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# Joyce's "A Little Cloud"

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Joyce's "A Little Cloud"

by

Thomas Maher Gilligan III

A Thesis

Presented to the Graduate Faculty

of Lehigh University

in Candidacy for the Degree of

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This thesis is accepted and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in English.

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Date

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"and I'll know my song well before I start singing."

-- from a song by Bob Dylan



## Abstract

Title of thesis: Joyce's "A Little Cloud"

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Although criticism of Joyce's work has reached mammoth proportions, not enough has been written about Dubliners in general, and particularly "A Little Cloud." The story was written just prior to "The Dead," virtually universally accepted as Joyce's finest short story, and is marked by the same richness of purpose and mature style so much admired in the later work. Unfortunately, much of the recent critical material has dealt with possible symbolic patterns in Dubliners, in an attempt to link Joyce's early artistic method with the later methods employed in Ulysses and Finnegans Wake. As a result, we tend to forget that the stories must work on a naturalistic level: the symbolism, if any exists, must serve to enhance the naturalistic interpretation. Thus, an extensive reading of the story itself is required.

"A Little Cloud" can best be read as a three-part characterization of Little Chandler. He is introduced to us, in the first part of the story, as a prim, punctilious clerk with esthetic yearnings. However, we

are exposed, also, to a deep inner nature which allows him to walk dark streets at night and seek out potential danger. This inner nature surfaces in various parts of the story, in marked contrast to Little Chandler's "normal" personality. Disturbed by his meeting with Gallaher, Chandler becomes deeply dissatisfied with his relatively harmonious home-life, and, in a fit of paranoia, his inner nature takes complete control. His shout of "stop" returns him to his normal state, and in a moment of awareness, severely limited by his thirty-two years in Dublin, Chandler sees the littleness of his own nature. But Chandler never realizes that the Byron poem which he would love to emulate is a piece of juvenilia, unworthy even of admiration. And, thus, Little Chandler's entrapment is certain; he cannot break free from the intellectually stifling Dublin, because he has been so conditioned by his association with the city that he can no longer understand the nature of its trap.

The fact that "A Little Cloud" is the eighth and central story in Dubliners is significant. In each of the seven previous stories, the main character is aware of the trap in which he is ensnared. Following "A Little Cloud," no character but Gabriel Conroy will recognize the trap. Gabriel, created just after Little Chandler, and sharing his esthetic nature, supports

Joyce's contention that entrapment by the intellectually stagnant Dublin is not inevitable, and prepares the reader for the continuation of the relationship of the artist to society in A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man.

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## Chapter I

The abundance of critical material concerning an author of Joyce's reputation never ceases to be staggering, and yet the sensation one receives when faced with such a voluminous output must be very similar to that received by an explorer on the moon: somewhere in that vast expanse of dull, grey, homogeneous rocks, there is probably something of great value which must be recognized, separated from its surroundings, and isolated for further study. I must confess to feeling this sensation, myself, when I began, nearly a year ago, to attempt to isolate from the expanse of Joyce criticism those few articles and books which would truly illuminate "A Little Cloud"; references to the story are commonly buried within the larger scope of articles or books dealing with Dubliners in general. Very rare, indeed, are those articles which deal with "A Little Cloud" thoroughly and exhaustively, with an eye toward its significance not only to the rest of Dubliners but to the rest of the Joyce canon, whose themes it echoes and, sometimes, introduces. In the light of the abundance of critical material directly concerned with other parts of that canon, one must stop and reflect on, even wonder at, the shortage of material directly

relevant to "A Little Cloud." As we can readily see by looking at the criticism of Joyce's longer and more complex works, there is no shortage of critics who are willing, and quite able, to make asses of themselves by attempting to explain a piece of literature which is too difficult for them; Dubliners has been visited by such critics but not in great numbers. The question, Why is there such a shortage of lengthy critical material? is important. I think the story seems too easy for most critics; there is not enough to it. It can easily be encapsulated with the rest of Dubliners or as a part of the "section dealing with maturity," and done away with in a sentence or two. I, obviously, do not agree that the story can be done away with in a few sentences, nor do I think it should be. "A Little Cloud" is a complex, artistic story, written late in Joyce's short-story career and interesting, aside from its intrinsic interest, because of what it foreshadows. This paper will deal with "A Little Cloud" in depth, looking first at the critical material in general and then at the story itself. It will conclude with a discussion of the important but often overlooked questions of the significance of the story in relation to Dubliners and to Joyce's subsequent work. We must look, first, at what has gone before, at the critics, both illuminating

and enshrouding.

Perhaps it is best to begin under the shroud and progress to greater clarity, although the awarding of the prominent first position to as unconvincing an article as "First Flight to Ithaca: A New Reading of Joyce's Dubliners," seems almost sacrilegious. According to Levin and Shattuck, Dubliners, even more closely than Ulysses, follows the adventures of Odysseus in Homer's Odyssey. "A Little Cloud" parallels the Aeolus episode of Ulysses: "Aeolus the wind-king is Gallaher... . Gallaher is loud-voiced, hail-fellow, backslapping, gusty, domineering -- all implicitly Aeolian qualities."<sup>1</sup> Little Chandler, then, is left to assume the role of Odysseus and, inexplicably, a second role simultaneously: "Odysseus, suppliant to Aeolus, is Chandler seeking literary assistance from Gallaher... . Both are timid and embarrassed in the situation and soft-voiced in their beseeching"; but also: "Chandler is of course the 'little cloud' of the title, blown about by Gallaher's whim, and the title is thus a clue to the theme of the story and to its Aeolian symbolism" (Levin and Shattuck, p.71). The well-stretched points continue with machine-gun rapidity. Both Chandler and Odysseus are impressed by some form of abnormal sexual activity. Corless's restaurant, like Aeolus's palace, is a famous place which is very noisy. Points stretch



nearly to breaking as the critics beg us to believe that "the action is faithful to Homeric pattern" (Levin and Shattuck, p.71), and then proceed to detail time periods which tend to disprove the point which they were intended to prove. Odysseus' one-month friendship with Aeolus supposedly parallels Chandler's many-year friendship with Gallaher; Odysseus' separation from Aeolus for ten days parallels Chandler's separation from Gallaher for eight years. Both Odysseus and Chandler approach the meeting place "sometime after lunch." Both are frustrated by the denial of a request (Levin and Shattuck, p.72). And to add a very unscholarly touch to what could, to this point, be considered blind enthusiasm, Levin and Shattuck dismiss Annie as unimportant because she "has no Homeric counterpart..." (Levin and Shattuck, p.72). Levin and Shattuck's article is a prime example of what I consider to be the most dangerous kind of literary criticism, that which begins with an idea and then fits the piece of literature to that idea. And any comparison between two literary works of art is threatened by the possibility of falling into this most dangerous trap. Clarice Short's "Joyce's 'A Little Cloud'" dangles precariously close to the edge of the trap.

While Short's comparison between "A Little Cloud" and Byron's "Prisoner of Chillon" is not quite so



strained as "First Flight to Ithaca," it appears to be of little more value in interpreting the story. The coinciding episodes are striking, however, and Short doesn't push her comparison as hard as Levin and Shattuck often seem to do. Joyce's regard for Byron's poetry is readily apparent; Stephen Dedalus took a beating for adhering to the opinion that Byron was the greatest poet, and, although as I will show later its significance is ironic, the poem which Chandler wishes he could emulate is a piece of Byron juvenilia. And, immediately prior to his single decisive act, the shout of "stop" which Chandler directs at his infant son, he thinks of himself as a prisoner:

It was useless. He couldn't read.  
He couldn't do anything. The  
wailing of the child pierced the  
drum of his ear. It was useless,  
useless! He was a prisoner for  
life.<sup>2</sup>

Byron's prisoner makes friends with spiders and mice;  
Little Chandler sees "vermin-like" children who squatted  
like mice. A bird from outside the prison shows the  
prisoner of Chillon the degree of his own entrapment;  
Little Chandler is made aware of his captivity by  
Gallaher:

Before the return of Gallaher to  
Dublin, Little Chandler had  
presumably lost the painful  
awareness of the narrowness of  
his life.<sup>3</sup>

As each man reaches this awareness, a light shines in his mind. The departure of the exciting influence sends each man into a much deeper depression than he could possibly have experienced had he not been made more aware of his entrapment. The prisoner thinks the bird celestial; Chandler idealizes Gallaher. Both men try to see the outside world and both are frustrated. Pathos is elicited in both cases when the reader realizes that imprisonment has incapacitated its victim. And, finally, the prisoner's bird flies away like "a single cloud on a sunny day" (Short, p.277).

The coincidences are strong enough between the two works to hide the only real contribution which Short's article makes. The idea that Chandler is made more aware of his situation by his visit with Gallaher, and the idea that Dublin has incapacitated its own victim are necessary in successfully interpreting the story. One can only wish that Short had turned her talents to a more naturalistic interpretation.

Following along with interpretations based on an influential outside source is Margaret Church in

her article "Dubliners and Vico." Miss Church's article is, perhaps, unique in literary criticism as she argues not that Joyce patterned Dubliners after Vico's four cycles but, rather, that Joyce anticipated the Viconian cycles which he was later to become fond of, and that this anticipation enables a comparison of Dubliners with a work with which Joyce was to be unfamiliar for perhaps as many as eight years. According to Church, "Dubliners may be viewed as evidence of Joyce's quadrilateral frame of mind as early as 1903, a frame leading to a ready acceptance of Vico's philosophy in his later works."<sup>4</sup> Without going into detail with regard to Miss Church's interpretation of Vico, suffice to say that she fits Little Chandler into the second age, the age of sons, the heroic age. Rather arbitrarily she groups together all the stories from "Eveline" through "A Painful Case" as parts of the heroic age. Apparently unabashed, she tacks a religious, symbolic interpretation onto her rather brief reading of "A Little Cloud" but her application of psychoanalytic principles preserves some value in her work:

Little Chandler is unable to play the role of parent or earthly father. Still seeking for a strong father substitute himself, he readily accepts the leadership of both his wife, Annie, (grace) and the false god, Ignatius Gallaher (Galahad). Gallaher's superficiality and self-centeredness are not apparent

to Little Chandler who is blinded  
by his idolatrous devotion to what  
he thinks Gallaher represents.  
(Church, p. 153) (punctuation [sic])

It should be clear to anyone bothering to read his story closely that Little Chandler is not quite so simple a character as Miss Church makes him out to be. The "idolatrous devotion," if it ever really existed, doesn't last through the meeting at Corless's.

Brewster Ghiselin is a strong exponent of the necessity of a symbolic reading of Dubliners and, as with Miss Church, the dominant symbols seem to be religious. The entire book is full of East-West comparisons, which Ghiselin relates to the significance of the East in the Catholic church: "Perhaps he [Joyce] did not know that the catechumens of the fourth century turned to the west to renounce Satan and to the east to recite the creed before they stepped into the baptismal font... Probably he did know that Christ returning for the Last Judgment was expected to come from the east."<sup>5</sup> The significance of the East-West dichotomy applies, according to Ghiselin, to "A Little Cloud." Gallaher has been to the east and returned; the fact that he has not changed implies "that the whole of Europe is secularized, perhaps the whole world" (Ghiselin, p.65). More significantly, Ghiselin realizes that the physical transportation to another place is not what is necessary for the people of Dublin: "A new condition of inward

life is the goal; not a place, but what the place implies, is the true east of the soul"(Ghiselin, p.65). Physical limitation of movement implies spiritual limitation; Little Chandler tries to break out of Dublin's grasp but succeeds only in going in a circle: "It is almost beyond doubt that he has come home to this defeat across O'Connell Bridge and past Rutland Square; for, as we have seen, the likeliest location of his home is in the neighborhood of Eccles Street. He has probably made a circuit coinciding almost perfectly with Lenehan's movement about the center of the city"(Ghiselin, p. 75). The concept of the necessity of dis-  
 establishing the spiritual hold of Dublin, by breaking the physical hold, is thereby implied.

Perhaps the most helpful of those critics who attempt to explain Joyce's work by relating it to his Catholic background is J. Mitchell Morse, who claims that the concept which controls and unifies Dubliners is the lack of fortitude displayed by its characters. Morse draws his definition of fortitude from Thomas Aquinas; the definition is couched in religious terms, pitting the virtues of faith, magnificence and patience against the vices of "fear of failure," meanness, and "morose delectation."<sup>6</sup> Except for the few characters whom Morse singles out as exceptions (a list which seems rather arbitrary; Michael Furey certainly



deserves separation from the rest of the characters in Dubliners but the "I" from the first three stories, Maria of "Clay," and The Misses Morkan of "The Dead" seem to be integral parts of the pattern), every character in Dubliners lacks fortitude in the Aquinian sense. Little Chandler is loaded with debilitating vices, which will keep him locked in a snug corner for life. Morse's contribution, however, is his realization that Gallaher is very much like the rest of the Dubliners: "Nor does Gallaher live bravely. ... How dreary are all his novelties! His interview with Chandler is an orgy of vainglory, presumption and morose delectation." (Morse, p.107). And it is necessary to see Gallaher as just that -- a man who has left Dublin, but who is still, very much, a Dubliner. It is just this insight which M.W. Murphy doesn't obtain in an article which, if done with a little more care, could be illuminating. A major connecting link in Dubliners (Murphy is not so dogmatic as to say "the connecting link") is the motif of darkness:

So pervasive is darkness in Dubliners that it is difficult to discover one major scene that takes place in bright sunlight in any of the stories. From first story to last the usual setting is a dark street or a dark room in Dublin, and the action almost always takes place at night or in the early evening after the sun has gone down.

Unfortunately, Murphy misreads the book while fitting it

into his idea. Very perceptively, Murphy suggests:

The darkness represents the plight of the Irish people. They are all in darkness -- not just the physical darkness of the dirty Dublin streets, but religious, political, and cultural darkness, and -- above all -- in the "spiritual" darkness that results from cutting oneself off from everything that is vital and alive and important. (Murphy, p.100)

If we accept this view, however, it is hard to accept the light associated with Gallaher as anything but symbolic of the redemptive qualities of leaving Dublin and going to London. The point which Murphy misses, and which illustrates the dangerous ground trod by anyone who tries to fit a book to a pattern, is that Gallaher is not redeemed, but is, as I will show later, every bit as much a Dubliner as Little Chandler.

Unfortunately, mere moving from symbolic readings to naturalistic readings does not eliminate incorrect readings. In an article which wavers between striking perception and equally striking obtuseness, Frank O'Connor sees "A Little Cloud" as a story "in which an unsuccessful poet is confronted by a successful journalist who has had sense enough to clear out of Dublin in time."<sup>8</sup> Once again, the basic point of Gallaher's not being worthy of Little Chandler's admiration has been overlooked. The story is not so simple as O'Connor would make it; the complexity of the relationship between Little Chandler and Gallaher

is more precisely expressed by Robert B. Heilman: "The story turns upon a paradox -- that even in the Gallaher whom in one way he rejects, Chandler in another way sees the embodiment of his own aspirations."<sup>9</sup>

Heilman is, of course, correct; Little Chandler is not homogeneous throughout the story. He is impressionable and mobile in his conceptions. This mobility is recognized by Hugh Kenner in an article which is disappointingly dogmatic coming from so stimulating a critic. Kenner says a great deal in one short sentence:

As Bloom and Dedalus, as Watson and Holmes, the palefaced Little Chandler encounters the Noble Savage Gallaher who has been abroad and got on, and by osmosis acquires a timid share of his virtues.<sup>10</sup>

This osmotic interchange is what Clarice Short recognized in her article on "The Prisoner of Chillon." (see above, p.6) When the osmosis has ceased, Little Chandler will have been shocked out of his complacent acceptance of his uneventful life. And yet, Chandler, as I will show later, is never completely shocked out of that complacent acceptance. The complacency is shattered; the acceptance remains intact.

This acceptance of a stifling existence is pointed out by Arnold Goldman in a particularly interesting sentence:



Little Chandler ("A Little Cloud"), Farrington ("Counterparts"), Maria ("Clay"), Mr. Duffy and Mrs. Sinico ("A Painful Case"), to name only a few, lead severely restricted lives, unable or unwilling to break out of webs of containment which seem overpowering, whether they are self-created or imposed from the outside.<sup>11</sup>

The words "unwilling" and "self-created" are of greatest interest. The concept of conscious or semi-conscious awareness of the trap and of the process of ensnarement in it is, thereby, introduced. This recognition of the possibility of awareness of the trap has been noticed also by Florence Walzl.

According to Walzl, the underlying pattern of unification in Dubliners is that of paralysis. The young Joyce, having recently turned from the study of medicine to the writing of fiction, drew heavily on his medical background:

Like most beginning medical students he was fascinated with diagnosis. Impatient at the restrictions of life in Dublin, he concluded that Ireland was sick, and diagnosed its psychological malady as hemiplegia, a partial, unilateral paralysis.<sup>12</sup>

This paralysis, significantly psychological in nature, extends from the physical paralysis of action to paralysis of perceptivity. The first fourteen stories of Dubliners can be divided into four sections, according to Walzl. "The Dead" a later addition, does

not fit the pattern and, thus, she dismisses it. The first three stories center around disillusionment. The next four stories deal with the paralysis of will during the all-important decision-making time of adolescence, and thus center around entrapment. The third group of stories, again numbering four and including "A Little Cloud," deals with the inability of a physically mature individual to produce effectively: "The image depicting such paralysis of action is sterility" (Walzl, p.222). The next three stories deal with the paralysis of society and its outward manifestation of corruption. By hypothesizing a kind of creeping paralysis, progressing in its effects as time passes, Walzl has added greatly to the interpretation of Dubliners and yet she apparently didn't recognize the value of her contribution. After establishing the four types of paralysis, she draws the following conclusion:

As a result, the stories in the first half are epiphanies, partial or whole, to the characters, but from the pivotal eighth story on, become progressively less so, until finally they are epiphanies only for the reader. (Walzl, p.223)

Walzl is so infuriatingly close to Joyce's point and yet misses it entirely. The point of Dubliners, as

is that of virtually every word Joyce wrote, is to instruct; there is no reason to write a book about a city of dead souls, for a city of dead souls and yet that is what Walzl concludes: "the 'moral history' Dubliners presents is a long decline, and the prognosis for the patient is death" (Walzl, p. 228). I cannot imagine how Walzl can reconcile this view of the book's final purpose with her view of "A Little Cloud." Little Chandler, according to Walzl, achieves an epiphany in which he realizes that his life has been wasted. This is absurd! Were Chandler to achieve an epiphany, a moment of true awareness, as an adult, he could change his life. As I will show later, Chandler never does achieve such an awareness because, in Walzl's terms, the paralysis has already progressed too far.

Paralysis extended to its most debilitating limits approaches death-in-life, a concept which can be important in understanding the self-perpetuating psychological hold that the city of Dublin has over its inhabitants. According to James R. Baker, Joyce solidified his own basic idea of living-death by reading Ibsen, particularly When We Dead Awaken:

Joyce finds in it the embodiment of his own preoccupations: the problem of the artist's relationship to a spiritually mean society, the penalties of aloofness from the common stream of life, and, most pertinent for the stories shaping in his mind,

a comprehensive dramatization of the pitiful failure of men to awaken from the somnolence which holds them among the living-dead. 13

Little Chandler is part of the list of characters (a list which suffers from over-inclusiveness) whom Baker describes as members of, "the great host of the living-dead" (Baker, p.22). Unfortunately, aside from realizing, and arguing beautifully, that "The Dead" is a summation of what has gone before it, Baker sees no progression through Dubliners; from the boy in the first stories, through Little Chandler, to the wardmen of "Ivy Day in the Committee Room," everyone fits into a single pattern of Ibsenesque living-death. The concept of living-death is of extreme value, but to neglect the progression from life to living-death is inexcusable because it is the inevitability of this progression which Joyce, through virtually all of his fiction, attempted to destroy.

The necessity of reading Dubliners as part of the complete Joyce canon is pointed out by Robert S. Ryf: "It is now generally agreed that in theme, imagery, symbolism, and rhythm, his writings are all of one piece. In a sense, he wrote but one book."<sup>14</sup> If Ryf is correct, we may then draw, as he does, on A Portrait of the Artist to help explain Dubliners in general, and "A Little Cloud" in particular. Ryf extracts the following quote, from A Portrait of the Artist, as essential to an

understanding of any of Joyce's works:

-- When the soul of a man is born in this country there are nets flung at it to hold it back from flight. You talk to me of nationality, language, and religion. I shall try to fly by those nets. (469)

The nets of nationality, language, and religion ensnare the inhabitants of Dublin in general, and since the inhabitants of Dublin provide Joyce with virtually every character he ever created, the validity of using concepts from one book to explain concepts in another is implied. The paralysis which Walzl theorized as the problem of the Dublin people, and which Baker extended into a living-death, is questioned by Ryf. Paralysis implies an internal debilitation in which a man loses the ability to cope with an indifferent environment; an external debilitating force, such as Stephen Dedalus' "nets," is explained more correctly by the word "captivity." Were Ryf to end at this point, his contribution would be slight, but he continues:

Language, nationality, and religion are captors -- agents of confinement, restraint, frustration. (Ryf, p.60)

but:

Captivity results in paralysis. Thus the relationship between the two ideas is one of cause and effect. (Ryf, p.60)

For paralysis to follow captivity, a man must spend a



certain amount of time as a captive. And as the length of captivity increases, the paralysis of the captive must likewise increase. The implication is clear -- if, in Dubliners, captivity is caused by the nets of language, nationality and religion as Stephen hypothesizes in A Portrait, then, as the characters advance in age from story to story, and advance in the number of years subjected to captivity, they must also advance in the extent of their own paralysis. And we have, at last, a cogent explanation of the obvious progression from greater to lesser awareness, a progression with which I will deal presently.

Ryf, although perceptive about "A Little Cloud," says far too little to be of value; it is left to his readers to apply his interpretation to the particular case. But the groundwork has been laid: Little Chandler becomes clearer when viewed as a man trapped in the nets of language and nationality. And, unlike Joyce himself, who flew past the nets by using them, rose above the people of Dublin by utilizing them in the creative process, Chandler can do nothing but remain ensnared.

Because such a vast number of critics skim quickly over "A Little Cloud" and neglect, for any number of reasons, any attempt at detailed analysis, the importance of any lengthy study of the story is obvious.

Two such studies, one by Warren Beck and one by Robert Boyle, S.J., are of exceptional value, not only for their length and inclusiveness, but also for the insight which ideally, if rarely, springs from a thorough knowledge of and concentration on a piece of literature. Whatever insight this paper may show has been considerably enhanced by the previous contributions of these two fine critics. Beck chooses, as a unifying factor in Dubliners, and throughout the Joyce canon, the concept of ambivalence. If this concept is applied to Little Chandler, as Beck very convincingly applies it, then "A Little Cloud" can be seen, immediately, as a more complex story than most critics have agreed that it is. In a discussion of the publishing history of "A Little Cloud," Beck points out that it was first published in America in May of 1915, when it appeared, along with "The Boarding House," in Smart Set. Beck is correct in his assessment of the stories:

Of the two, "A Little Cloud" is obviously the more complex, but that it comes to a greater attainment and indeed strikes a deeper note than is to be heard in any of the seven Dubliners stories preceding it seems not to have been fully recognized.<sup>15</sup>

The complexity of the story, according to Beck, lies in the characterization of Little Chandler, and it is he

at whom we must look if we are to understand the story at all. I think Beck is completely correct in his assessment; certainly Gallaher is important to the story, and Annie is important, but each is important only in the same way as the baby in the final scene: each exists for the sole purpose of interacting with Little Chandler and eliciting some kind of response from him. James S. Atherton has remarked that: "Perhaps the most unusual story, as to structural technique employed, is 'A Little Cloud.'" The story is about Little Chandler's failure to live; Joyce begins with the emphasis on Gallaher (the successful journalist whom we meet later in Ulysses), but he weaves his two parts together so skillfully that the story remains a unity."<sup>16</sup> To believe that "A Little Cloud" is about anyone but Little Chandler is absurd, and the absurdity can best be seen by introducing the concept of progressive characterization. Without offending too many critics, I think, the story can be broken down into three distinct parts: the time leading up to Little Chandler's meeting with Gallaher, the time during Little Chandler's meeting with Gallaher, and, finally, the time, somewhat later, after the meeting, as we see Chandler at home. It is essential that we realize that this single day in the life of Little Chandler is not a typical day. It has begun, before the story opens, with his unexpectedly



meeting an old friend and it will not end until he has bared what soul he has by his decisive shout of "stop" at his infant son. Clearly, the Little Chandler of part one is not the Little Chandler of part three; something has happened to the mild-mannered, prim, almost effeminate little clerk to elicit one intense moment of violent emotion. The point of the story lies in the change -- the progression -- of Little Chandler from the first part, through the second, and, finally, into the third, and to enable this progression to be seen, the central figure must always be Chandler himself. Robert Boyle is completely correct in his answer to Atherton's assertion that the initial emphasis is on Gallaher:

The story is certainly about Chandler's failure to live. But Joyce begins with the emphasis on Little Chandler, and maintains that emphasis throughout the story. Interesting though Gallaher is, he exists in this story, like all other elements, to contrast with and to illuminate the spirit of Chandler. We see Gallaher through Chandler's eyes, and it is Chandler's reaction to Gallaher which is central.<sup>17</sup>

And so, the stage is set to delve deeply into the character of Little Chandler, watching him in relation to everything else in the story, keeping constantly aware that very many of the things which Joyce allows us to see, he allows us to see only through the eyes of

Little Chandler, and that so many of the emotions we feel are not our own, nor the authors, but those of the character. We are ready to take our initial look at Little Chandler, the Little Chandler of part one, before the meeting with Ignatius Gallaher.

## Chapter II

We are introduced to the intellectual state of Little Chandler in the first paragraph of the story, the paragraph which Atherton had awarded to Gallaher. Joyce consistently concentrated a great deal of information in his opening paragraphs and we should, therefore, look very closely at this one. Certainly, we are introduced to Gallaher's name before Little Chandler's, but that name is really all we see of him. The paragraph is written, significantly, from Little Chandler's point of view. What we are learning of Gallaher is very subjective, and based on the prejudices of the little clerk whom we have yet to meet. And, thus, we learn a great deal more about Little Chandler than we do about the object of his reverie. What we really discover, as Boyle points out, is the remarkable ability which Little Chandler possesses which enables him to use eleven clichés within the framework of a single paragraph:

'seen his friend off', 'wished him  
godspeed', 'had got on', 'travelled  
air', 'well-cut tweed suit', 'fearless  
accent', 'few fellows had talents  
like his', 'unspoiled by success',  
'heart in the right place',  
'deserved to win', 'it was  
something' -- and we perceive at once  
that Chandler's mind is conventional,  
limited, insensitive, unperceptive.  
He is not vigorously alive mentally;

he merely shifts one dead phrase  
 into juxtaposition with another.  
 (Boyle, pp.85-86) (punctuation [sic] )

It is necessary for the reader to realize, from the very beginning of the story, that Joyce is not consistent in his assignment of point of view; sometimes he retains omniscience in regard to his characters' innermost thoughts, but, just as often, he allows his characters to bare their own souls through what they think or say, even if he, himself, would not agree. Thus, we cannot take the statement "Gallagher had got on" as representative of Joyce's regard for Gallagher's industrious perseverance toward success. We must wait and see this supposed great talent. But the means by which this possibly correct statement has been made has illuminated the man making the statement; we must be very cautious in accepting anything Little Chandler tells us. And we must become only more wary of Chandler's objectivity as we become better acquainted with him.

A small point, but possibly illuminating in regard to Gallagher's emotional ties with his old friend, occurs at the beginning of the second paragraph:

Little Chandler's thoughts ever since lunchtime had been of his meeting with Gallagher, of Gallagher's invitation and of the great city London where Gallagher lived.(80)

The point may be small but it is, I think, significant. Chandler has already met Gallaher once that same day -- at lunchtime. Furthermore, the meeting must have been quite accidental because, as we find out later, Gallaher has already been in Dublin for a number of days and is planning, very soon, to depart. I don't want to press the point; the "meeting" could, although I don't think it does, refer to the pending meeting. But if the passage does imply an earlier, brief, chance meeting on the street, the implication is that Gallaher does not consider Chandler worthy of the time which they spend together. And this view of Chandler is augmented by the physical description of him which follows immediately:

He was called Little Chandler because, though he was but slightly under the average stature, he gave one the idea of being a little man. His hands were white and small, his frame was fragile, his voice was quiet and his manners were refined. He took the greatest care of his fair silken hair and moustache and used perfume discreetly on his handkerchief. The half moons of his nails were perfect and when he smiled you caught a glimpse of a row of childish white teeth.(80)

The implications of the description are staggering; Chandler is established as nearly pathetic in his ineffectiveness. He was not particularly small, and yet he "gave one the idea of being a little man." He

went to great lengths to make himself attractive, but nobody seems to have noticed; he has succeeded in establishing himself in people's minds simply as Little Chandler. And Joyce, significantly, calls him by no other name throughout the story.

As the frame of reference widens and the background scenery clarifies, we see Little Chandler sitting at his desk, and another aspect of this strange little man is examined and clarified. In contrast to his assessment of Gallaher as "a brilliant figure on the London Press," Chandler sees his own mechanical writing as "tiresome," and he proceeds to gaze out his window. His reaction to the scene is of primary importance: the romantic glow of an autumn sunset colors a scene which seems particularly depressing -- the nurses, the old men, significantly decrepit, the screaming children are all enough to evoke a sense of melancholy in a sensitive man, but not in Little Chandler; he must first think "of life," and the melancholy must spring from his thoughts rather than from what is before him. One is reminded of Stephen Dedalus, who, as he wanders along the rivulet, meets a young girl, attractive, sensuous, and earthy, and idealizes her, as only Stephen can idealize, and misses the true beauty in the scene by substituting his own self-centered, ethereal idea of beauty. So, also, does Chandler miss the reality of



the moment as his feeling of melancholy springs from his thoughts, "as always happened when he thought of life"(81). But there is more to this rich paragraph: the children are not laughing, or playing, or even shouting, but, rather, they are screaming. In the light of Chandler's later reaction to his screaming child, the word cannot be accidental, but affords an early look at Chandler's basic attitude toward children in general. And finally, as Warren Beck points out, we are introduced to the element of everyman, "the long view in which Little Chandler is to be held as he walks across central Dublin" (Beck, p.16 ). Joyce says:

He [Chandler] felt how useless it was to struggle against fortune, this being the burden of wisdom which the ages had bequeathed to him.(81)

And Chandler is right; the Dublin mentality has bequeathed to him the futility of struggle, but it is this futility which Joyce overcame and which he constantly tried to teach others to overcome. By attributing this idea to Little Chandler, the author, through the irony of its divergence from his own philosophy reveals a great deal about the character he has created.

Our extended introduction to Little Chandler is not yet complete. Having been introduced to the tedium of his business life, we must now take<sup>a</sup> corresponding

look at his home life. It is difficult to feel no pathos for the little clerk whose home life is so stifling that he cannot "read out something to his wife" without being overwhelmed by shyness. But the way in which Little Chandler satisfies his love of poetry forces our emotion from pathos to pity, a word which carries with it the implication of detachment on the part of the observer; one may feel pathos at seeing a strong man being broken, pity at seeing a dog being beaten by a stick. It is quite clear, from this single paragraph, that Little Chandler's problems are, to a great degree, self-determined. There is no mention of any ridicule his wife might subject him to if he tried to read her some poetry. He was held back, rather, by his own shyness -- he never even bothered to try. Thus, through the first four paragraphs of the story, we are introduced to virtually every aspect of Little Chandler's character. The rest of the story will clarify the picture which has been sketched to this point, but the basic characterization has been drawn. We have met a slight, ineffectual, shrinking, day-dreaming, rather morose little man who is locked at a desk during the day, and locked in his own pessimistic self-denial all day and all night. It is no wonder that,

When his hour had struck he stood  
up and took leave of his desk and  
his fellow-clerks punctiliously.(81)



Punctilious ineffectiveness may sum up Chandler to this point. Be on time to wherever you are going, but don't do anything once you get there.

In the light of Chandler's imminent "poetic moment," his emergence into the Dublin streets takes on new meaning:

The golden sunset was waning and the air had grown sharp. A horde of grimy children populated the street. They stood or ran in the roadway or crawled up the steps before the gaping doors or squatted like mice upon the thresholds.(81)

But,

Little Chandler gave them no thought. He picked his way deftly through all that minute vermin-like life and under the shadow of the gaunt spectral mansions in which the old nobility of Dublin had roistered.(81-82)

Is this the mind of even a minor poet? Little Chandler is becoming more Dedalian as the story progresses. Once more, Warren Beck is illuminating:

He "gave them no thought," either in themselves, or in comparison with his own infant son, or in contrast with other lives that had played themselves out along this same street. A genuine poet who really "thought of life" and not first of himself as its melancholy prisoner might have considered these children whose "struggle against fortune" was indeed more severe than his. (Beck, p. 165)

As the young Stephen Dedalus so often did, Chandler loses himself in his thoughts and, thereby, misses the reality on which all valid literature must, ultimately, be based.

The next paragraph, as Chandler reflects on Corless's Pub and his nocturnal diversions, strikes some discord into his heretofore relatively harmonious portrait. Chandler had never before been in Corless's, and yet:

Walking swiftly by at night he had seen cabs drawn up before the door and richly dressed ladies, escorted by cavaliers, alight and enter quickly. They wore noisy dresses and many wraps. Their faces were powdered and they caught up their dresses, when they touched earth, like alarmed Atalantas. (82)

The seeming inappropriateness of the reference to the Atalanta myth tends to make me read that as Chandler's analogy. Atalanta was a fast runner, and the women "caught up their dresses" rapidly, one would presume, but a far better analogy, I would think, could be drawn and Joyce, I am sure, was quite capable of realizing the fact. Without pressing that point, however, the paragraph is still a mystery. The French and German waiters and the lavishly dressed women contribute to the exotic motif which pervades Dubliners and which will play an important role in "A Little Cloud." What bothers me however, and may be it shouldn't, is the reason for Little Chandler's being out, alone, late

enough at night to notice fashionable ladies emerging from cabs in front of Corless's. And he had not only passed a few times:

He had always passed without turning his head to look. (82) (*italics mine*)

Combine this night-walking, in a section Little Chandler would not cross on his way home from work, with his almost pathological searching out of the darkest narrowest streets to walk down and what emerges is a somewhat different look at the prim law-clerk than, I think, anyone has bothered to notice. I don't want to apply anything quite so strong as a Freudian death-wish, but the implication is that Chandler is perhaps using too weak a word when he picks "melancholy" as his "dominant note." Melancholy implies a passive acceptance of a world one laconically thinks could be better and of one's place in that world. It is a passive emotion, imposed by a realization of the imperfection (perhaps absurdity) of the world and its people. The role of the typical subordinate, a role Little Chandler, seemingly, has devoted a life-time to creating, is passive, and melancholy could very well be its most dominant note. But Chandler is not a simple character; the passivity which should accompany melancholy is not a part of this little man. The imperfection of the world is not passively accepted, but

actively sought, and there in lies one of the keys to the story, and to all of Dubliners. Ensnarement, and paralysis become, eventually, narcotics which one actively seeks, as Little Chandler seeks the "darkest and narrowest streets" on his walks through central Dublin late at night. And again, the incident is not uncommon:

... and at times a sound of low fugitive laughter made him tremble like a leaf. (82) (*italics mine*)

Little Chandler, apparently "courted the causes of his fear" on a regular basis. The implication of Chandler's active role in his own life is important. No longer can he be seen as "the 'little cloud' of the title, blown about by Gallaher's whim" (Levin and Shattuck, p.71). If Chandler is "blown about," as he, of course, sometimes is, the impetus is not always from without; in at least this one paragraph, he is "blown about" by an internal wind, a psychological wind which entered, puff by puff, from the external Dublin environment, but became substantial and self-sustaining within.

Little Chandler's active role in the creation of his life will become increasingly important as the story progresses, and the subordinate role could, conceivably, be overlooked were Joyce not meticulous enough to remind us of it in the form of Little Chandler's reminiscence about the "many signs of future greatness"

which he had noticed in Gallaher so long ago. The "signs" prepare us for Gallaher, but they also remind us of the subordinate creature Little Chandler is, as they recall his opening assessment of Gallaher and evaluation of his own merits. Chandler had said earlier,

It was something to have a friend like that.(80)

Now he admits that Gallaher

... did mix with a rakish set of fellows at that time.(82)

If we consider that one member of that "rakish set" was Little Chandler, himself, we learn two things. First, that the "rakish set" was, at least in part, somewhat less "rakish" than Chandler would care to admit; and second, that Chandler, the subordinate, cannot realize yet that boorishness, no matter how impressively extroverted it may be, is not a sign of greatness. Our first real look at Gallaher is the saying he used to repeat (apparently quite often) when something was wrong:

-- Half time, now, boys, he used to say light-heartedly. Where's my considering cap? (83)

Chandler finds the saying so clever that he experiences pride from his association with it; we, however, realize that it is trite and hackneyed. Thinks Chandler:

That was Ignatius Gallaher all out; and damn it, you couldn't but admire him for it. (83)

The discerning reader must realize that that, indeed, was Ignatius Gallaher, but that, damn it, no admiration is called for. And in the light of such a questionable stimulus, Chandler's self-elevated feelings of superiority become ludicrous. How simple the story would be if they remained so.

The importance of the scene in which little Chandler experiences his poetic moment cannot be overstated. The relationship of the potential artist to his actual artistic creation is a theme with which Joyce deals extensively, even exhaustively, in his later works. Stephen Dedalus's ethereal poem "To E.C." and his subsequent villanelle are central to A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man; his Shakespeare criticism and the parable of the plums mark his artistic growth in Ulysses. But here, so much earlier, is another view of the artist, and the relationship of the artist to his art is as crucial here as in any of the later works. It may even be found to illuminate those later works and cast doubt upon some deep preconceptions of Joyce's artistic purpose.

As Little Chandler quickens his pace and heads toward Grattan Bridge, he experiences a revelation:



There was no doubt about it:  
if you wanted to succeed you  
had to go away. You could do  
nothing in Dublin. (83)

Many critics have recognized a basic theme in this passage, and a few have noted the irony in Little Chandler's voicing of it. Warren Beck says:

That this is a general Joycean theme does not preclude its being read here as a particular gibe against the escapism of an arty poseur, for it is in this guise that Little Chandler continues to show himself. (Beck, p.166)

The realization of the irony of Little Chandler's mouthing these words is as close to the realization of the meaning of this passage as any critic, whom I could find, has come. But, I think, the irony goes deeper than that, and, in fact, calls for a basic change in critical outlook of a major Joyce theme. The irony of this situation lies in the fact that immediately following his assertion that "You could do nothing in Dublin," Little Chandler experiences what is, for him, the ultimate creative poetic moment. He has not left Dublin to experience it; he, rather, does what Stephen Dedalus will learn to do between the time of his villanelle and the time of the parable of the plums: he uses the city of Dublin, the city which he knows so well, to construct a poetic simile. Joyce's point is not to leave Dublin and travel to England, or France,

or Trieste, for that matter, but, rather, to leave the intellectual atmosphere which stifles creativity under the three nets of nationality, religion, and language. As we will see later, the mere physical moving away from Dublin is not sufficient to break through the nets; through Gallaher, we will find the stifling qualities of London and the possibility of intellectual entrapment in even the most exotic of places. Gabriel Conroy, in contrast, will come to a much fuller realization of life and death than anyone else in Dubliners, and he will come to that realization without physically moving from the room where he, earlier, could not come to a similar realization. I think the implication is clear: Joyce advocated, rather than an emptying of the city of Dublin and expatriation to more stimulating environments, an intellectual awakening within that city which would make Dublin itself the stimulating environment he sought. Of course, the quality of Little Chandler's "extended pathetic fallacy" (Beck, p. 166) is commensurate with the thirty-two years he has spent in the intellectually stifling atmosphere of Dublin's fair city. As many critics have noted before, the simile is childish, rather forced, and, in the end, allowed to slip away undeveloped. But the point is that it does exist; and it is brought on by Little Chandler's admitting to

himself, however unconsciously he does so, that it is not "useless to struggle against fortune." But it is too late for Little Chandler; he has been in the intellectually stifling atmosphere of Dublin too long. What he could have become is buried beneath what he has become, and yet he is left with some vestige of awareness although that awareness is, as I will show later, severely limited.

The complexity of Little Chandler's character shows clearly in his reaction to the "poetic moment" he has just experienced. The comic absurdities are well known:

He weighed his soul to see if  
it was a poet's soul. (84)

One wonders if he weighed it in grams or in ounces.  
The absurdities continue:

He began to invent sentences and phrases from the notices which his book would get. Mr. Chandler has the gift of easy and graceful verse . . . . A wistful sadness pervades these poems . . . . The Celtic note. (84)

And they conclude with childish concern over the value of a name:

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. (84)

What few critics have noticed is that nestled among Little Chandler's comic absurdities is a valid self-analysis:

Melancholy was the dominant note of his temperament, he thought, but it was a melancholy tempered by recurrences of faith and resignation and simple joy. (84)

Warren Beck, again, is enlightening:

Some may read "recurrences of faith and resignation and simple joy" as merely more satire by cumulative clichés, yet who is to deny that Little Chandler may have experienced such insights, and may feel himself open to further recurrence? (Beck, p.168)

Who, indeed, is to deny Little Chandler's self-evaluation in the light of what we have seen, or will see, of him? We have seen him resigned to the life he leads; we have seen him faithful to the memory of a friend from whom he has not heard in eight years; and we will see the pure and simple joy he derives from giving Annie a blouse which cost him too much in both cash and embarrassment. Whatever else Little Chandler is unaware of, and we will see just how extensive this field is, he is aware of the basic human qualities he possesses, and that awareness will be of crucial importance in interpreting his reactions to Ignatius Gallaher in the next section of the story. But first, Joyce must add one more fine, artistic brush-stroke to

the portrait he is painting. Little Chandler is, above all, comic in his ineffectuality. No matter how touched we may be by the very human day-dreams with which Little Chandler is so seriously concerned, we are forced to laugh at the slap-stick manner in which:

He pursued his reverie so ardently that he passed his street and had to turn back. (84)

And finally, the last act Little Chandler performs before opening the door to Corless's and Gallaher is pathetically typical:

As he came near Corless's his former agitation began to overmaster him and he halted before the door in indecision. (84)

The complexity of Little Chandler is thus well established; he is far more complex than any of the characters in any of the preceding stories, including, I think, Lenehan, his nearest rival. With the complexity of his character well established, we may look at Little Chandler's meeting with Ignatius Gallaher as a continuation of characterization leading, eventually, to Chandler's one decisive act at the story's end.

### Chapter III

In order to realize the significance of Little Chandler's reaction to Gallaher, we must understand exactly what Gallaher, himself, is really like. William York Tindall compares him to Corley of "Two Gallants":

Gallaher ... is brighter and more articulate than Corley though, like him, crude, aggressive and extroverted. Enterprising enough to have escaped, he returns to patronize his enterprising friend and to condescend to dear, dirty Dublin.<sup>18</sup>

Tindall's reading of "A Little Cloud" recalls the early assessment of the story by Louis Golding as "the study of the moaning poet and the prosperous journalist."<sup>19</sup> But Golding was doing pioneer work on Joyce and can, therefore, be excused for accepting the obvious; Tindall, and those who agree with his reading of Gallaher, seem to be closing their eyes to some of the less obvious refinements which make the story so rich. It seems almost inconceivable that Tindall could see Gallaher's close relationship to Corley (and, I am sure, if he were pressed, to Jack Mooney of "The Boarding House") and still refer to Gallaher as "enterprising enough to have escaped." As I have shown above, the stifling influence is not the physical Dublin, but, rather, its anti-intellectual atmosphere. It will be clear, as the story progresses, that Gallaher has never broken



free from the mental bonds, the true restraining forces in Dubliners. In fact, even his physical expatriation is not motivated by an attempt to escape from Dublin's stifling of creativity, but rather, it seems, by an attempt to escape from something much more tangible:

In the end he had got mixed up in some shady affair, some money transaction: at least, that was one version of his flight. (82)

And so, the meeting between Little Chandler and Gallaher cannot be seen as a meeting between the hopelessly trapped and the enlightened departed because Gallaher, apparently, never intended to leave Dublin, but was forced by external circumstances to depart. Perhaps Hugh Kenner is a bit strong in calling him "the pseudo-masculine incarnation of irrational know-how" (Kenner, p.56). But J. Mitchell Morse seems too kind in his evaluation:

He [Gallaher] is a successful yellow journalist who has no desire to be anything else or do anything better; his chief motive aside from money is love of novelties -- to be always on the go, seeing new places and new people, and, as a writer, "always to have something new in [his] stuff." (85). But what stale stuff it is! How dreary are all his novelties! (Morse, p.106)

Robert Boyle, who had previously noted Little Chandler's cliché-riddled speech, perhaps best sums up Gallaher by noting that he is,

... even more than Little Chandler trapped in cliché. ... He parrots the jargon of the turn-of-the-century Irish newspaper, 'tasted the joys of connubial bliss', 'may you never die till I shoot you', 'a pleasure deferred'. He uses the cheap and vulgar counters of street-corner toughs, 'a ton better', 'knock about a bit', 'Hot stuff!', 'ready to eat me, man', 'liquor up', 'head in the sack', 'a bit stale'. (Boyle, p.88.-- punctuation [sic])

And Boyle is right. We have seen Chandler mouth a single concentrated paragraph of cliché and then revert to it intermittently; we will see Gallaher revert to cliché constantly and find himself unable to relate those experiences which do not fall neatly into an established verbal pattern.

One of the outgrowths of cliché is insincerity. A sincere expression of emotion grows from the individual situation in which a man confronts another man; it is fashioned at the moment of emotion and, of course, can apply <sup>only</sup> to that particular moment. As soon as a phrase, once vibrantly alive, is used out of context of the emotion in which it was born, a great deal of the emotion it once conveyed is lost; this is the net of language in which so many Dublin residents (and ex-residents) are trapped. A phrase, at one time alive and emotive becomes, through constant use, flat and dead; and the mind which thinks only in flat, dead, overused phrases is, naturally, flat and dead, if not

overused, itself. And Gallaher, having fallen into this slovenly thought pattern, finds sincerity very difficult, indeed, as his first words show us.

Little Chandler, whom we left "halted before the door in indecision" (84), has finally "opened the door and entered"(84). His actions are typical: fearful that the people at the bar "were observing him curiously," he frowned in order "to make his errand appear serious"(84). This is the same ineffectual little man whom we have grown to know so well.

Gallaher's first phrase is staggering, both in its ludicrous inappropriateness and its betrayal of his abject insincerity. Joyce has chosen, immediately before Gallaher's first phrase, to emphasize Little Chandler's timidity and almost paranoid self-concern. And yet Gallaher's first words are:

--Hallo, Tommy, old hero, here you are!(84)  
(italics mine)

Gallaher's insincerity is rampant; the reader is aware of his patronizing within one half page. He calls the waiter garçon, and, later, François, in an apparent attempt to parade his continental refinement, but only succeeds in demonstrating his boorishness by the inappropriateness of calling an Irish barman by a French name. Once we have seen his "vivid orange tie," which, as Beck points out, he flaunts "in the face of Catholic

Dublin" (Beck, p.168), and have heard him condescend to "dear dirty Dublin"(85), our image of Ignatius Gallaher is virtually complete. And yet Little Chandler has not yet progressed to where he can realize Gallaher's boorishness. Significantly, from Gallaher's opening line through the "dear dirty Dublin" reference, we do not hear Little Chandler speak. And when he finally does speak, he modestly, and still subordinately, denies his ability to drink liquor, acquiescing to Gallaher's implied assertion that one is more manly if he drinks liquor "neat."

The conversation between Little Chandler and Gallaher really begins with, perhaps, the most confusing episode in the story, the discussion of the financial situations of Hogan and O'Hara. In the light of his imminent refusal of Chandler's invitation to spend the evening with him, Gallaher's concern over the "very flush" Hogan could indicate, simply, that Hogan will be part of the "little card-party"(90) planned for that evening. Or his concern could stem, as Warren Beck suggests from "remembering that Hogan flush in London paid for the drinks, or perhaps had been good for a loan"(Beck, p.169). Neither explanation seems particularly illuminating, nor can either be proven within the story. Equally difficult, but, perhaps, more interesting, is O'Hara's case. Gallaher says:

Poor O'Hara! Boose, I suppose?

to which Chandler replies:

to which Chandler replies:

--Other things, too, said Little Chandler shortly.(86)

What other things are wrong with O'Hara? Women and gambling are often associated with excessive drinking, and if that is the case here, then Little Chandler prudishly dismisses those qualities he earlier found so admirable in Gallaher. But, again, nothing can be proven; perhaps Joyce's point is to show Little Chandler's prudish reaction to any waywardness and thus set up Gallager's analysis of his character:

-- Tommy, he said, I see you haven't changed an atom. You're the very same serious person that used to lecture me on Sunday mornings when I had a sore head and a fur on my tongue.(86)

The irony of Gallaher's statement lies in its utter correctness -- Little Chandler has not changed "an atom" in the last eight years -- and in its imminent incorrectness--very soon, the change in Little Chandler will begin to take place. First, however, each character must establish himself firmly in his own pattern so that his basic nature will be fresh in the reader's mind as realization is born in Little Chandler. We have seen so much of Little Chandler that to re-invoke all that we have seen of him before, Joyce needs only a few lines:



-- Have you ever been anywhere, even for a trip?

-- I've been to the Isle of Man, said Little Chandler.

Ignatius Gallaher laughed.(86)

One gets the impression that the popular island resort, so convenient to Dublin, was constructed and named solely for the effect it would have in this single story. The effeminate Little Chandler has been nowhere but the Isle of Man! And Joyce continues to add to the comic ineffectuality of this poor creature:

Little Chandler finished his whiskey and, after some trouble, succeeded in catching the barman's eye.(87)(italics mine)

Gallaher, in the meantime, has been busy showing off his more obvious flaws. His bragging elicits Chandler's question about the beauty of Paris, to which he replies:

-- Beautiful? said Ignatius Gallaher, pausing on the word and on the flavor of his drink. It's not so beautiful you know. Of course, it is beautiful. ... But it's the life of Paris; that's the thing. Ah, there's no city like Paris for gaiety, movement, excitement...(86)

Little Chandler has caught his friend off guard; Gallaher does not know a cliché expressive of the beauty of Paris and so he fumbles. It's not beautiful! It is beautiful! And then a cliché is found. Of course, "the life of Paris" is "the thing." And Gallaher never answers the simple question which Little Chandler has



asked but, rather, limited by cliché, rambles on about Parisian life. And, for the first time, Little Chandler begins to recognize Gallaher as a boor:

He was beginning to feel disillusioned. Gallaher's accent and way of expressing himself did not please him. There was something vulgar in his friend which he had not observed before. (87)

But total awareness is not for Little Chandler to achieve; his awareness will deepen throughout his meeting with Gallaher, but, as the final section of the story will show, it will never reach totality. At this point, he is not even ready to accept his own limited observation:

But perhaps it was only the result of living in London amid the bustle and competition of the press. The old personal charm was still there under this new gaudy manner. And, after all, Gallaher had lived, he had seen the world. Little Chandler looked at his friend enviously. (87)

If we are inclined to agree with Little Chandler in his rationalization of Gallaher's boorishness, our inclination is destroyed in the very next paragraph. Joyce is a craftsman, meticulous in the construction of his fiction; the positioning of episodes within the narrative is always of great importance. In A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man, every time Stephen Dedalus etherealizes a subject, inflates it beyond its nature, a deflating paragraph is certain to

follow: as he expounds his esthetic theory, an iron-drill rattles by; as he hallucinates the winged bird-man, he is shouted at by his more earth-bound school-mates; as he expounds on the beauty of the body, a louse crawls across his neck. So, also, by positioning of events does Joyce destroy Chandler's generous view of Gallaher's worldliness. Gallaher continues in his praise of "the life of Paris," and concludes by saying:

When they heard I was from Ireland  
they were ready to eat me, man. (87)\*

Chandler has just silently awarded Gallaher London as a home and has accepted his boorishness as a result of his living there. But Gallaher, living in London and traveling to Paris, says that he is "from Ireland." He is being perfectly truthful, of course, and yet the implication is that he has never left Ireland. Physically, he is a Londoner, but spiritually and intellectually, he has never left Dublin. And, thus, the awareness Chandler felt and then repressed is shown to have been correct. He will, as the story progresses, feel that awareness again, but he will never fully dismiss the idea that Gallaher has escaped and is somehow better because he has.

\* Edward Brandabur relates Gallaher's statement to his own hypothesis of an oral-sexual motif recurrent in Dubliners, but, I think, the passage works equally well on a more naturalistic level.<sup>20</sup>

The complexity of Little Chandler's character appears, again, in his almost neurotic vicarious enjoyment of Gallaher's talk of European immorality. This sedate, refined, very proper little man has been seen, quite out of "character," walking dark streets late at night and watching, from afar, as beautiful women enter exotic places. Now, he timidly insists on a comparison between London and Paris in terms, not of their relative morality, but of their relative immorality. And his astonishment indicates his complete acceptance of Gallaher's evaluation of "the vices of many capitals"(88). Our picture of Little Chandler is beginning to focus just a little better; he is a man with two levels of consciousness, two levels which could be divided very easily along Freudian lines. Little Chandler is the prim, punctillious, law clerk he seems to be, but he is this personality only on the conscious level. This is the ego, the part of the psyche which shapes and molds the bestial id forces and makes them emerge in patterns conforming to social living. But Little Chandler is also the night-walker who enjoys stories of immorality. The id, the main energizing force of the psyche which, in a normally functioning member of society is completely channelled through the ego, is, in Little Chandler, capable of surfacing unimpeded. I don't want to press the Freudian

analysis too far, but I think we see Little Chandler's development as a character governed by two forces not necessarily in accord at all times. Certainly Chandler, in his everyday role, would not be capable of the final action of the story; we must find something far from "everyday" in this little man in order that we may accept his final act as plausible. And it is toward this end that, I think, the strange aspects of Little Chandler's characterization point.

Yet we must not think of Little Chandler as a psychopath; the dominant aspect of his personality is, oddly enough, passivity. And, thus, the next part of his interview with Gallaher performs two functions. Besides re-emphasizing Gallaher's unabashed insincerity, it establishes the truly warm human emotion Chandler feels for his wife and child and, to some degree, for an old friend. At the mention of his marriage:

Little Chandler blushed and smiled.  
 -- Yes, he said. I was married  
 last May twelve months.(89)

To Gallaher's lame excuse for not offering his best wishes sooner, Chandler replies simply by shaking hands. And as the conversation progresses, Gallaher becomes even more blatantly insincere:

--Well, Tommy, he said, I wish you  
 and yours every joy in life, old chap,  
 and tons of money, and may you never  
 die till I shoot you. And that's the

wish of a sincere friend, an old friend. You know that?(88)

That's the wish of any insincere drunk in any pub in the area, but Little Chandler doesn't realize it:

--I know that, said Little Chandler.(89)

And the insincerity reaches absurdity when, after learning of Little Chandler's son,

Ignatius Gallaher slapped his friend sonorously on the back.

-- Bravo, he said, I wouldn't doubt you, Tommy.(90)

The gentleman, obviously, protests too much. In different company, perhaps with Hogan in London, the one thing Gallaher would, of course, doubt would be Little Chandler's sexual capacity, and the obvious joke would center around the actual identity of the father. But Chandler doesn't notice the slur:

Little Chandler smiled, looked confusedly at his glass and bit his lower lip with three childishly white front teeth.(90)

In order to achieve any kind of awareness of the true nature of his relationship with Gallaher, Little Chandler must be provided with the strong awakening stimulus of Gallaher's refusal to spend an evening with him:

— Thanks awfully, old chap, said Ignatius Gallaher, I'm sorry we didn't meet earlier. But I must leave tomorrow night.



-- Tonight perhaps ... ?

-- I'm awfully sorry, old man.  
You see I'm over here with another  
fellow, clever young chap he is  
too, and we arranged to go to a  
little card party. Only for that...

-- O, in that case... .(90)

And yet, Chandler could, possibly, accept Gallaher's  
obviously insincere promise to come back next year  
were it not for his near refusal of another drink:

-- And to clinch the bargain, said  
Little Chandler, we'll just have  
one more now.

Ignatius Gallaher took out a large  
gold watch and looked at it.

-- Is it to be the last? he said.  
Because you know, I have an a.p.(90)

Little Chandler's earlier repressed realization of  
Gallaher's boorishness and the stimulus of the belittling  
refusals, coupled with the strong liquor and the cigar,  
"upset the equipoise of his sensitive nature"(91).  
What some critics have regarded as Little Chandler's  
epiphany, a moment of total awareness, is, in reality, a  
jumble of awareness and delusion elicited by these  
varied stimuli. Chandler is aware that what Gallaher  
practices is really, "mere tawdry journalism." He is,  
of course perceptive in the following realization:

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.(91)



But this is not a moment of total awareness for Little Chandler. His assertion that,

he could do something better than his friend had ever done, or could ever do, something higher than mere tawdry journalism if he only got the chance (91)

is childish illusion. The reasoning is that of a slight ten year old who watches a bigger boy play football and sulkingly thinks that if he himself were that big, he'd be even better than the boy he envies. And Chandler's reaction is expressly childish; instead of meeting Gallaher in<sup>a</sup> contest of literary ability, Little Chandler chooses; as a way "to assert his manhood," a totally unconnected challenge:

-- Who knows? he said, as they lifted their glasses. When you come next year I may have the pleasure of wishing long life and happiness to Mr. and Mrs. Ignatius Gallaher. (91)

Little Chandler still has not lost the attitude of the subordinate. In challenging Gallaher, he bypasses the opportunity to elevate himself and thereby prove his superiority; instead, he childishly attempts to bring Gallaher down to his own level. In effect, he is saying that someday Gallaher will marry, and then he will have to settle down, and, after that happens, then we will see who is more worthy! The reasoning is, again, that of a child, and yet Little Chandler strikes

a tender spot in the brash façade of his friend. As Robert Boyle says,

"Gallaher reveals, in his own excited resentment of Chandler's challenging claim to this one superiority that he is not as self-sufficient and balanced as he pretends to be, and he returns and crushes Little Chandler's attacks with boasts, loud laughter, and crude insult."(Boyle,p.89)

But Little Chandler has come to a deeper awareness than any he has actually articulated. He has realized that his own shrinking, servile, esthetic personality is of greater human value than Gallaher's boisterous, dominant, and bestial one. And thus, he is not afraid to stand up to Gallaher's assault on the marital state:

-- You'll put your head in the sack, repeated Little Chandler stoutly, like everyone else if you can find the girl.

He had slightly emphasized his tone and he was aware that he had betrayed himself; but, though the colour had heightened in his cheek, he did not flinch from his friend's gaze.(92)

And we should not be surprised that, in response to Gallaher's assertion:

She'll have a good fat account at the bank or she won't do for me(92)

Little Chandler merely shakes his head in rejection of his friend's values and acceptance of his own.

And yet Little Chandler is not an assertive individual; we have seen the various aspects of his personality controlling him at various times, and we would be presumptuous to accept as final his rejection of Gallaher's values; Little Chandler is extremely impressionable, and Gallaher is very impressive in his subsequent assault. He evokes the image of "rich Germans and Jews, rotten with money," an image Little Chandler can't help comparing with Annie. And he forces Chandler to re-evaluate his entire life by directly attacking the marriage state itself:

-- I don't fancy tying myself up to one woman, you know.

.. . . .  
 -- Must get a bit stale, I should think, he said.(92-93)

Warren Beck claims that we may disregard any effect these last passages may have on Little Chandler because "Here it remains for the reader to remember that Chandler has already shaken his head over this man"(Beck,p.175). But this is clearly nonsense. Gallaher's assault has introduced to that uncontrollable portion of Little Chandler's mind the image of rich Jewesses, which will recur in the next section of the story, and a deep doubt about the validity of the married state in general. And it is these doubts which will elicit the action at the story's end.

## Chapter IV

2

The third section of "A Little Cloud" grows, organically, from the preceding two sections, and to miss this organicism is to miss the point of the story. As we focus in on Little Chandler sitting "in the room off the hall, holding a child in his arms," (93) we must realize that this is the same Little Chandler who, not long before, leaned against the bar in Corless's Pub and drank malt whiskey with Ignatius Gallaher. Consequently, we are not looking at Little Chandler during an average evening at home, and I think it is important that we realize, at every moment, what has gone before. Little Chandler has experienced a "poetic moment"; he has met an old friend after eight years; he has had four small whiskies and a strong cigar which have "confused his mind." Finally, he has been exposed to exotic ideas that will cause him to doubt the value of the one area of his life which has, apparently, seemed worthwhile to him. Now, through the use of a dramatic ellipsis, Joyce enables us to see just how stale Little Chandler's life really is:

The third section of the story, two or three hours later, shows us Little Chandler's resentment of his trapped situation . . . . His humiliation by Gallaher rankles in his soul. He is left to care for the baby while his wife,

because of his ineptitude, goes out to buy tea and sugar. He resents his wife, his timidity in buying a blouse for her, her prim complacency in her lack of money and voluptuousness, her prim and pretty furniture. (Boyle, pp. 89-90)

Boyle, thus, suggests the "standard" reading of the first part of this final section: we must see the futility of Little Chandler's home life in order to justify his motivation in screaming at his child. Chandler becomes aware of the trap into which he has fallen and from which he, presumably, can't escape and from that awareness springs his remorse. But this "standard" reading overlooks some very important details, not least of which is the narrative point of view; we must look very closely at this section of the story because, as in so many other sections, that which seems to illuminate only itself, illuminates, instead, Little Chandler.

The impressions related in this final section are, perhaps even more completely than in the preceding sections, Little Chandler's, and that fact is of crucial importance; we have found Little Chandler to be, repeatedly, less than reliable in his evaluations, and we can expect, therefore, a divergence between reality and what he sees as reality. And when we look objectively at Little Chandler's domestic life,

when we disregard his own slanted subjectivity, we find that his home life really is not nearly so bad as the "standard" reading suggests. We must remember that Annie lives, everyday, with the timid, ineffectual clerk who, as we have seen, is so inept at everything from writing poetry to ordering drinks. How much more aware than we must she be of Little Chandler's ineptitude, and how much more annoying it must seem to her. We are not surprised that

Little Chandler had come home late for tea and, moreover, he had forgotten to bring Annie home the parcel of coffee from Bewley's. (93)

We have seen enough of little Chandler to realize that this is probably not the first time he has failed in a very simple task, but Annie's reaction is not one of disgust. She simply reacts as the average young woman she is:

Of course she was in a bad humour and gave him short answers. She said she would do without any tea but when it came near the time at which the shop at the corner closed she decided to go out herself for a quarter of a pound of tea and two pounds of sugar. (93)

Of course she is in a bad humour! Her husband, without notice, fails to come home. He spends the early evening drinking, comes home, presumably, half-drunk, and



forgets to bring her the simple item she requested that he buy. As a woman, she is hurt and, as a woman, she retaliates, but the hurt and retaliation stem from love rather than from indifference. Were she indifferent toward Little Chandler, she would have been concerned only with the coffee he was supposed to bring home. But her concern is so far from being with the coffee, that when she finally goes out, she goes to buy tea. Her motive is to demonstrate her disappointment, and this is not an act of indifference, but, rather, a game of domestic love; the warmth of their relationship shows, even through Little Chandler's slanted evaluation of her picture:

Little Chandler looked at it,  
pausing at the thin tight  
lips.(93)

The lips appear cold and indifferent to Little Chandler, apparently in contrast to the exotic fancies which, we will learn, are occupying his mind, and a number of critics have agreed with his analysis. I don't want to press the point too hard, but perhaps the most striking feature of the fledgling photographic technique of the period was the thinness and tightness of the lips, caused, apparently, by the concentration that was necessary to remain perfectly inanimate.\*

\*see, for example, the picture of Clancy, Byrne, and Joyce in the Ellmann biography. Plate V, facing page 240. They each have "thin tight lips" due, presumably, to the photographic process.<sup>21</sup>

It would be all too typical of Little Chandler to pick out this isolated feature and, paranoia flowing freely, attribute adverse significance to it; and the inappropriateness of a reference to Annie's frigidity is marked in the light of the warm paragraph which follows. The blouse episode is, perhaps, the most humanly warm part of the story. We may feel sympathy for the timid little clerk, as he buys a lady's blouse for ten and elevenpence and "an agony of nervousness" (93). And, we can appreciate the human warmth which is displayed as the gift is presented:

When he brought the blouse home  
Annie kissed him and said it  
was very pretty and stylish. (94)

But, being a typical woman,

...when she heard the price she  
threw the blouse on the table  
and said it was a regular swindle  
to charge ten and elevenpence  
for that. (94)

And yet she knew, and Little Chandler should have known, and we should know, that she really had no intention of returning it. Her protest made the present more valuable:

...when she tried it on she  
was delighted with it,  
especially with the make of  
the sleeves, and kissed him  
and said he was very good to  
think of her. (94)

Within a single paragraph, Annie has kissed her husband twice and said he was "very good to think of her." This is hardly the reported passion of Gallaher's rich Germans and Jews, but, on the other hand, it is hardly the unemotional coldness which Chandler, in his confused mental state, imagines. And when one looks "coldly into the eyes" of a circa 1900 photograph one cannot expect them to do anything but answer coldly.

The images of the rich Jewesses, passionate and voluptuous, with rapturous eyes, still pervade Little Chandler's thoughts and allow his deep, inner nature to surface once more; and in response to these exotic stimuli, the hidden part of Little Chandler, that part of him which walked dark streets and welcomed tales of immorality, becomes as strong as his "punctilious" everyday personality, and,

A dull resentment against his life awoke within him. Could he not escape from his little house? (94)

He feels trapped -- trapped by the "eyes in the photograph" -- trapped by the pretty furniture -- trapped by the city of Dublin, itself. And yet, if we look at Little Chandler objectively, he is not trapped at all:

Why had he married the eyes in the photograph? (94)

Why, he hadn't married those passionless eyes, at all. He had married a girl, a living girl, whose eyes, we shall see, portray more than enough passion. But the furniture:

There was the furniture still  
to be paid for. (94)

And if it weren't paid for, repossession would take care of that trap with a minimum of effort on Little Chandler's part. But what about Dublin? Dublin is still a trap:

Was it too late for him to  
try to live bravely like  
Gallaher? Could he go to  
London? (94)

But even Little Chandler, in his more lucid moments realized that Gallaher really didn't live bravely and that moving to London, in itself, was not the means of escaping from the trap. But many forces are working on Little Chandler at this point. His day's activities have brought him to the point where he desires escape, but his interview with Gallaher has convinced him that his own esthetic personality is superior in value to the boorishness with which Gallaher "had got on." And thus, instead of emulating Gallaher, he turns, both in consolation and hopefulness, to the volume of Byron's poetry and begins "to read the first poem in the book." (94)

William York Tindall suggests that the significance of the poem lies in its application to Chandler's life and, possibly, to his unconscious desires:

Minding the baby, Little Chandler gets his Byron out and, thinking of his wife, reads a poem about Margaret's clay. It may be that Little Chandler's wife is Annie, not Margaret, but Byron's poem on her tomb flatters Little Chandler's less conscious wishes. (Tindall, p.28)

I cannot completely disagree with Tindall in his analysis, and yet the specific subject matter of the poem may, very well, be incidental to its true dramatic import. James S. Atherton was the first to record a very important observation:

Many critics have discussed the relevance of the verses Little Chandler reads from Byron, but none of them has pointed out that Chandler reads the first verses on the first page of Byron's collected poems, verses which Byron himself apologized for including in his juvenilia. This gives a stress which could hardly be strengthened to the portrayal of Chandler as immature; but no one seems to have noticed. (Atherton, p.51)

Robert Boyle, himself greatly influenced by Atherton's work, is more definite in his assessment:

Byron ... wrote poems, like this one which Little Chandler admires because it is so melancholy. It is also, though Little Chandler cannot perceive the fact, a rotten

poem, slimy with eighteenth-century clichés, sodden with self-conscious sentiment, puerile in handling of rhythm. (Boyle, p.90)

But Chandler not only fails to perceive the inadequacies of the Byron poem; he wishes he could emulate it. Here, at last, is the way out of the trap:

He paused. He felt the rhythm of the verse about him in the room. How melancholy it was! Could he, too, write like that, express the melancholy of his soul in verse? (95)

We may excuse Byron for writing such a horrible poem since he was only twelve years old at the time, but what are we to make of Little Chandler's admiration of it. Little Chandler is not twelve; he is thirty-two, and, by his own evaluation, "just at the point of maturity"(83). And so, Little Chandler's character begins to clarify, and with it a theme Joyce will use many times again.

Four levels of artistic awareness are implied within the story. The first level belongs to Little Chandler, and we can see the significance of his occupation: he is a scribe; like Farrington, in "Counterparts," his days are spent copying words originally written by other people. And, thus, no creativity is required of him; he merely transfers words, as exactly as he can, from one paper to another. The second level of artistic awareness belongs to Gallaher: he is a journalist; his



job requires a certain small degree of artistry. But, he copies other people's lives; his job is to transcribe rather than to create. He records things while they happen and, ideally, exactly as they happen, with no regard for the universal which may underlie the actual. The third level of artistic awareness belongs to the twelve-year-old Byron; he writes original material which is artistically poor. The intent, the realization that the individual case may have universal significance which can be relayed through verse, is present, but the ability to successfully relay it is not; and yet this is the level so admired and sought after by Little Chandler. The fourth level of artistic awareness belongs, of course, to the mature Byron, to Joyce himself, and to all other truly creative artists. And it is this level, if he were to attain it, which would enable Chandler to break the bonds of the spiritual and intellectual Dublin in which he is entrapped. But Little Chandler will never reach the fourth level of artistic awareness because he cannot see beyond the third level; he cannot conceive of anything more artistically perfect than the early Byron poem. And so, Little Chandler's plight is made clear; he will never find the solution to the problems which hold him as an intellectual Dubliner because he cannot even understand the nature of the problems which confront him; and immediately following this clarification of his character,

Little Chandler performs his single critical act within the story.

The balance which had been created between Little Chandler's calm, proper, everyday personality and the dark forces within him, which Gallaher's exotic stories had helped to conjure up, is momentarily tipped by the crying of the child, and Little Chandler completely loses control for, perhaps, the first time in his life:

It was useless, useless! He was a prisoner for life. His arms trembled with anger and suddenly bending to the child's face he shouted: -- Stop! (95)

The strength of his own shout, the subsequent screaming of the child, and its sobs, piteous and convulsive, return Little Chandler from the animal state and make him function, once more, as the very human person which he normally is:

He looked at the contracted and quivering face of the child and began to be alarmed. He counted seven sobs without a break between them and caught the child to his breast in fright. If it died! ... (95-96)

And as Annie bursts in, Little Chandler reverts to the childish state in which we have seen him spend so much of his time. He attempts to excuse himself:

--It's nothing Annie ... it's nothing. ... He began to cry... (96)

And in the face of her accusation, unable to confront the eyes, which not so very long ago seemed so cold and passionless, he is reduced to unintelligible stammering:

-- It's nothing . . . . He . . .  
 he began to cry. . . . I couldn't . . .  
 I didn't do anything. . . . What? (96)

I cannot explain Chandler's "What" at the end of this quotation except, possibly, as a rather feeble attempt to re-establish communication with Annie, but:

Giving no heed to him she  
 began to walk up and down  
 the room, clasping the child  
 tightly. . . . (96)

But there can be virtually no mistake about the implication of the words Annie uses to comfort the baby:

--My little man! My little mannie!(96)

Little Chandler has lost his position as the man in his household, a loss which is completely self-inflicted. And it is the realization of this loss, coupled with every incident which has led up to it, which elicits the remorse Little Chandler feels. Remorse implies a gnawing, torturing guilt, very much like Stephen Dedalus' Agenbite of Inwit, but removed from it in its aftereffects. One experiences Agenbite of Inwit by intellectually accepting an action which will carry with it torturous guilt. Remorse is an even stronger word in that it implies a sudden realization of the torturous

guilt at a time when the act cannot be undone. And Little Chandler does come to a sudden realization, a moment of awareness, but this awareness is not complete; it cannot be complete because Little Chandler, we have seen, has lost the ability to become aware in at least one very crucial area. What he does realize is everything he is capable of realizing: the littleness of his nature, and his reversion to animalism; his lack of ability to write poetry; his own role in creating his present disabilities; and, finally, his barbaric treatment of his son. What Little Chandler does not realize, he is incapable of realizing: the fact that the poem he aspires to imitate is worthless; the fact that even had he accomplished his goals, they would have led merely to further entrapment. And therein lies the tragedy of Little Chandler: he is a man who has lived too long within the intellectual system known as the city of Dublin. He cannot escape, nor can he realize the nature of the net which holds him.

## Chapter V

"A Little Cloud" is the eighth, and therefore central, story in Dubliners, and, in the light of what we have learned, thus far, about Little Chandler, the importance of the structural arrangement of the collection is implied. Little Chandler actually reaches a moment of awareness, but his awareness is stunted; he has lost the ability, through so many years in Dublin, to recognize the nature of the trap in which he is caught. And this recognition is one of the many unifying devices in Dubliners. Throughout the first seven stories, there is no escape from the stifling of intellect which Dublin breeds, and yet each character has, or will develop, the ability to recognize the nature of the trap in which he is ensnared.

The first three stories in the book chronicle the development of awareness from the naiveté of childhood to a level mature enough to enable the individual to understand the nature of his ensnarement. The pattern for the first seven stories is determined in the first paragraph of "The Sisters":

Every night as I gazed up at the window I said softly to myself the word paralysis. It had always sounded strangely in my ears, like the word gnomon in the Euclid and the word simony in the Catechism. But now it sounded to me like the name of some maleficent and sinful

being. It filled me with fear,  
and yet I longed to be nearer  
to it and to look upon its  
deadly work. (19)

A conscious seeking of the source of fear implies an awareness of the possibility of being caught by that source, and awareness will be displayed by every central character in the first seven stories. The confused, speculative awareness of the boy in "The Sisters" is followed by a more substantial awareness of the distastefulness of Dublin's anti-intellectualism as the boy narrator of "An Encounter" admits, to himself, his feelings for the very Irish Mahony:

He ran as if to bring me aid.  
And I was penitent; for in my  
heart I had always despised  
him a little. (38)

And not until "The Dead" will we find as complete self-awareness of one's role in life as that which the boy in "Araby" experiences:

Gazing up into the darkness I  
saw myself as a creature driven  
and derided by vanity; and my  
eyes burned with anguish and  
anger. (46)

The first three stories have shown the education of a boy, significantly nameless and, therefore, representative of all boys. And his development of awareness can be seen as universal; all young people, apparently, develop the ability to be aware, and it is the society,



as we shall see, which destroys the ability. Eveline, older and, therefore, exposed to society longer than the boys of the first three stories, is aware of the trap:

She stood up in a sudden impulse of terror. Escape! She must escape! (50)

And yet, the stifling force of the society in which she has grown up has taken its toll; she cannot break the bonds which hold her close to those things she has always known, even though she realizes, fully, the entrapment familiarity carries with it. And she is not alone in her realization; Jimmy Doyle, in "After the Race," remains constantly aware of his loss even as he throws away his small fortune:

He knew that he would regret in the morning but at present he was glad of the rest, glad of the dark stupor that would cover up his folly. (59)

The more interesting of the "Two Gallants," Lenehan is also aware of the trap. The image of unconcerned youth vanishes with his audience:

Now that he was alone his face looked older. His gaiety seemed to forsake him... (66)

His realization of his present place in life and its contrast with his ideal is clear:

This vision made him feel keenly his own poverty of purse and spirit. He was tired of knocking

about, of pulling the devil by the tail, of shifts and intrigues. He would be thirty one in November. (68)

And, yet, Lenehan is moving toward the intellectual paralysis which extended exposure to Dublin -- the mental Dublin, not the physical -- brings about; his awareness lasts for only a moment. In "The Boarding House," immediately prior to our introduction to the debilitating mental paralysis in which Little Chandler is caught, Bob Doran demonstrates the process of subjugation of awareness to the forces of society. He is well aware of what he is faced with:

He had a notion that he was being had. He could imagine his friends talking of the affair and laughing. (77)

And yet, he cannot break away from Dublin, even though he realizes that he is being trapped:

He longed to ascend through the roof and fly away to another country where he would never hear again of his trouble, and yet a force pushed him downstairs step by step. The implacable faces of his employer and of the Madam stared upon his discomfiture. (78)

The pressures of his business obligation and his obligation to honor, coupled with the more tangible pressure of Jack Mooney's "thick short arms" (79), cause Doran to stifle his awareness and rush into the trap.

If "A Little Cloud" had not been written, I think the shrinking degree of awareness, on the part of the major characters, would be easier to spot; simple and blatant, "Counterparts" would immediately follow "The Boarding House." The mechanical beating the mechanical Farrington administers to his son occurs at the end of the story: a spot where awareness, if it is going to, should occur. But Farrington's last words show no awareness:

--Take that, you little whelp! (109)

Maria, in "Clay," remains so oblivious to her situation that she accepts the feeble explanation that "it was wrong that time" (117) and that she must choose a second dish; and when she sings the wrong verse of I Dreamt that I Dwelt, "no one tried to show her her mistake" (117). After so many years in Dublin one loses the ability to be aware, as Mr. Duffy, no matter what some eminent critics may think, demonstrates. At the end of "A Painful Case," Duffy is almost brought to an awareness of human values by the sound of the goods train:

It passed slowly out of sight;  
but still he heard in his ears  
the laborious drone of the  
engine reiterating the syllables  
of her name. (129)

If Duffy is to become aware of his role in Mrs. Sinico's

death and accept the value of true human emotion, here is the opportunity. But as the sound of the train passes out of his hearing, he loses the awareness which was so close:

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. (129)

Having forsaken the memory of Mrs. Sinico, Duffy will, presumably, return to his sterile, solitary existence.

If the absence of something can be rampant, then absence of awareness is rampant in the next three stories. The city of Dublin, the stifling force we have seen in action, is made up, not of buildings, but of people; and it is these people whom we meet in these last stories before "The Dead." Insincerity is a way of life for these professional Dubliners; in response to Mr. Hynes' horrible, but emotional, poem, "Mr. Crofton said that it was a very fine piece of writing" (148). In conclusion to the parade of grotesques in "A Mother," Mr. O'Madden Burke gives ironic approval:

You did the proper thing,  
Holohan ... .(163)

And true human awareness cannot possibly break through the hypocrisy which pervades the sermon of Father

Purdon, the "spiritual accountant" (189) in "Grace."

Were Joyce to end Dubliners with "Grace" the collection would chronicle the ultimate intellectual debilitation of the individual by a dominant, non-intellectual society and the "prognosis for the patient," the Irish people, would, indeed, be death (Walsh, p.228). But "Grace" is not the final story; Joyce added "The Dead" and, with it, an affirmation of his belief in the possibility of the individual to free himself from the mental paralysis of the masses. As Gretta sleeps, Gabriel Conroy experiences that which no other character in Dubliners experiences: a total spiritual communion with the universal aspect of man. And, thus, in Dubliners, Joyce not only points toward the problems of Dublin or any other place in which the intellect is paralyzed, but also suggests a solution to the problems in terms of human understanding and universal concern.

## Appendix

On the third day of December, 1905, James Joyce sent a volume of short stories, called Dubliners, to publisher Grant Richards, an action which was to precipitate more than eight long years of struggle before culminating in the publication of the volume, in slightly altered form, on June 15, 1914. The major alterations in the book were the additions of "Two Gallants" on February 22, 1906, "A Little Cloud" later in that year, and "The Dead" about a year later. On April 23, 1906, Joyce was about to send "A Little Cloud" to Richards when the entire volume was returned to him for revision. On July 9, 1906, Joyce again sent Richards the volume, which, by now, included a re-written version of "The Sisters" and the heretofore unsubmitted "A Little Cloud," and excluded, very reluctantly, six uses of the word "bloody." Though to remain long unpublished, the volume was finally completed in late 1907 when Joyce finished writing "The Dead." Joyce's book of poems, Chamber Music, his first book to reach print, was published in that year. As he was concluding Dubliners, Joyce began work on Stephen Hero, the rambling novel which he was later to rewrite, by 1914, and publish, in 1916, as A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man. Also, in 1914, he finished writing his only



stage drama, Exiles, published in 1918 with, a rarity for Joyce, very little trouble. Ulysses, finished by 1921 and published in 1922, and Winnegans Wake, begun in 1922 and finally completed and published in 1939, complete the amazingly short list of books on which so great a reputation is based.

I have thought it necessary to sketch the publishing history of Joyce's works in order to establish the one area of criticism of "A Little Cloud" which, I think, has been grossly overlooked. In his early criticism of Joyce, Louis Golding notes the following comparison:

In the character of the minor poet, Tom Chandler, ... it is difficult not to see a bitter oblique reference to the bard "Kinch," Stephen Dedalus himself, whom Buck Mulligan, the mocker, jeers at so persistently, the bard who was at this time moaning the pale syllables of Chamber Music. (Golding, p. 28)

But the comparison between Little Chandler and Stephen Dedalus seems to have been lost in the critical shuffle by all but a very few, and no one seems to have bothered to explore it. By looking at the publishing history, we become aware of a very important factor in the evaluation of the significance of "A Little Cloud" to the rest of Joyce's work. The story was the last one written before "The Dead"; following that are Portrait, Exiles,

Ulysses, and Finnegans Wake. What we have, therefore, in "A Little Cloud" is not just a look at a strange little man who would like to write poetry but the first in a series of fictional works which deal with the relationship of the potential artist to his art and to the society which breeds them both. The issues which face Little Chandler are the same as those Stephen Dedalus will later encounter: the necessity of observing the real world and the subsequent unacceptability of "canned" emotion. Little Chandler's melancholy, which "always happened when he thought of life" (81), is echoed by Stephen in A Portrait:

He drew forth a phrase from his treasure and spoke it softly to himself:

-- A day of dappled seaborne clouds. (428)

Little Chandler misses the real emotion which he should, as a "poet," derive from the scene beneath his window because he substitutes his stored-up "melancholy"; Stephen misses any real emotion which the clouds, might elicit by substituting his stored-up phrase. Language, stored in empty jars, becomes very stale; and stale language, cliché, can evoke no emotion. Contrary to Stephen's esthetic theory, a theory with a good many glaring flaws, static art, as Joyce was well aware, is no art at all: the hypotenuse of a right triangle, as Lynch is quick to point out, cannot compare

to the hypotenuse of the Venus Praxiteles. Dubliners, Portrait, Exiles, Ulysses, perhaps even Finnegans Wake, are kinetic works of art, intended to teach the reader something about life and about his place in it, in relation to his environment and the other human beings who share that environment with him. I hope a study will be done, someday, of the artist in Joyce's work -- not in a single work, but in all the Joyce canon, for, as Finnegans Wake instructs us, everything is related -- and when that is done, I should hope to see it begin with a study of Little Chandler, Joyce's first portrait of the artist.

## Footnotes

- <sup>1</sup>Richard Levin and Charles Shattuck, "First Flight to Ithaca: A New Reading of Joyce's Dubliners," James Joyce: Two Decades of Criticism, ed. Leon Givens. (New York, 1963), p.70.
  - <sup>2</sup>James Joyce, The Portable James Joyce, ed. Harry Levin. (New York, 1966), p.95.
- All subsequent references to any Joyce work will be to this edition unless otherwise noted, and pagination will appear within the text.
- <sup>3</sup>Clarice Short, "Joyce's 'A Little Cloud,'" MLN, LXXII (April, 1957), p.276.
  - <sup>4</sup>Margaret Church, "Dubliners and Vico," JJQ, V (1967-68), p.150.
  - <sup>5</sup>Brewster Ghiselin, "The Unity of Dubliners," Twentieth Century Interpretations of "Dubliners", ed. Peter K. Garrett. (Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1968), p.60.
  - <sup>6</sup>J. Mitchell Morse, The Sympathetic Alien: James Joyce and Catholicism (New York, 1959), pp.100-102.
  - <sup>7</sup>M.W.Murphy, "Darkness in Dubliners," MFS, XV (Spring, 1969), p.97.
  - <sup>8</sup>Frank O'Connor, "Work in Progress," Twentieth Century Interpretations of "Dubliners", ed. Peter K. Garrett. (Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1968), p.20.
  - <sup>9</sup>Robert B. Heilman, ed., Modern Short Stories: A Critical Anthology (New York, 1950), p.147.

- <sup>10</sup>Hugh Kenner, Dublin's Joyce (Bloomington, 1956), p.56.
- <sup>11</sup>Arnold Goldman, The Joyce Paradox (Evanston, Ill., 1966), p.4.
- <sup>12</sup>Florence L. Walzl, "Pattern of Paralysis in Joyce's Dubliners: A Study of the Original Framework," CE, XXII (January, 1961), p.221.
- <sup>13</sup>James R. Baker, "Ibsen, Joyce, and the Living-Dead," A James Joyce Miscellany, ed. Marvin Magalaner. (Carbondale, Ill., 1962), pp.20-21.
- <sup>14</sup>Robert S. Ryf, A New Approach to Joyce (Berkeley, 1966), p.2.
- <sup>15</sup>Warren Beck, Joyce's "Dubliners": Substance, Vision, and Art (Durham, N.C., 1969), p.172.
- <sup>16</sup>James S. Atherton, "The Joyce of Dubliners," James Joyce Today, ed. Thomas F. Staley. (Bloomington, 1966), p.50.
- <sup>17</sup>Robert Boyle, S.J., "A Little Cloud," James Joyce's "Dubliners": Critical Essays, ed. Clive Hart. (New York, 1969), p.84.
- <sup>18</sup>William York Tindall, A Reader's Guide to James Joyce (New York, 1959), p.27.
- <sup>19</sup>Louis Golding, James Joyce. (London, 1933), p.29.
- <sup>20</sup>Edward Brandabur, A Scrupulous Meanness: A Study of Joyce's Early Work (Chicago, 1971), p.102.
- <sup>21</sup>Richard Ellmann, James Joyce (New York, 1959), Pl.V, between pp.240-241.

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## Vita

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