

—What is a ghost? Stephen said with tingling energy. One who has faded into impalpability through death, through absence, through change of manners.

[\(Ulysses 9, 147-149\)](#)

In Tom Stoppard's *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* Rosencrantz's last line as he is about to disappear is "Now you see me, now you. . . ." The reader knows from Shakespeare's text that he is now a ghost through death; the auditor from Stoppard's play that he is a ghost through absence. The pregnant ellipsis is itself a ghost through absence, suspended aloft and rattling its chains, unspoken but nonetheless "heard" by the process of subliminal anticipation as we instinctively complete the line by availing ourselves of a preexisting text. The gnomon of Euclid resurfaces thousands of years later in the opening paragraph of "The Sisters," trailing after itself clouds of meaning probably only dimly perceivable to the young dilettante of words who is the central intelligence of the story and variously apprehended by the variety of readers of *Dubliners*. Gnomon coexists in the boy's mind in an unholy trinity with paralysis and simony: he incarnates paralysis, the *new* word, as "some maleficent and sinful being" (*Dubliners* 9). Paralysis is the recent apparition come to claim Father Flynn; [End Page 519] by extension simony, actually derived from a personified Simon Magus, is one who sometimes appears but should be kept away; and gnomon is a nonappearance suggesting a presence made palpable only by the concept of its absence.

The ghosts who haunt *Dubliners* outnumber those conjured up by either Henrik Ibsen or Charles Dickens, beginning with Father Flynn himself, and followed by green-eyed sailors, Father Butler, O'Donovan Rossa, Mrs. Farrington, Alphy Donnelly, Mrs. Sinico, Charles Stewart Parnell, Richard J. Tierney, Johannes Josef Ignaz von Döllinger, Father Constantine Conroy, and hosts of others, including the Holy Ghost.

Frequent attention has been given to the priestly presence and absence in *Dubliners*, a volume that begins with the death of Father Flynn. He is dead before the boy is aware that he has died, although he had been anticipating the death and attempting to read the signs of that death in the candle-lit window. Apprised of the news by Old Cotter, the boy feigns indifference rather than give the adults the satisfaction of seeing his reaction: later he finds that the pretense of indifference has evolved into a sustained absence of emotional reaction ("I found it strange that neither I nor the day seemed in a mourning mood" [12]). The signs that eluded him at night in the priest's window he belatedly encounters by day on the shop door, the formal notice that inadvertently discloses that Father Flynn before his death was already a ghost through absence ("formerly of S. Catherine's Church, Meath Street" [12]). Even before his official verification of the death, the boy is afraid of being haunted: "In the dark of my room I imagined that I saw again the heavy grey face of the paralytic. I drew the blankets over my head and tried to think of Christmas" (11). The ghost of course materializes in his dream, strangely smiling, the smile reflected in the boy's responsive smile until roles are interchanged and the child absolves the priest ("I felt that I too was smiling as if to absolve the simoniac of his sin" [11]). The smile recurs when the boy does see the dead body (and the candles *are* lit), but it is only the ghost of a smile:

The fancy came to me that the old priest was smiling as he lay there in his coffin.

But no. When we rose and went up to the head of the bed I saw that he was not smiling.

(14)

Each of the three childhood stories has its obligatory Catholic cleric, but whereas Father Flynn is so recently deceased, the priest that haunts "Araby" is remote, anonymous,

unrelated to the boy who now tenants his transferred house. His domain is the "waste room behind the kitchen . . . littered with old useless papers" (29); his legacy is a suspicious trio of abandoned books reflecting either his interests (ostensible or covert) or rejection, books he purposely has discarded—in either case they transfer to the accidental recipient who prefers the one with yellow pages. **[End Page 520]** Bracketed by dead priests, Father Butler of "An Encounter" is very much alive, but his presence is confined to his school so that the truants in absenting themselves from classes for the day manage to disengage themselves from his living presence. Nonetheless, the spectre of Father Butler threatens to hover over them as they plan their disengagement: "Leo Dillon was afraid that we might meet Father Butler or someone out of the college" (21). It is a fear that no rational disclaimer can dispel, for Leo proves a ghost through absence, preferring to face the priest in the flesh than risk the priest in spirit at the Pigeon House, and becomes truant to the planned truancy. Mahony's contrasting insensitivity is nonetheless "sensible" to the protagonist ("Mahony asked, very sensibly, what would Father Butler be doing out at the Pigeon House" [21]). Lulled by this logic, the boys risk ghostly encounters on the day's adventures, but they manage to procrastinate sufficiently in their journey toward their destination never actually to arrive at the Pigeon House—it too an unrealized goal that may portend more than it promises.

The notable absence of priests becomes endemic throughout the adult stories of *Dubliners*; absence and anonymity, established in "Araby," return in "Eveline," once again associated with yellowing:

And yet during all those years she had never found out the name of the priest whose yellowing photograph hung on the wall above the broken harmonium beside the coloured print of the promises made to Blessed Margaret Mary Alacoque. He had been a school friend of her father. Whenever he showed the photograph to a visitor her father used to pass it with a casual word: —He is in Melbourne now.

(37)

The tone of indirection, the degree of insignificance, the remoteness of the location in Australia, the indifference in Eveline's idle curiosity—all these relegate the departed cleric to obscurity. And there is no one until "Ivy Day in the Committee Room" to represent the Dublin clergy in *Dubliners*.

As a prelude to the mysterious appearance of Father Keon, we have the mention of "Father Burke's name" (123) conscripted into service by candidate Tierney's canvassers as one of the nominators of their man, a name with ironic reverberations once we hear about the revered Father Tom Burke eulogized in "Grace," although at the other end of the spectrum there is Daniel Burke, the Dublin publican in whose premises Mr. Duffy has his lunch (Tierney too is a publican). It is Keon of course who excites the interests of the canvassers, an apparition out of nowhere, bundled up so that his clerical collar is concealed, hovering in the doorway of the darkened committee room, seeking someone who is not there. (His face has "the appearance of yellow cheese"!) First designated as "A person resembling a poor clergyman or a poor actor," Father Keon is classified in terms of a false façade (a clergyman dissembling? an actor impersonating?), and Henchy voices an immediate disbelief apparently **[End Page 521]** in his actual existence: "O, Father Keon! . . . Is that you?" (126). Failing to find the object of his visit, Father Keon quickly and inconspicuously disappears, leaving behind enthralled speculation:

What is he exactly? . . .
Is he a priest at all? . . .
And how does he knock it out? . . .
Is he attached to any chapel or church or institution or—

(126-127)

The lapsed question, although answered in the negative, resurfaces immediately in a new context emphasizing once again that which is missing from the committee room and that

which their employer could logically and easily have provided: "Is there any chance of a drink itself?" (127). And despite the temporary fascination with the "black sheep" pastor, he is summarily allowed to fade into inconsequence.

Father Keon has the almost unique distinction of being a ghost through *change of manners*, although he may have an analogue in the famous Father Purdon of "Grace," the one story in *Dubliners* in which the clergy are of pronounced importance. The centrality of religion does not guarantee the sanctity of ecclesiastical stature: as the comforters gather around the Kernan sickbed (at which Fogarty intrudes as an uninvited, unexpected guest), the talk is of popes who do not behave like popes ("there were some bad lots," Cunningham concedes [168]), but write poems on photography; cardinals who either change their beliefs or leave the Church; priesthoods that are "unworthy of the name" (164); the Jesuit Order that "never fell away" (164), although in reality it had been suspended on several occasions; and a sermon that is "not exactly a sermon, you know. It's just a friendly kind of talk, you know" (165). Mrs. Kernan's contribution to Catholic orthodoxy introduces the banshee as part of a quadrilateral Trinity, paralleling Fogarty's presence as a Fourth Comforter. When Father Purdon does make his appearance, he justifies his reputation as "a man of the world like ourselves" (164) (Kernan had never heard of him) and lectures the businessmen on double-entry spiritual accountancy. It is a resuscitated Kernan who attends the retreat, apparently unmindful that no spiritual comforter from the Church has been present at his bedside, only well-meaning but ill-informed laity involved in luring him to the Gardiner Street church through duplicity. No spiritual emanation attends the Christmastime festivities at the Morkans' in "The Dead" either, although the reigning pope is taken to task for eliminating women from the choirs, and monks at Mount Melleray are lauded for sleeping in their coffins, although not yet dead. Particularly conspicuous for his absence is Gabriel's brother, Father Constantine Conroy, senior curate at Balbriggan; no one mentions him at all during the evening, and it is only in a photograph that Constantine [End Page 522] is present, not as a priest but as a child "dressed in a man-o'-war suit" (186).

When Gabriel Conroy posits a general paralytic condition of snow falling generally throughout Ireland, he envisions the Oughterard graveyard as a paradigm of Ireland, "snow falling . . . upon all the living and the dead" (224). These two discrete categories had undergone a series of fusions in "The Dead," a process anticipated by almost every story in *Dubliners*. Deaths occur only in two of the stories, "The Sisters" and "A Painful Case," but the margin separating life and death is often depleted: Eveline Hill is not yet twenty, yet has lost her mother and a brother; even a childhood playmate, Tizzie Dunn, is already dead. She herself has undergone a change from childhood into a prematurely responsibility-ridden young adult, for whom the efficacy of escape is justified by the changes in the world around her ("Everything changes" [37]). When she assumes that "Now she was going to go away like the others" (37), does she mean like the Waters, who "had gone back to England" (37), or like Tizzie Dunn? The photograph of the forgotten priest returns her own image should she leave; she may not be able to imagine the prospective house in Buenos Aires, but she can visualize herself as *absent* from her own home, a fading, yellowing, discarded memory, a vacuum that only the dust fills. It is the fear of nonexistence that eventually paralyzes Eveline into remaining a ghost in her own home.

Negative haunting—the absence of an expected ghost—is a motif introduced in the first story as the child realizes the lack of emotional response to the news of the priest's anticipated death. "A Painful Case" further develops the concept: by maintaining no real contact with other living beings, Duffy has insulated himself from their ghostly

visitations after death ("He lived his spiritual life without any communion with others, visiting his relatives at Christmas and escorting them to the cemetery when they died" [109]); by living "at a little distance from his body, regarding his own acts with doubtful side-glances" (108), he has established himself as his own ghost, a comfortable ghost he knows and has accommodated himself to. Although the official verdict records that "No blame attached to anyone" (115), Duffy suspects that he has compromised himself into qualifying as Mrs. Sinico's intended victim by temporarily conducting his inadvisable relationship with her (Captain Sinico, a ghost through absence, had created a vacuum into which Duffy allowed himself to be drawn). As long as Duffy can convince himself that Mrs. Sinico is to blame, he can remain free of her haunting; as soon as he implicates himself as responsible for her neglect (he too a ghost through absence), the danger of her ghost accosting him becomes imminent: "She seemed to be near him in the darkness. At moments he seemed to feel her voice touch his ear, her hand touch his. He stood **[End Page 523]** still to listen. Why had he withheld life from her? Why had he sentenced her to death? He felt his moral nature falling to pieces" (117). A third turn of the screw, however, eliminates any possibility of ectoplasmic contact from the dead Mrs. Sinico; instead, it is the *absence* of any such emanation that haunts Duffy:

He could not feel her near him in the darkness nor her voice touch his ear. He waited for some minutes listening. He could hear nothing: the night was perfectly silent. He listened again: perfectly silent. He felt that he was alone.

(117)

The ease with which the dead evaporate from memory, a subject of concern to Leopold Bloom ("People talk about you a bit: forget you. . . . Even Parnell. Ivy day dying out" [\[Ulysses 6. 853-855\]](#)), as if he had witnessed the events a year or so earlier in the Tierney committee room. Parnell's ghost, wanly evoked by Joe Hynes, fails to generate fire or warmth among the jejune political canvassers; nor does the ethereal presence of Christ fare much better in the hothouse atmosphere of the Morkans' Christmas party, where no bursting forth of an epiphany illumines the twelfth night of the Yule season. Father Flynn's corpse is as devoid of spirit as his dropped chalice was of sacramental wine; Eveline Hill's mother is recalled for her dying gibberish; and the missing mother of the Donnelly brothers in "Clay" has long been supplanted by Maria (even while alive the mother had been relegated to a back bench—"Mamma is mamma but Maria is my proper mother"—and then displaced completely, her death presumably responsible for the "break-up at home" [100]). And the dead of "The Dead" outnumber the living, literally as well as metamorphically. The presence of Gabriel, the two aunts, and niece Mary Jane is overbalanced by the absence of the third sister Ellen, Gabriel's mother; of the brother Pat, Mary Jane's father; of Gabriel's father, T. J. Conroy; of grandfather Patrick Morkan; of Mary Jane's mother—by implication, although she is never mentioned. (While the grandfather is "late lamented," his horse commands even greater immortality as "The never-to-be-forgotten Johnny" [207]). All the adults in the family enclave of "The Dead" are parentless, an epidemic situation in *Dubliners*, where even young adults seem devoid of parents (except for the fathers of Jimmy Doyle and John Corley, and the disunited parents of Polly Mooney). The genesis of this condition is apparent in the boyhood stories where the protagonist of "The Sisters" and "Araby" lives with an aunt and uncle instead, and not even surrogate parents are as much as mentioned in "An Encounter."

The extent to which the boy's parents have been refined out of existence is all the more poignant by the negative evidence, particularly in "The Sisters," where death is the immediate subject matter. There is ample time even in this brief narrative for the death of Father Flynn to invoke recollections by the boy of the death of his own parents (should **[End Page 524]** he have been aware of the instances of their dying) or the condition of their being dead (should he have been too young when it actually

happened). Instead, there is a vacuum, as if those deaths were too remote for his conscious comparison, or were a blocked passage of thought that will not allow the boy's mind to consider the traumas of the past. The psychological gnomon of "The Sisters" has two faces: that which shows itself in the first half of the story, as the protagonist actively investigates his reactions to the death of the priest, and that which hides itself in the second half, as he abdicates his function as active reactor and allows the events in the priest's death room to unfold themselves "objectively," ghost writing on the *tabula rasa* of his mind, to which he adds no marginal notations. By failing to comment on the conversation between his aunt and Eliza Flynn, by refusing to allow himself to think critically of the tenor of their talk, the boy not only succumbs to a form of mental paralysis, but also "disappears" from the scene (like Nannie in her deafness and fatigue), abstracted from the parallelogram.

Joyce's stage direction for the gnomon is particularly specific, "the word *gnomon* in the Euclid" (9)—some of his indicators are left vague, some self-explanatory, some pointedly marked. The parallel image of the three words of "The Sisters" can be found in the opening portion of "Araby" in the three books (books are repositories of words), where the author of *The Abbot* is specified, the author of *The Memoirs of Vidocq* implicit, and the author of *The Devout Communicant* a ghost through absence. Yet even the Euclidian gnomon is self-reflexive, and the gnomonics of *Dubliners* are of parallel possibilities: "the remainder of a parallelogram after the removal of a similar parallelogram containing one of its corners" suggests both presence and absence, that which has been taken away and that which remains. Both conditions are operative in *Dubliners* and both germane to the technic of the book. The presumably orphaned boy of the book's "Telemachiad" is the remaining factor in a construction that has lost its initial construct; and in the two social situations he is an uncomfortable fourth corner (uncommunicative when his aunt, uncle, and Old Cotter discuss the death of the priest, and when his aunt, Eliza, and Nannie conduct a dismal wake at his bier). Whereas in the first instance he comments silently to himself, in the second he has given up even that degree of participation so that, totally abstracted, he silently observes a parallelogram consisting of his aunt, the Flynn sisters, and the dead man. In the "Nostos" of *Dubliners*, "The Dead," some of the living return home, constantly casting their shadows over those dead that have been removed from the box stage of the Morkans' residence (itself a corner transplanted from the original house in Stony Batter), and in turn are shadows themselves of those who haunt the corners of the rooms.

The "Odyssey" proper of *Dubliners*, stories four through fourteen, contains numerous instances of spiritual legerdemain, inexact substitutions, [End Page 525] substances that cast no shadows, and frames that enclose no solid constructs. Eveline's rooms are mysteriously invaded by dust despite her weekly effort to eliminate the dust (just as "the evening invade[s] the avenue" [36] as she watches from her window). She has chosen to replace the dusty air of Dublin with the clean air of Buenos Aires, removing herself from an area in which she cannot prevent invasions. "Down far in the avenue she could hear a street organ playing" (39-40), a further uninvited invasion of her thoughts, and the familiar "air" conjures up an involuntary memory of her promise to her dying mother. The dead mother has been replaced by the blessed Margaret Mary Alacoque (temporarily, Eveline assumes, but by the end of the story it proves to be a permanent replacement). Eveline had become of late a substitute for her absent brothers (Ernest now dead, Harry "in the church decorating business . . . nearly always down somewhere in the country" [38]) as the recipient of her father's wrath. Should she escape, she would undoubtedly be replaced in the victim's position by the young siblings that she promised her mother she

would protect—as a surrogate mother. "Ernest had been her favourite" (39), but he was no longer in the equation, his place miraculously taken by a sailor named Frank, "kind, manly, open-hearted" (38), assuredly earnest. Eveline mentally deconstructs the substance of her Dublin dwelling ("Home! She looked round the room, reviewing all its familiar objects which she had dusted once a week for so many years, wondering where on earth all the dust came from. Perhaps she would never see again those familiar objects from which she had never dreamed of being divided" [37]) and reconstructs it in her imagination at the other end of the world ("But in her new home, in a distant, unknown country, it would not be like that. Then she would be married, she—Eveline" [37]). The assumption that "she would not be treated as her mother had been" (37) is a chancey one, predicated on a false syllogism—after all, her mother had been married too and nonetheless had been treated badly. The ghost of the "melancholy air of Italy" (40) returns to project her memories back to her mother: the projection forward to her new life is censored in her thoughts but was obviously instrumental in preventing her from boarding the ship. Adept at handling the Dublin market crowds on terra cognita ("holding her black leather purse tightly in her hand as she elbowed her way through the crowd and returning home late under her load of provisions" [38]), she rebels against the "swaying crowd in the station at the North Wall" (40) and refuses to be pushed along toward that "distant, unknown country" (37), preferring *The Devil That You Know*.

"Things Above Are Mirrored in Things Below" reads the oft-quoted precept from *The Emerald Tablets* of Hermes Trismegistus (Joyce's own "quotation" can be found in *Finnegans Wake*: "The tasks above are as the flasks below, saith the emerald canticle of Hermes" [263; 21-22]), **[End Page 526]** the mundane not so much negating the ethereal as corresponding to it. Eveline's successful maneuvers through her neighborhood market suggest one of the few instances in which she holds her own against a sea of troubles. Her youthful counterpart in "Araby" has also attempted to buck the tide of a similar environment, concentrating on the phantasm of Mangan's sister rather than the necessity of doing the shopping:

Her image accompanied me even in places the most hostile to romance. On Saturday evenings when my aunt went marketing I had to go to carry some of the parcels. 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 guard by the barrels of pigs' cheeks, the nasal chanting 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 converged in a single sensation of life for me: I imagined that I bore my chalice safely through a throng of foes.

(30)

The boy assumes himself above the battle; Eveline persists as a vital part of it. She has temporarily escaped the hostility of her home, where she had fought her father for the money with which to shop, and engaged herself in the pursuit of her provisions; the boy has been wrenched away from his romantic isolation to carry the aunt's purchases. Eveline's mundane black leather purse is mirrored in his ethereal chalice, and although he envisions himself as a romantic knight templar, the shouts of the shopboys are to them their own plebian "litanies."

Like Eveline Hill, Jimmy Doyle also has only a single extant male parent, but no mention is made of the significance—if any—of the missing mother. In his own life the father had undergone a major transformation, from merely a "butcher in Kingstown" to an entrepreneur "rich enough to be alluded to in the Dublin newspapers as a merchant prince" (31). But in doing so, Mr. Doyle has had to remove a part of himself that would no longer fit the new pattern: having "begun life as an advanced Nationalist," he "had modified his views early" (43). The transformation that Jimmy himself undergoes during the one-day duration of "After the Race" is an ironic reverse image of his father's rise to wealth, especially ironic because Jimmy "had a respect for his father's shrewdness in business matters" (45). As much as he would like to emulate his father's success by

investing his patrimony in the automobile enterprise of his continental acquaintances, he loses it instead in a reckless evening of card-playing. The flaw in his procedure becomes apparent when he drunkenly and angrily adopts the role that his father had so prudently abandoned: the presence of the Englishman Routh goads him into "advanced Nationalist views": "Jimmy, under generous influences, felt the buried zeal of his father wake to life within him: he roused the torpid Routh at last" (46). Here in Kingstown Harbour, within a stone's throw of the location of his father's first butcher shop, the son brings the family fortune full circle. The card game results in Routh's victory and Doyle's defeat. And looming behind the action is the prudent **[End Page 527]** Hungarian Villona, the calm and cautious musician whom Jimmy should have emulated, abstaining from the card game and refusing to risk financial loss. The parallel position is obvious: as we know from the Arthur Griffith pamphlet mentioned in *Ulysses* (and probably ghost-written by Leopold Bloom), Hungary stands in mediate relation to Austria as Ireland to England. Doyle, in his zeal, had failed to notice the significant shadow cast by Villona, his ideal other self, until it is too late:

The cabin door opened and he saw the Hungarian standing in a shaft of grey light:
—Daybreak, gentlemen!

(48)

Whereas the geometric pattern formed by the time of the discourse in "After the Race," from Doyle *père's* origins to Doyle *fil's* rude awakening, executes a full circle, the shape of the narrative, from the Naas Road into Dublin and out again to Kingstown Harbour, arcs like a campani-form crested in the center of Dublin where Mr. Doyle made his money and the DoYLES now live. The specifics are vague (Jimmy's house is somewhere just north of the Bank of Ireland), but the general line is carefully circumscribed. In "Two Gallants" the details are so precise as to graph the route taken by the protagonists, especially Lenehan's lone stroll elliptically through central Dublin. His peregrinations mark three distinct orbits of increasing greater circumference with each excursion, and although he often retraces his steps along one side of a previous route, each of the three swaths that he cuts through Dublin topography creates a separate parallelogram contiguous with one of the others. Entry into the Dublin maze is effected in the company of Corley, a man of straight and direct approaches—they saunter "down the hill of Rutland Square" (49) (itself a parallelogram) down into the center of the city, cut west on Nassau Street, south on Kildare, west again on the north of the Green, until Corley makes contact with his slavey a short block south on the Hume Street corner. Lenehan then follows them till they board their tram and begins his solitary meanderings through the streets. North on Merrion Street and the west side of Merrion Square and east on Clare and Leinster Streets bring him back to the corner of Kildare and Nassau, completing the first circumambulation of a small parallelogram. Even before reaching Kildare Street and the spot where he saw the harpist playing "Silent, O Moyle," Lenehan finds himself responding to the sweetness of that "unheard music," an echo vestigial within him of the harpist's song, an auditory gnomon; but as he passes the place itself in front of the Kildare Club where the harpist stood, there is no mention of either the harpist still being there or of Lenehan aware of the significance of the location. The narrative concerns itself with Lenehan's absorption of and with the music: "The air which the harpist had played began to control his movements. His softly padded feet played the melody while his fingers swept a scale of variations idly along the railings after each group of **[End Page 528]** notes" (56). The railings in question are along the Duke's Lawn, which means that Lenehan has not yet reached the point of origin, yet the next sentence finds him already heading west on St. Stephen's Green South, a mental ellipsis parallel to Stephen Dedalus' gnomonic visit to the Gouldings in "Proteus"—yet even Lenehan's obtruding thoughts are as silent as the Moyle.

By heading north on Grafton Street, Lenehan approaches the corner of Nassau Street and completes his second parallelogram, larger than the first but also containing a portion of his previous walk with Corley. Only the third and most far-reaching of the parallelograms is constructed of four sides of isolated and individualized walking by Lenehan, its first long side completed when he returns to the point at Rudand Square where some time before he and Corley were coming down the hill ("*If Judas go forth tonight it is to Judas his steps will tend*," Stephen mused in Scylla and Charybdis; "We walk through ourselves, meeting robbers, ghosts, giants, old men, young men, widows, brothers-in-love. But always meeting ourselves" [[Ulysses 9. 1043-1044](#)]). As if hoping to avoid such a confrontation, Lenehan turns sharply left at the Square, along a street that is never named in the text but where he finds a "poor-looking shop" (57) and has his meager meal. In a story in which so many street names are catalogued, every one of them proven to have strong associations with the British hegemony in Ireland, the silent but ghostly significance of that "dark quiet street" with its "sombre look" is a gnomonic omission (57): Lenehan has found himself on Great Britain Street, where Father Flynn had died.

Once inside the shop he finds himself a fourth corner in what had previously been an equilateral triangle. Seating himself opposite "two work-girls and a mechanic," Lenehan is palpably out of place, but "to appear natural he pushed his cap back on his head and planted his elbows on the table. The mechanic and the two work-girls examined him point by point before resuming their conversation in a subdued voice" (57). The uneasy alliance of the four designates Lenehan as the odd man out, but in his thoughts he divorces himself from the parallelogram to conjure up an avatar, a married self seated at his hearth with a wife who finances his new incarnation. His next real encounter (he has since turned south on Capel Street and east on Dame Street) is with two friends with whom he stops to talk; they in turn speculate on a fourth, a mysterious Mac whom one of them had seen on Westmoreland Street (the fourth side of the present geographic square beginning with Great Britain, Capel, and Dame), and Lenehan had seen the night before. The shadowy Mac, his name only a hint of his full appellation, is here, there, everywhere, seen "an hour before" in one place and "the night before" in another, and he might have won some money at billiards, which would make his present whereabouts important. **[End Page 529]**

When Lenehan arrives at Grafton Street, he has completed his third rhomboidal diagrammatic wandering, and a glance at the College of Surgeons clock tells him that time too has run out—he rushes forward to his reunion with Corley. Now the basic quest for the gnomon begins: what has been lurking behind the Corley-Lenehan conspiracy has been kept from the reader, for the overheard part of their conversation remained ambiguous and no clear statement of intention is disclosed in Lenehan's thoughts. The elusiveness of the quest is accentuated as Lenehan's anxieties mount; he focuses on an anticipated entity that does not exist ("kept his gaze fixed on the part from which he expected to see Corley and the young woman return"). What he sees is emptiness ("His eyes searched the street: there was no sign of them"), but he persists ("He strained his eyes as each tram stopped") until he concludes that they have eluded him ("They must have gone home by another way"), and despairs of success ("He knew Corley would fail" [59]). When they do materialize, a significant eclipse blocks his view: Corley's "broad figure hid hers from view for a few seconds and then she reappeared running up the steps" (60). And now with success in sight Lenehan finds Corley strangely evasive; Lenehan presses on and is vouchsafed a glimpse of the missing element, the yearned-for grail for which the knight had quested: "He extended a hand towards the light and, smiling, opened it slowly to the gaze of his disciple. A small coin shone in the palm" (60).

The overall gnomonic presence in "The Boarding House" persists in a familial parallelogram in the Mooney family: when Mr. Mooney has been abstracted from the pattern, a vacuum was created into which Bob Doran unconsciously drifts against his will and better judgment. Changes have been rampant: the daughter of a butcher and the wife of a butcher, Mrs. Mooney has become a boarding-house keeper; her daughter, once a typist, has been withdrawn from her job and is resident in the boarding house; her son has been transformed into "a hard case" (62); and her discarded husband is now a bailiff's man, but mostly he sits "all day long . . . in the bailiff's room, waiting to be put on a job" (61-62). From Spring Garden the remaining three Mooneys have transplanted to Hardwicke Street, where the missing Mooney received "neither money nor food nor house-room" (61). The remaining trio could have held its own had the father not imposed himself on his daughter where she worked: once she has been removed from the corn-factor's officer, her only option is marriage, and into the gap ventures timid Bob Doran like a mouse. When the trap snaps shut, he has only one way out—by going over the wall—but he visualizes himself removed from his job after "thirteen years in a great Catholic wine-merchant's office" (65), and, rather than risk that, he capitulates. One ironic aspect of the pattern remains for a future glimpse of Bob Doran in *Ulysses*, where, as a perennial drunk married to Polly Mooney, he has come full circle, **[End Page 530]** replacing her drunken father in the family quadrilateral equation and probably as out of a job as his father-in-law.

The next three stories of *Dubliners* track the three protagonists as they venture forth to encounter reality, not only for the millionth time, as the Stephen of *A Portrait* intends, but also for the first time, walking through themselves, "meeting robbers, ghosts, giants," and so forth. Of the three, Chandler of "A Little Cloud" is the most optimistic that this evening will be eventful: he expects to meet a gnomon of himself, what he might have been had he too broken out of his environment and traveled abroad like Gallaher, and he comes armed with a new image of himself, "T. Malone Chandler," poet "of the Celtic school" (74). His ammunition is illusory, however; his armorplating, threadbare: crossing the Liffey he has a moment of inspiration in which the houses look like tramps, and he wonders whether this ability to perceive the essential substance beneath a shadowy façade could be translated into original poetry, further speculating whether "Gallaher might be able to get it into some London paper for him" (73). Before long Chandler has already glimpsed the English reviews of his volume of poems, almost unaware what an important solid entity has evaporated: the poems themselves. In meeting Gallaher (the robber—"he got mixed up in some shady affair, some money transaction" [72]; the ghost through absence in London for eight years; a giant in Chandler's estimation—"Ignatius Gallaher on the London Press!" [72]), he seems to realize that this avatar of himself is someone he could never have become, nor would want to have become, yet is unsure whether he is relieved or all the more despondent at his pronounced inability to evolve into anything other than his insignificant self. His attempt to set himself on a new path, the reading of Byron presumably in preparation eventually to become a Celtic Byron, proves shortlived: the reading of the first poem in the volume is interrupted, the poem truncated in the middle of the sixth line, another ellipsis disclosing the missing section of the structure.

In "Counterparts" (a title that reverberates with gnomonic import), Farrington Sober goes forth to encounter Farrington Drunk, yet the desired drunkenness by night proves as elusive as sober efficiency by day. Hitherto he had been able to cover his tracks by several sleights-of-hand: providing himself with glasses of porter during working hours; augmenting a half-hour lunch period into an hour and half; keeping a cap in his pocket

for the walk to the pub, while its surrogate remained on the hatrack; adding a caraway seed to disguise his breath. Eventually he will pawn his watch when money is unavailable, even to the extent of extracting six shillings in lieu of the five offered by the pawnbroker. But on this decisive day the missing segments in his presumably ordered life in the offices of Crosbie and Alleyne have been consistently uncovered: letters are missing from the Delacour file; the Bodley and Kirwan contract **[End Page 531]** cannot be copied out in time; the washroom ploy has been exposed by Mr. Shelley; *Bernard Bernard* has intruded on *Bernard Bodley*, the second Bernard a shadow of the first, the Bodley deleted entirely from the construct; the cashier cannot be relied on for an advance. When thoughts of riotous drinking subsume him at his desk, he finds that "his imagination had so abstracted him that his name was called twice [like *Bernard Bernard*] before he answered" (91). And he had already been threatened with a report by the omnipresent Mr. Alleyne to the mysteriously abstracted Mr. Crosbie, a titular figure lurking somewhere in the wings.

The failure of the evening is caused by Farrington not being the man he claims to be. With six shillings and a good retort to repeat in the bars, Farrington should have been able to get drunk enough to satisfy his desire for a "spell of riot" (91), but instead he finds himself standing more drinks than he receives, outclassed even in the telling of his own story by Higgins (surrogate raconteur from his office), losing his title as strong man to Weathers, and failing to win the "woman in the big hat" (97) because he had run out of money. The homecoming is also replete with portentous absences, "the kitchen empty and the kitchen fire nearly out" (97). His wife has retreated to the chapel; and the wrong son (in the dark he thinks Tom is Charlie) apprehended; no dinner readily available; and when our hero (himself a Noman with no given name) is on the verge of revenging himself against Tom, the boy offers to say a "*Hail Mary*" in lieu of the probably more appropriate "*Our Father*" (98). But failure was always in the offing for Farrington because of his own lacunae in retelling the incident with Mr. Alleyne: instead of faithfully repeating his comment, "I don't think, sir, that that's a fair question to put to me" (91), self-interest causes him to omit the word *sir* (93).

Maria's journey in "Clay" has all the earmarks of a familiar one, almost a ritualistic Halloween excursion on which she anticipates few if any surprises—although she stresses her preference that she encounter Joe Donnelly sober rather than Joe Donnelly drunk: "He was so different when he took any drink" (100). The implication has an ironic reverberation when Maria approves of a total stranger, the "colonel-looking gentleman" on the tram (102-103), insisting that it was easy "to know a gentleman even when he has a drop taken" (103)—Joe is apparently a poor imitation of a gentleman. Maria is easily deceived by appearances, partly because she lives in a world in which "barnbracks seemed uncut; but if you went closer you would see that they had been cut into long even thick slices" (Maria "saw that every woman got her four slices") (101). Equilateral squares removed from a seemingly whole rhomboid imply both a completeness and unity that are misleading: Maria *never* gets the ring baked into one of the slices, although Lizzie Fleming *always* assures her that she will. When Maria laughs, "the tip of her nose *nearly* met the tip of her chin" (101); she sits in the tram **[End Page 532]** (the only seat available is the stool at the end; on the second tram the only seat is the one offered by the only gentleman), "her toes *barely* touching the floor" (102, emphasis added). Credited with being a peacemaker at the laundry, Maria is a failure in attempting to make peace between Joe and his brother Alphy, for whom she was the "proper mother" (100). At the Donnelly's, brother Alphy has a stand-in, his nephew Alphy, obviously named for him.

That there are vast lacunae in Maria's life is obvious as the story develops, and they are mirrored in almost comic fashion in the minutia of missing items: by giving away "one or two slips" (100) from her plants, Maria is creating gnomonic patterns, but these are expected to grow back and recomplete the pattern; by serving tea she disappoints Ginger Mooney, who would prefer "a sup of porter" (101); she changes cake shops because "Downes's plumcake had not enough almond icing on top" (102), and then of course she manages to lose the plumcake on the tram; offered stout or port she wants neither, but Joe insists and she has to accept; Joe first cannot find the nutcracker and then cannot see the corkscrew (a missing corkscrew will temporarily inhibit the festivities in the Committee Room); mischievously offered the clay in the divination game, she has it mysteriously withdrawn from her, replaced by a prayerbook—but still no ring. And finally, when singing "I Dreamt that I Dwelt," Maria fails to sing the second verse but repeats the first one instead. Readers have scoured the missing verse for excessive elements of romanticism that Maria might have unconsciously repressed, although it hardly seems any more romantic than the first. Apparently Maria has become *fixed* on the elements of the verse she sang. She is a case of arrested development: her body is still tiny ("In spite of its years she found it a nice tidy little body" [101]); she still blushes like a schoolgirl; her immaturity makes her the butt of both condescension and mockery (there is no wedding cake in the offing for her and no ring). And even the assumption that a lack of maturation means only a stasis that is permanent is unrealistic; "Coming events cast their shadows before," as Leopold Bloom muses ([Ulysses 8. 526](#)), and Maria's holds on her position at the laundry and on life are tenuous.

No one maintains as tight a control on the status quo as Maria's successor, the James Duffy of "A Painful Case." By a monkish ordering of his life he allows for no surprises, no vulnerable gaps in a solid façade, no expectations that can lead to disappointment. The route that he has carefully circumscribed for himself takes him from his room in Chapelizod to his bank on Baginbun Street; lunch at Dan Burke's and dinner in "an eatinghouse in George's Street" (108-109) make his day fixed and predictable. Evenings are somewhat less structured, and when he found himself an inappropriate bourgeois intellectual among hardheaded workmen at meetings of the Irish Socialist Party, he abstracted himself from a situation **[End Page 533]** in which he did not properly fit. Concerts were certainly more consistent with his position in life until he chanced to meet Mrs. Sinico, a woman for whom a vacuum had been created because her husband, a ship's captain, "was often away" (110). Introducing himself into the Sinico household, Duffy finds himself sailing under false colors: "Captain Sinico encouraged his visits, thinking that his daughter's hand was in question. He had dismissed his wife so sincerely from his gallery of pleasures that he did not suspect that anyone else would take an interest in her" (110). At least two interesting gnomons emerge from the Duffy/ Mrs. Sinico/Captain Sinico/Mary Sinico parallelism.

As a construct, Joyce's "A Painful Case" is a narrative that contains as its centerpiece a newspaper item titled "A Painful Case," the second title serving as an indicator pointing toward Mrs. Sinico, but the overall title eventually directing toward Mr. Duffy. The one case impinges on the other: what was relevant for Mrs. Sinico was relevant for Mr. Duffy. He was quick to read certain signs that disturbed him and that led to his rupture with her ("she had shown every signal of unusual excitement" [111]); she in turn failed to heed the signs which warned her of danger ("The company had always taken every precaution to prevent people crossing the lines except by the bridges, both by placing notices in every station and by the use of patent spring gates at level crossings" [114]). In the interim between dismissing her from his life and the end of her life, several discrete

sections from Mr. Duffy's ordered existence were deleted: "He kept away from concerts. . . . His father died; the junior partner of the bank retired" (112). On the night in which she died all other members of her family were absent from her life: Captain Sinico "was not in Dublin at the time of the accident" (114), and Mary "was not at home until an hour after the accident" (115). That "No blame attached to anyone" (115) is as equally applicable to the exonerated engine driver as to the victim herself, and by extension to the innocent bank cashier who once "allowed himself to think that in certain circumstances he would rob his bank, but as these circumstances never arose, his life rolled on evenly—an adventureless tale" (109).

The public life stories of *Dubliners* extend the structures and thicken the textures of the increasingly complex narratives that lead to "The Dead." Each of the last four narratives takes on the proportions of a parallelepiped, prismatic as well as parallelogrammatic, from which solid segments are deftly deleted as we watch forms take shape and in which empty sections are enigmatically filled. In Tierney's election headquarters in "Ivy Day in the Committee Room," the man himself never turns up, although he is a mere shadow of the Parnell politician to whose coattails he nominally adheres. Parnell himself is a shade of a shade, present primarily in a poem praised for its fine writing but containing various qualities, like sincere appreciation, yet totally devoid of fine writing. That **[End Page 534]** Tierney is so unlike Parnell has allowed Wilkins, the Conservative candidate, to withdraw from the race (he is too exactly duplicated by Tierney), and imposes his canvasser Crofton on the Nationalists, despite his discomfort among them. Clear lines of demarcation are blurred, and the linear succession of parent and child rarely results in an exact duplication: the caretaker Jack complains of the ingratitude and dissoluteness of his son; Joe Hynes is declared as not being "nineteen carat," although his father Larry is lionized ("Many a good turn he did in his day" [124]); and Tierney is reduced to a "mean little tinker" and "mean little shoe-boy of hell" (123), although in denigrating his origins Mr. Henchy unintentionally sets up the opposite equation: Tierney's father had a second-hand clothes shop and kept a bottle on hand for Sunday morning cronies, whereas his son has become a publican selling drinks on a large scale. Nor is the parallel between King Edward VII and his mother devoid of irony: his profligate life is excused by Henchy, who welcomes his visit to Ireland, all the more because Queen Victoria never deigned to make the voyage—whereas in actuality she did more than once. Disproportion in "Ivy Day" is often caused by the myopic sighting through the wrong end of the telescope, although reversals are possible under the right circumstances. For the assembled canvassers, who are in the process of talking about their achievements but are not out canvassing at the moment, the missing items are payment and promised drinks from Tierney's pub. As long as neither is forthcoming their attitudes are jaundiced. As soon as the dozen bottles of stout make their belated appearance (even without the necessary corkscrew), the missing money goes unmentioned and Henchy, who had suspected Joe Hynes of being a spy for the opposition, now praises him as a loyal Parnellite, having been significantly altered by the intrusion of a bottle of stout.

Over generous dollops of whiskey, Hoppy Holohan and Mrs. Kearney in "A Mother" sign a contract for the musical services of her daughter at a series of concerts sponsored by the *Eire Abu* Society. Although these are the constants apparent in the foreground, two variables lurk in the shadows: Mr. Kearney, "sober, thrifty and pious," whose "conversation, which was serious, took place at intervals in his great brown beard" (137); and Mr. Fitzgerald, the secretary of the Society (Holohan is after all only the "assistant secretary" [136]), with a "vacant smile" that Mrs. Kearney immediately finds irritating (140). Holohan himself is progressively eliminated from the configuration: even at the

beginning he is eclipsed by Mrs. Kearney ("it was Mrs Kearney who arranged everything" [136]), and once he is challenged by her, Holohan effaces himself, deferring to his superior ("You'd better speak to Mr Fitzgerald, said Mr Holohan distantly" [144]). And when confronted by her, Mr. Fitzgerald invokes an even vaster and more mysterious entity: "Mr Fitzgerald, who did not catch the point at issue very quickly, seemed unable to resolve the difficulty **[End Page 535]** and said that he would bring the matter before the committee" (141). Mrs. Kearney, however, is dubious but withholds her sarcastic question, "And who is the *Cometty*, pray?" (141)—although later she does give vent to her annoyance, insisting, "I haven't seen any Committee" (148).

"A Mother" is replete with several four-sided figures that are constantly losing their fourth sides. Initially there were to have been four concerts, but as the projected attendances failed to materialize, one of the performances was cancelled. Kathleen Kearney was to have been paid eight guineas for the four concerts, but with one missing, Mrs. Kearney suspects that she won't receive her entire contracted fee. When she comes to a confrontation with Mr. Fitzgerald, he gives her half the fee now and promises the other half to be paid later, yet even the half offered is a shade off (pounds in lieu of guineas, so that for each of the pounds a shilling is missing). The mathematics of the story parallels its geometries as the equation reduces itself down to almost nothing. Mrs. Kearney has counted on the formidable presence of her husband, marshalled for the showdown on the final night. She had married him when the romantic young men did not manage to get beyond her "ivory manners" (136). In effect she is playing her trump against Mr. Fitzgerald's high card, the *Cometty*; "She respected her husband in the same way as she respected the General Post Office, as something large, secure and fixed; and though she knew the small number of his talents she appreciated his abstract value as a male" (141). But Mr. Kearney hardly proves effective, having long since had his masculinity abstracted from him by the ivory manners of his dominant wife, and in conflict with so abstract a quantity as the Committee, he is powerless. Opposing forces line up as two pockets of people form:

In one corner were Mr Holohan, Mr Fitzgerald, Miss Beirne, two of the stewards, the baritone, the bass, and Mr O'Madden Burke. . . . In another corner of the room were Mrs Kearney and her husband, Mr Bell, Miss Healy and the young lady who had recited the patriotic piece.

(147-148)

The proportions are already unequal, and one of the minority party at least is uncomfortable on Mrs. Kearney's side: "Miss Healy wanted to join the other group but . . ." (148). When Mrs. Kearney mocks Hoppy Holohan as "a great fellow fol-the-diddle-I-do," he in turn reduces her stature ("I thought you were a lady" [149]). "After that Mrs Kearney's conduct was condemned on all hands" and the disbalance of power is complete. The parallelogram takes on its complete form, rejecting the gnomonic Kearney contingent, who retreat from the fray. Mrs. Kearney refuses to be removed from the pattern ("I'm not done with you yet, she said"), but Hoppy Holohan makes the removal complete: "But I'm done with you, said Mr Holohan" (149). **[End Page 536]**

Many of the gnomons of these stories are comic effects: abandoned plumcakes, misplaced nutcrackers and corkscrews, anticipated bottles of stout, fires that give no light or heat, priests who look like actors, narrow gaps between nose and chin, toes and floor, solid males who prove abstract, audiences composed of "paper," and unknown sopranos from London in "faded" dresses over "meagre" bodies (Madame Glynn has the distinction of personifying both aspects of the gnomon, that which is hidden and that which is prominently exposed: "The shadow took her faded dress into shelter but fell revengefully into the little cup behind her collar-bone" [143]). Yet nowhere are the gnomons more comic than in "Grace": Mr. Kernan has a piece of his tongue missing;

Mrs. Kernan adds an Irish fourth to the Holy Trinity; three comforters find themselves augmented into a quadrumvirate; Pope Leo XIII is credited with extolling photography in verse (a photograph is a gnomonic presence after the subject is already absent); two so-called gentlemen accompanied Kernan on his drinking bout but disappeared when he fell down the stairs; Mr. McCoy has changed professional identities at least six times; Mr. Harford is denounced as an "Irish Jew" but shows up at the Catholic retreat, where Father Purdon sounds more like a businessman than a priest, delivering a non-sermon on an ambiguous text given in a translation that would rarely be acknowledged as accurate. And to complete the pattern, the party of five who turn up in the church reconstitute themselves strategically in the only way five can make up a quadrilateral shape, "the party had settled down in the form of a quincunx" (172). Mr. McCoy of course is the odd man out (he "had tried unsuccessfully to find a place in the bench with the others" [172]), yet he becomes the central point in the quincunx by being seated alone in the middle, with two before and two behind.

The gnomons that abound in *Dubliners* —or would abound if they were not so blatantly missing—reflect the narrative strategies of the stories: absence of climactic instances, deleted resolutions of plot, inconclusive closures, inexact overlays of perception on the part of the characters, insufficient information about them: so that Maria has no family name and Farrington no given name, and the boy in the first three stories no names at all (although we know that the boy in "An Encounter" *cannot* be named Smith because that is the alias he designates for himself), and so trivial a character as the railway company representative in "A Painful Case" is fully equipped with a handle like "Mr H. B. Patterson Finlay." Nominations are gnomonic ("Sounds are impostures," Stephen Dedalus contends; "FOR time. Like names READ time, like names. . . . What's in a name?" [*Ulysses* 16. 362-364]), and Farrington is often referred to in the text as "the man," yet in losing his wrestling match with Weathers he is unmanned, becoming a Noman. Many another **[End Page 537]** male in *Dubliners* is deprived of his full masculinity: Bob Doran at the hands of the Mooney women; Mr. Kearney in the hands of a determined wife with ivory manners; Gabriel Conroy, a self-styled Romantic Man, deflated by the intrusion into his life of the ghostly Michael Furey, a stripling long-dead who had long outdistanced him as a lover. And Little Chandler, already in trouble with his wife for having forgotten to bring home "the parcel of coffee from Bewley's" (82), is further demeaned when she returns to find their baby wailing. Turning her back on her husband ("Giving no heed to him" [85]), she concentrates her attention exclusively on the child, calling the infant "My little man! My little mannie!" (85).

The word gnomon comes from the Greek, meaning "interpreter, discernor, pointer on a sundial, a carpenter's square." The most pointed indicators as such in *Dubliners* are the story titles, the first indications in each instance. The book title designates an entire population and by internal reference a place of residence, yet the parts that stand for the whole are the handful of Dubliners actually delineated in the fifteen stories. Of the story titles, some pinpoint characters ("The Sisters," "Eveline," "Two Gallants," "A Mother"); others a place ("Araby," "The Boarding House," "Ivy Day in the Committee Room"); one a time-frame ("After the Race"); one an event ("An Encounter"); and several a condition ("A Painful Case," "Grace," "The Dead"). The directness of most of them is deceptive, but a handful are highly elliptical and ambiguous. Irony informs "Two Gallants," where gallantry is decidedly unobservable; that it is Ivy Day during the course of the political tale arranges for ironic contrast with the diluted Parnellism of the canvassers. "Grace" as well is intentional overstatement, for few would consider either Mr. Kernan or any of the others in a state of grace despite their presence in the Gardiner

Street Church, although Kernan may in fact be in a state of animated suspension, during a period of grace. "Clay" offers various possibilities in the literal substance brought forth and withdrawn during the game: its applicability to the malleable character of the unfortunate Maria and its symbolic import as a designator of the condition of death, prefigured as such in the Byron poem that Chandler attempted to read. "Counterparts" is itself a counter of various parts, contrasting Farrington with each of his adversaries throughout, from Mr. Alleyne to Weathers to his son Tom, and extending outward to counterpartite applicability to the Chandler of the preceding story, where "A Little Cloud" both parallels the person of Little Chandler and a condition that marks him and affects him. That "The Sisters" deflects attention away from the dead priest to his surviving sisters indicates the Joycean method of narrative counterpoint, as also in the case of "The Dead," a story in which two sisters figure prominently. The possibility for interexchange of the titles of the first and last story offers a circular construct for **[End Page 538]** *Dubliners*, a cycle that Joyce artistically quadratures in his gnomonic parallel structures, squaring the circle, encircling the numerous squares.

In Heaven there'll be no algebra,
 No learning dates or names,
 But only playing golden harps
 And reading Henry James.

—Anonymous

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