and the only way she knows to find a revelation is to descend into her

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[40] The Triumph of the Egg, pp. 236-38.

own mind, down into what she has earlier pictured as a ravine with marble walls or down into the earth itself. Thus the three main people in the story all realize the importance of the imagination, and all three of them search for meaning in the underworld by recognizing the vitality that lies buried in the Midwestern soil itself and by harrowing their minds in search of a similar manifestation. Both Walter Sayers and Rosiland find what they are looking for -- a vision of love that moves him to singing and, later, her to running through the night away from Willow Springs towards Chicago. This story illustrates how life in Anderson's fiction, even though it be out of nowhere and into nothing, can be momentarily meaningful if the imagination is completely liberated and allowed to unveil a universal mystery.

The epiphany is the crowning feature of the literary method of both Joyce and Anderson, both in the textual and structural design of their fiction and as an event that their words re-create. Because the epiphany is the climax of the imaginative progression toward re-creation, it is of prime importance in the actual writing of fiction. Both Joyce and Anderson felt that the sudden insight is crucial for imaginative writing, though with a difference of emphasis: Joyce (especially as a young man) believed that the artist should capture the <u>meaning</u> of the revelation, while Anderson valued the <u>mood</u> of heightened vision as an aid to composition. This is not to say that Joyce was interested exclusively in meaning or Anderson exclusively in mood, but manifestations of "vulgarity of speech or of gesture" certainly dominate the epiphanies in Dublin, as "pregnant hours" of awareness dominate those in Winesburg. The line of demarcation here

between the act of creating and the thing created is not of any importance, for the kinds of revelation that the characters in Dublin and Winesburg experience are naturally a result of the kinds of insight Joyce and Anderson themselves have undergone. A Portrait, Stephen Hero and Anderson's numerous autobiographical sketches are evidence enough of this difference. And this meaning-mood dichotomy accounts for important differences between the visions of the imaginative individuals in Dublin and Winesburg. To put it simply: an epiphany in Dublin is an experience of intensified thinking, and an epiphany in Winesburg is an experience of intensified feeling. Of course thinking and feeling cannot be arbitrarily separated, especially in matters of the imagination (a problem which Wordsworth solved by calling the imagination the "feeling intellect"[41]). But, for the most part, the value of a scene is revealed in words to a person in Dublin, while the value of a scene is revealed in images to an inhabitant of Winesburg. The boy in "Araby" knows in his intellect that he is "a creature driven and derided by vanity,"[42] but George Willard knows in his feelings that he is "a thing destined like corn to wilt in the sun."[43] This is the reason for the charge of vagueness often brought against Anderson.[44] Undoubtedly, if these two brief statements of revelation are compared, then it will be seen that Anderson is being vague in one way: for example, Joyce's

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[41] The Prelude, Bk. XIV, l. 226.

[42] Dubliners, p. 41.

[43] Winesburg, Ohio, p. 215.

[44] See, for example, Lionel Trilling's statement: "Most of us will feel now that this world of Anderson's is a pretty inadequate representation of reality and probably always was" in The Liberal Imagination (New York, 1951), p. 25.

"creature" compared with Anderson's "thing," or Joyce's "driven and derided" with Anderson's "destined to wilt," or Joyce's "vanity" with Anderson's "sun." But Anderson is being very clear in another way: Joyce's words tend to be abstract and nominal, while Anderson's tend to be imagistic. The question is, does clarity reside in thought alone, or can a mood expressed by images convey an equal definiteness? Anderson himself, making a brief defence of D. H. Lawrence for a charge of immaturity brought against him, wrote to Van Wyck Brooks in 1923:

> My dear Brooks, isn't there at least a chance that the fear of emotional response to life may be as much a sign of immaturity as anything else? It does seem so to me.[45]

The emotional response to life characterizes both Anderson and the people in his fiction. But does such a response -- especially the intensified response of the epiphany -- make vagueness inevitable? The answer must be no. As long as the reader can be convinced that a revelation is clear in the mind of the character, it should not matter whether thought or feeling, words or images, the intellect or the emotions are more involved. Certainly, George's revelation is as clear in his mind as is that of the boy in "Araby" or that of Stephen on the beach. The fact that George does not think about what his mood means to him as an artist surely does not make him less of an artist. It simply means that for George, and Anderson, writing is a matter of mood and instinct more than intellect and linguistics as it is for Stephen and Joyce. At any rate, whether or not Anderson's

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[45] Letters of Sherwood Anderson, ed. H.M. Jones and W.B. Rideout (Boston, 1953), p. 109.

epiphanies have the same clarity as Joyce's does not nor should not matter, for they are the result of the very same process of literary creativity. It would be futile either to attempt to define the clarity of the respective epiphanies or to separate and choose between the partitions of the "feeling intellect" which is the imagination.

The most significant thing, however, about Joyce's and Anderson's use of the epiphany is that it is the virtual raison d'être for their short stories. So important is the moment of revelation to both the texture and the structure of their stories, and so revolutionary was this kind of short story writing at the time of Dubliners and Winesburg, Ohio, that the epiphany -- and all that integrates to form this revelation -- may be said to be the most important contribution of Joyce and Anderson (a contribution that they made independently of each other) to the art of short fiction. This innovation of technique has since commanded immeasurable respect, influence, and imitation among modern writers of the short story, and likewise commands some critical attention here.

Having seen how the inhabitants of Dublin and Winesburg are forced by their inarticulateness and lack of community vitality to seek an understanding of their isolation within their own imaginations, and how the climax of this search is the revelatory moment of insight, it is now time to make a brief examination of the effect upon the styles of Joyce and Anderson of this progression through the chambers of the mind that they have re-created in their fiction.

VI

THE TRIUMPH OF THE WORD

If Dubliners and Winesburg, Ohio had been first conceived as dramas, there is very good reason to suppose that they would never have been written. The stage demands speech, and this speech must be articulate, that is, it must be vital speech, it must come from the recesses of consciousness. On the stage people must speak of their subterranean vitality, must erupt with living words, if their most significant feelings and thoughts are to be responded to appropriately by the spectators. Eloquent articulateness has been traditional in drama since the beginnings of that art. The greatness of Sophocles and Shakespeare is, before anything else, the language that they put in the mouths of their characters. However, Western drama since Shakespeare has declined in roughly inverse proportion to the rise of the alienated hero -- the man described perfectly in a metaphor by the nineteenth century French novelist Barrès as the déraciné.[1] Since the man living completely within himself is unlikely to be able to reach out to other people by the most natural human extension of words, speech gradually becomes less and less alive and meaningful. The difficulty of putting this alienated person on the stage is obvious. Of course, such statements as these are dangerous, and can only be expected to serve as the broadest of outlines with the most shadowy of lines, but the general truth of what has been

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[1]Maurice Barrès, Les Déracinés (Paris, 1898).

said must surely be admitted. The purpose of this background is simply to show the province of the inarticulate people of Dublin and Winesburg in the tradition of Western literature.

The concern of both Joyce and Anderson for what Anderson called "true imaginary figures" would probably force them to abandon, in the interests of artistic integrity, any idea of putting their inarticulate characters on the stage. Another, even more obvious, drawback would be the fact that they were working with several stories and would have to write several plays if they wished to make Dubliners and Winesburg, Ohio into dramas. Of course, this is all (hopefully not useless) speculation. In reality, neither Joyce nor Anderson probably ever thought for a moment of writing their stories as plays. Joyce's youthful admiration of Ibsen, Stephen's definitions of the lyric, epic, and dramatic arts, and his preference for the dramatic, in A Portrait, and the fact that he did write one play, Exiles, do however show that he was very interested in drama. In his university essay "Drama and Life" Joyce gives an interesting definition of drama:

> Drama has to do with the underlying laws first, in all their nakedness and divine severity, and only secondarily with the motley agents who bear them out.[2]

Clearly, the motley agents who bear out the underlying laws of life is a perfect description of the Dubliners. When there are several of these motley agents, and when they are lonely and inarticulate, how is one to re-create their lives in art but to write fiction? --

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[2]The Critical Writings, p. 40.

which allows the author to lay open the subvolcanic turmoil that goes on in the minds of these people without the necessity of the spoken word. The writer of fiction might still remain refined out of existence in the same way as a playwrite stays behind the scenes; he might be only a magician who discloses the hidden vitality that his motley agents all carry around in their skulls. So too, Anderson would have found drama to be unsuitable for the stories he had to tell, though it is very doubtful if the idea of writing a play ever even occurred to him. If it had, he would probably have attempted to do so, for he wrote according to whatever feeling impelled him at any given moment. Late in his career, in 1937, he published Plays, Winesburg and Others, but his only attempt to write drama proved unsuccessful. The most important things about his grotesques remain buried inside them, so deep that conventional conversation is powerless to bring these forces to the surface.

What Dubliners and Winesburg, Ohio do is to articulate the lives of the inarticulate. To accomplish this Joyce and Anderson had to write with a subtle, suggestive, and powerful command of language. Using their imaginations they fashioned two not only articulate but also new-styled volumes of short stories. In the broadest possible terms, their short stories presented the reader of the early twentieth century with a radical change of emphasis from the structure of a story to the texture. This of course was not a sudden and independent upheaval in the writing of fiction. Many influences had long been in operation behind the scenes. Both Joyce's and Anderson's faith in the imagination made a living,

growing form more attractive to them than an imposed, predetermined form (once again, a Romantic doctrine). The trend toward realism, with its emphasis upon slice-of-life factuality, no doubt had influence, especially with Joyce, upon attention to details, which in turn would tend to make texture more important than structure. And, of course, the technique of the epiphany was not completely new in fiction. It had long been common for novelists to employ a moment of revelation for their heroes; George Meredith's The Ordeal of Richard Feverel is a good middle nineteenth century example of such a novel, and, as Philip L. Marcus has pointed out,[3] George Moore had used Dublin itself as a scene of sudden visions before the turn of the century. But the short story whose purpose was to capture fleeting manifestations of meaning that flashed from the rough surface of everyday life was new (in English at any rate, though Chekhov had been moving in this direction in Russia). It should be mentioned here that Joyce and Anderson were not the only great short story writers at this time to turn their imaginations, and the language formed within these fiery chambers of the mind, to a design of story-telling that emphasizes each word, rather than the group of words called plot. Katherine Mansfield also in the few years between 1911 and 1923 greatly influenced the revolution to texture-stories with meaning dependent upon poetic implication rather than upon what happens. Bliss and Other Stories, published in 1920, and The Garden Party and Other Stories, published in 1922, certainly deserve to rank

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[3]Philip L. Marcus, "George Moore's Dublin 'Epiphanies' and Joyce," James Joyce Quarterly, (Winter 1968), 157-161.

with Dubliners and Winesburg, Ohio as the forerunners in what has become the tradition of twentieth century short story writing.

But the popular short story throughout this period from 1910 to 1925 continued to be the plot story. The respect with which the realists of the late nineteenth century regarded journalism tended to encourage plots of even sensational nature. It was possible in 1909 for a historian of the short story to characterize the modern age in these words:

> Kipling sums up the last twenty years in the short story about as adequately as Shakespeare sums up the Elizabethan drama.[4]

It should be mentioned that this chronicler subordinates Joseph Conrad and O. Henry as lesser examples of the new tradition of short story writers being established under the leadership of Kipling. This is indeed a unique conglomeration: Kipling and Conrad and O. Henry; seemingly they would be disparates yoked by violence together, but there is (even with the advantage of hindsight) certain legitimacy in linking these authors. All three wrote stories in which something significant happened. Admittedly, there is a great difference, and this difference is in quality as well as technique, between what happens in Conrad's stories and what happens in O. Henry's. These two authors may be taken as the extremes in the writing of the plot story, for Conrad's stories, though they deal with the exotic and adventurous, are mostly stories of the buried life of the individual mind, while O. Henry's stories depend entirely upon an ironic-twist ending, toward which the whole story is structured.

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[4]H. S. Canby, The Short Story in English (New York, 1909), p. 344.

Kipling stands in the middle. The point is: structure had not yet been thrown over in favour of texture, though of course Kipling's journalistic and scientific use of words and Conrad's interest in the depths of the mind were no doubt influencing a shift in that revolutionary direction. But, reviewing Dubliners in 1914, Ezra Pound wrote:

> Since DeMaupassant we have had so many people trying to write "stories" and so few people presenting life. Life for the most part does not happen in neat little diagrams and nothing is more tiresome than the continual pretence that it does.[5]

Pound praised Joyce for his presentation of "life" rather than a plot in which events move toward a climax. Here, as elsewhere, Pound was far more forward-looking than most, for he recognized Joyce as a writer of fiction who was attempting something new and exciting with the form of the short story.

In the United States, the genre had been dominated for some time by O. Henry and others who favoured the slick, suspenseful, structured short story usually with a surprise ending, such as those in his second and most famous volume The Four Million, which was published in 1906 and composed of stories of New York life. In fact, there was almost a current formula for the American short story in the first two decades of the twentieth century. Anderson despised this state of affairs:

> Formerly, when I myself began writing, when I found I could not live by my writing, I worked for several years in a Chicago advertising agency. I was employed there as a writer of advertisements. Publishers and editors of some of our most important

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[5]Ezra Pound, " 'Dubliners' and Mr. James Joyce," 267.

popular magazines used to come to us. They wanted our clients to advertise in their magazines.

Often they outlined for us their plans for the year ahead. "This is the sort of stories we are going to have our writers write," they said. They did not give us actual outlines of stories but often they did speak as a manufacturer of, say automobiles, might have spoken. "We are going to produce this or that model." You get the idea.

> Life was not to be touched too closely, to disturb people or make them think. People did not like being made to think, or to be disturbed. The mind might thus be taken from the buying of the goods advertised in the pages of the magazines.
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> But what is to happen to the imagination of the writer, the story teller? I think you can see that he has got to put it to work in a certain groove, keep it there. He has got to be cautious.[6]

The idea of short story writing, and fiction in general, as a business which manufactures models was common in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The perfect example of the literary businessman in English letters, George Gissing's Jasper Milvain who says summarily, " 'Literature is a trade,' "[7] is not actually much of an exaggeration. And the influence upon the writer of short stories of the trade demands of magazines is not to be scoffed at, for Joyce and Anderson, like all writers in this genre, published their first stories in magazines. In a society with little media for literary experimentation, the manufacted model gains tremendous respect. Thus the influence of 'popular' taste in American fiction, tended to paralyze the conventional mold of the short story.

But the year 1919 was a transition period. O. Henry's Waifs and Strays was published in that year, and so was Winesburg, Ohio, a

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[6]"Man and His Imagination," pp. 45-46.

[7]George Gissing, New Grub Street (London, 1891), p. 7.

first volume of stories by a new writer. Interestingly, the editor of the American Best Short Stories series rated O. Henry's and Anderson's volumes equally: fair or middle of the scale achievements,[8] though he did reprint Anderson's "An Awakening", which had appeared in The Little Review, and did not select any of O. Henry's stories, whose popularity, together with that of his imitators, was by this time on the decline. And in this year, which was less than a decade since his death, an article was even published on the "Amazing Failure of O. Henry."[9] But Anderson was on the way up: he was received enthusiastically by the reviewers and promised to be in the foreground of the American fiction scene for a long time, as indeed he was. The young avant-garde writers regarded him very highly in the early 1920's, and no less a trio than Ernest Hemingway, F. Scott Fitzgerald, and William Faulkner were all friends, and Hemingway and Faulkner were more or less protoges of the suddenly successful Anderson. Though this position as mentor-comrade was short-lived, his achievement with the short story was not forgotten by the younger men. In 1924 Fitzgerald wrote to Maxwell Perkins: ". . . despite Anderson, the short story is at its lowest ebb as an art form."[10] Clearly, Anderson was greatly respected for Winesburg, Ohio, The Triumph of the Egg, and Horses and Men, but the younger men were already beginning to take over; Fitzgerald's Flappers and Philosophers (1920) and Tales of the Jazz Age (1922) were instantly successful,

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[8]Edward J. O'Brien, ed., The Best Short Stories of 1919 (Boston, 1919), pp. 366-67.

[9]R.C. Holliday, "Amazing Failure of O. Henry," Chicago Daily News, March 19, 1919.

[10]Letters of F. Scott Fitzgerald, ed. Andrew Turnbull (New York, 1963), p. 174.

and Ernest Hemingway's In Our Time (1925) introduced what may be called the post-Andersonian period in the American short story, though his last volume of stories, Death in the Woods, in 1933, contained stories as good as those in any of the earlier volumes. It is as "a revolutionary force in the American short story"[11] that Anderson is mainly remembered. But his stories, like those of Joyce, are not significant merely because they were among the first of a new kind of short story; they remain (again, like Joyce's) among the best of this new style. And Winesburg, Ohio has a special place in Anderson's fiction. Its significance has long been recognized; his earliest biographer, Cleveland B. Chase, in 1927, wrote of the Winesburg stories, and his judgement still stands:

> They are one of the important products of the American literary renascence and have probably influenced writing in America more than any book published in the last decade. They made and sustain Anderson's reputation as an author worthy of comparison with the great short story writers.[12]

At this point, a brief consideration of what was so revolutionary about Dubliners and Winesburg, Ohio seems pertinent. As mentioned earlier, the change which Joyce and Anderson helped to bring about is, in the simplest and broadest of terms, a favouring of texture instead of structure as the prime agent of forming a story. The significance is shifted from plot-climax to implication-epiphany. When other aspects of the fiction techniques of Joyce and

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[11]Mark Schorer, The World We Imagine (New York, 1948), p. 313.

[12]Cleveland B. Chase, Sherwood Anderson (New York, 1927), p. 32.

Anderson, and their time in literary history, is remembered, this shift seems almost inevitable. Again, the alienated and inarticulate man looms large in the background. This man, the modern 'hero,' has lost both of his powers: he can no longer act heroically, the principal reason being that he cannot find a cause which requires heroics, and is in danger, usually as an economic underling in a rigidly organized industrial society, of becoming a common man; and, of course, he can no longer speak heroically. Both these losses tend directly to one result: that life becomes, instead of violent eruptions of the best and the worst in man, the underground stream of consciousness. Thus, since life is no longer dramatic, a plot in literature (especially in fiction) becomes superficial, and the dull though sometimes fascinating fabric of everyday life seems to be the best imitation of nature. This is all also closely related to Joyce's and Anderson's mode of writing, which one word sums up -- imaginative. The process of re-creating the fabric of life makes the artist a god, for he can understand where others are blind, and most important, he can speak where others are dumb. The very act of writing is for him an ordering into meaningfulness of the chaos of life, and the best way, since it seems most fitting, for him to express this meaning to anyone who reads his work is to use words in such a way that his meaning is suggested, often ironically. By doing this the imaginative artist is in fact encouraging the people who read what he writes to participate in the imagination-unto-re-creation that he has first experienced. Like the Romantic poets, he is using words to liberate the imaginations of the massss of people so that they can experience more feeling.

The imagination is especially vital in such societies as Joyce and Anderson saw all about them, for the vision that it can supply is the only hope for these people who live in the shells of their skulls and bodies. If understanding is to be achieved in such a world it must come as a manifestation to the imagination, for communication with others is impossible and public sources of meaning have decayed. Therefore the epiphany is as crucial for the re-created people as it is for the re-creator. By concentrating on the suggestive powers of the texture of a story, the writer is able to show both life as it is and what it means at the same time. With such people in such communities and living in such a time, Joyce and Anderson wrote in the natural manner that their imaginations suggested and the result was a new form for the short story.

To illustrate, a quick look at two representative stories from Dubliners and Winesburg, Ohio should suffice: say, "The Boarding House" and "Paper Pills." Major similarities and differences between Joyce's and Anderson's techniques with the texture of their stories will thus be readily apparent.

The first obvious thing about the form of "The Boarding House" is that there is no direct-line sequence of events with a beginning, middle, and end. Time in the story is twofold: there is the time of what happens on a certain Sunday morning, and, more important, there is the fluctuating time in the imaginations of all three of the major characters. With almost no movement of action -- in fact, no plot -- to shape the story, time is mainly internal in the minds of the characters, and because of this, form is not dependent upon structure but upon texture. This concept of personal time is, once

again, inherently Romantic. Wordsworth described the life-time of an individual this way:

> Even as a river, -- partly (it might seem)
> Yielding to old remembrances, and swayed
> In part by fear to shape a way direct,
> That would engulf him soon in the ravenous sea --
> Turns, and will measure back his course, far back,
> Seeking the very regions which he crossed
> In his first outset; so have we, my Friend!
> Turned and returned with intricate delay.
> Or as a traveller, who has gained the brow
> Of some aerial Down, while there he halts
> For breathing time, is tempted to review
> The region left behind him; and if aught
> Deserving notice have escaped regard,
> Or been regarded with too careless eye,
> Strives, from that height, with one and yet one more
> Last look, to make the best amends he may:
> So have we lingered.[13]

Wordsworth's metaphors of the river and the traveller, both always turning backward in the very process of moving ahead, explain very well the idea that life and time move in a steady progression only on the surface, while in the undermind of the individual, life and time have no sequential order whatsoever.

Because Joyce utilized this conception of time as a non-chronological series of images in the individual imagination, it is only natural that the form of his stories would be that of a series of vivid but fragmented memory images in the mind of the hero; each image dissolving after a short while and being replaced by another of a different time, and perhaps even of a different character's mind. Of course, there is apparent in the narration a surface or clock time which serves to unify and integrate the times and places of the various images which are related. For example, in "The

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[13] The Prelude, Bk. IX, ll. 1-16.

Boarding House" the Wordsworthian "spots of time" go like this: the first four long paragraphs are straight background narration which set up the historical perspective of the boarding house and establish the characteristics of the Mooney family; the next paragraph narrates the problem of Polly's affair; the next five paragraphs reveal Mrs. Mooney's thoughts on the day in which the action of the story takes place; the next three paragraphs contain Bob Doran's thoughts, which include some reminiscing; the next four paragraphs are again surface action: Polly enters and confronts Bob Doran; the next four paragraphs present images of their love affair in Bob Doran's mind; the next three paragraphs are again action: Bob descends to meet "the Madam;" the next two paragraphs show Polly Mooney lounging on her bed and imply that she is experiencing a past time in her mind; and the story ends, still with Polly's perspective, in the 'climax' of surface action, though the last line is reserved for Polly's buried life and completes the story not by an event but by an epiphany of suggestion: "Then she remembered what she had been waiting for."[14] Clearly, nothing which happens in the story could stand alone as worthy of being re-created in fiction. There is no surprise, no suspense, no action, not even a bit of articulate conversation. The form is like the unfolding of a cocoon (to use a Romantic metaphor): there is no rush of events leading to a climax, only a slow opening of the obvious -- no one was ever surprised by a Joycean short story any more than by a butterfly. Each step in the development is important both in itself and for the

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[14] Dubliners, p. 84.

image-like conclusion. All the stories of Dubliners grow into something meaningful and end with the maturity of revelation; they are not sliced out of life, but are organic themselves and are most alive when they reach the point where they suggest an epiphany. The time fragmentation allows for an almost plotless story to be written; only three actions occur in the present of this story (the Madam sends for Bob, he descends, and she calls for Polly), but the individual memory-stored times blend for the reader to make these simple actions a meaningful event in their lives. What Joyce has done is to use words imaginatively[15] as to articulate the inarticulate, subterranean forces of his Dubliners and to combine these subvolcanic disclosures in such an interrelation as to imply with brilliant clarity in the very last sentence of the story all the vulgarity of Mrs. Mooney, the gullibility of Bob Doran, and the ambition of Polly Mooney. Such things as Mrs. Mooney saving the bread crusts from Sunday's breakfast for Tuesday's pudding, Bob Doran's desire to ascend through the roof of the house, and Polly Mooney's naughty song -- the incidental things of the story -- all interjoin for the making of the fabric of the final vision which completes the form of the story. In a recent article Nathan Halper has said of the story ". . . it is clear what is happening."[16] Though Halper is here referring to the lack of "difficulty," it is not legitimate to assume that the story is uncomplicated. If a quite different inference is made from his statement, then the

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[15]For details of Joyce's suggestive use of language see Chapter II.

[16]Nathan Halper, " 'The Boarding House,' " James Joyce's Dubliners: Critical Essays, ed. Clive Hart (London, 1969), p. 72.

true nature of Joyce's achievement here is more evident: that the amazing clarity of the story is an ultimate proof of the power of suggestive details to illuminate the obscurities of everyday life.

Sherwood Anderson's "Paper Pills" exhibits a similar form to "The Boarding House." Again there is no logical progression of time. The first paragraph tells everything that happens in the story:

> He was an old man with a white beard and hugh nose and hands. Long before the time during which we will know him, he was a doctor and drove a jaded white horse from house to house through the streets of Winesburg. Later he married a girl who had money. She had been left with a large fertile farm when her father died. The girl was quiet, tall, and dark, and to many people she seemed very beautiful. Everyone in Winesburg wondered why she married the doctor. Within a year after the marriage she died.[17]

With the outline of the story thus disposed of, Anderson proceeds to re—create different times in the lives of the characters and to give direct author-comment where it seems to him appropriate. The most important "spots of time" in two lifetimes are presented, with their interconnecting implication, in the space of only four pages: it is an outstanding achievement with the poetic short story, for it is as concentrated and tense with suggestion as the poetry of imagism which was being written at the same time by others in Chicago, some of them Anderson's own friends. The next three paragraphs describe Doctor Reefy's character by the use of images: his large hands that look like"clusters of unpainted wooden balls as large

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[17] Winesburg, Ohio, p. 32.

as walnuts fastened together by steel rods" and the "pyramids of truth" he erects in his mind, and the little balls of paper that he keeps in his pockets; the next paragraph comes back to the doctor's relationship with the tall, dark girl which Anderson seems to separate from the overall story: he speaks of the courtship as "a very curious story" and goes on to compare it with the twisted apples of the Winesburg orchards. Of course, with the description of the sweetness of these twisted apples the two previous spherical images fuse with the image of the apples and all three become related symbols.[18] The next two brief paragraphs disclose that the building blocks of the doctor's pyramids of truth are written on the scraps of paper: namely, random thoughts which when combined form a truth which eventually "clouded the world" for the doctor and thereupon dissolved. The next three paragraphs retreat into the past for the girl's story, especially for a particular dream which becomes part of her consciousness. The next two paragraphs then present the scene in the doctor's office when they meet. The story then ends with a quick summation of the few months of their marriage. The last two sentences tell of the most important event of this period:

> During the winter he read to her all of the odds and ends of thoughts he had scribbled on the bits of paper. After he had read them he laughed and stuffed them away in his pockets to become hard round balls.[19]

As in Joyce's story, the end is not a climax but an epiphany. The

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[18]See pp.50-51 for further explication of the symbolic importance of the twisted apples to the entirety of Winesburg, Ohio.

[19]Winesburg, Ohio, p. 35.

images and symbols grow in their homeliness until the point where the beauty of a manifestation of meaning is unfolded. And it is the most delicate of revelations, for, though it is evident that the attempt to communicate the image of truth is fatal, any logical questioning that can be brought against such a suggestion would soon break away the tender fibres of the vision.

To emphasize the extent to which Anderson has disregarded the convention of sequential action in this story it need only be mentioned that there is no one predominant "now" or "then" in it; that is, there is no surface flow of events or single event which can be taken as background time to which the personal time of each character can be referred. In "The Boarding House" the "now" or 'real' time is the Sunday morning when Mrs. Mooney calls for Bob Doran, but in "Paper Pills" there is no one present, only several individual times, one as present as the other. Generally speaking, this is one difference between the textures of Joyce's and Anderson's stories; both tend to escape the conventional structure imitated from historical time and let their stories grow as they will, be it amorphously or symmetrically, but Anderson is more radical in this respect than Joyce. James M. Mellard has recently observed that:

> Actually, Winesburg has four rather distinct narrative forms: a form (1) that focuses on a central symbol, (2) that portrays a character type, (3) that delineates a quality, state, or "truth," and (4) that depicts a simple plot development.[20]

But such a division of narrative forms fails to mention the most important thing of all about the form of the stories in Winesburg,

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[20]James M. Mellard, "Narrative Forms in Winesburg, Ohio," PMLA, LXXXIII (October 1968), 1304.

Ohio: simply that, as far as traditional structuring is concerned, Anderson's stories have an essential quality of what Virginia Woolf discerned long ago as "shellessness."[21] And this is Anderson's, and Joyce's, greatest contribution to the short story; by writing of the imaginative lives of others imaginatively they were able to do away with forms as grooves or molds and let their stories flow according to the cavernous streams of people's thoughts and feelings rather than according to the events of clock-time which happen independent of consciousness.

The texture-rich short story then is the principal achievement for Anderson in fiction, and a first and major achievement of Joyce. The influence that this revolution has had since 1920 is immeasurable. Perhaps the best indication of its significance is that this kind of short story has become, in a few short decades, traditional. And perhaps the most appropriate illustration of how strong and universal is this tradition is to be found in the voice of the current 'little magazines' that have in those same few decades become synonymous with the views of the avant-garde. For example, Kent Thompson, writing in the Canadian magazine Fiddlehead, has recently observed that a new revolution is immanent:

> Again, one is constantly reminded of the stranglehold which the sonnet-form or sonnet-technique has upon the literary mind. So many writers have come to think in sonnet patterns that we have come to expect -- even demand -- sonnet-thinking. Writers who would shudder at the thought of writing an actual rhymed sonnet will quite happily compose a dazzling imagistic syllogism and nail the point down with the "different" image. Even short story writers who will swear that they have not looked

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[21] Virginia Woolf, "American Fiction," Saturday Review of Literature, II (August 1, 1925), 1.

> at a sonnet since Grade 11 will construct a story in which a final revelation runs back through the story like a zipper and tidies-up all the thoughts. Worst of all, this kind of zipper-thinking places a tremendous emphasis on thought, on idea, on point. Character or quality of experience, or direct communication of emotion, are neglected in favour of wit and display of skill.[22]

It is not the texture story itself which is being rebelled against presently, but the one in which the fabric has worn so threadbare that the "zipper-thinking" is obvious. In other words, as with all traditional literary forms, the texture story has degenerated with popularity in the hands of those who use the form, not feelingly, but merely as a vehicle for trickery. But such a thing is inevitable, and it would certainly be foolhardy to suppose that the technique of writing short stories had reached a glorious culmination with the innovations of Joyce and Anderson, and Mansfield. Way must be made for another Joyce and another Anderson if the art of imaginative fiction is to go on living.

By way of recapitulation, it must be stated that a cycle has been completed. Beginning with a brief poetics of both Joyce and Anderson, in which it was discovered that they each worked from a similar premise: that fiction was made in a threefold process -- observation of life through both the senses and the intellect, brooding upon these observations in the chambers of the imagination, and the resultant re-creation of life anew -- the step was then taken to examine the workings of Joyce's and Anderson's imaginations:

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[22]Kent Thompson, "Editorial," Fiddlehead, No. 79 (March - April 1969), 2.

namely the settings of Dublin and Winesburg, Ohio, which was the archetypal small town of the American Midwest, and it was found that, though disparate in many ways, these communities were identical in that they each had been re-created rather than represented. Focusing then upon the individuals in Dublin and Winesburg, it became apparent that they were all isolated from each other and suffered in loneliness simply because they were unable to speak out the desires that lay in the netherminds of their intellects and emotions. It was then disclosed that since relief from their alienation was not to be received from the public institutions of religion, politics, and the arts, these people had to go down into the depths of their own imaginations, which resembled surrealistically the communities in which they lived, in order to search for a transcendental explanation of their frustrations. It was then seen that the visionary message was there to be experienced in the imagination, but that only a few had the courage to seek out the truth. Finally, scrutiny was returned to Joyce and Anderson themselves for a look at the effect upon their short fiction techniques of the people that they had chosen to re-create faithfully with only the addition of implied meaning, suggested by their choice of details and their use of language, and it was discovered that the inhabitants of Dublin and Winesburg who lived contained in their imaginations and memories had indeed affected the authors' styles of writing: namely, in that the fragmented personal time which they experienced, and more so than usual because of their inarticulateness, had made it inevitable that Joyce and Anderson (who favoured a poetic language to begin with) would

fragment the sequences of their stories and replace the structured story of plot and climax with the suggestive story of actionless epiphany.

Imagination has been the key throughout. It was with this power that Joyce and Anderson fused the disorder of Dublin and the small Midwestern town into an order which revealed its significance for their particular historical time; and an important era it was, because it was the last threshold between the old time of tradition, ease, social vitality, and dependence upon nature to the new time of rebellious individuality, speed, rejection of society, and dependence upon industry. Mainly, it was the imaginative lives of the people that they re-created, from the impulses that cannot form into words through the museyroom or the house of corn to the ultimate realization of a universal secret of life. And the combination of the re-creators' imaginations with the imaginative lives of the re-created gave shape to a new kind of short story that imitated the underground personal time sequence of the individual rather than the lifetime by which society recognized him.

Judgement need not be made as to the relative achievements of Joyce and Anderson. It has been the purpose of this study to show that they wrote with similar aims, about similar communities, and had a similar effect upon the art of short fiction. Many differences have been pointed out along the way, but they seldom implied comparative distinction. It would be easy to choose the better writer -- no one would place Anderson with Joyce on the loftiest

pinnicle of modern-day fiction, if their overall careers be considered. And the difference is easily accounted for. William Faulkner, in his statement of appreciation of Anderson's work and of the influence of Anderson upon his own writing put it this way:

> His was that fumbling for exactitude, the exact word and phrase within the limited scope of a vocabulary controlled and even represented by what was in him almost a fetish of simplicity, to milk them both dry, to seek always to penetrate to thought's uttermost end. He worked so hard at this that it finally became just a style: an end instead of a means: so that he presently came to believe that, provided he kept the style pure and exact and unchanged and inviolate, what the style contained would have to be first rate: it couldn't help but be first rate, and therefore himself too.[23]

Unlike Joyce, Anderson attempted to freeze his imaginative vision into an artificial permanence; in fact, he began to produce "models", like those the editors visiting the advertising agency where he worked years before had sought. But when considering the short story, it is hardly fair to criticize Anderson for not writing novels comparable with Ulysses and Finnegans Wake. Perhaps it is best to say simply that a choice between the relative merits of certain stories in Dubliners and certain stories in Winesburg, Ohio is impossible to make, and that preference for one or the other is at best a matter of taste.

The greatest accomplishment of Joyce and Anderson in these two revolutionary volumes of short stories is one for which they can claim equal credit. The language they used to speak for the inarticulate communities which always lived in their minds appeals to

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[23]William Faulkner, "Sherwood Anderson: An Appreciation," Atlantic, CXCI (June 1953), 28.

the imagination of the reader, and thus says the most that can humanly be said, for suggestion soars indefinitely from the surface of such language. Speaking greatly, then, for the inarticulate is indeed Joyce's and Anderson's highest achievement in Dubliners and Winesburg, Ohio, and it is a form of the grandest ascendency possible for the literary artist: the triumph of the word.

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