

OUT OF JOINT: JAMES JOYCE AND 'IRISH TIME'¹

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Fig. 1 “Stopped clock at the GPO after its destruction” (1916-1921: *Revolution* Collection, Mercier Press: <http://hdl.handle.net/10599/10027>)

This is the Dublin General Post Office clock, stopped during the fighting of the 1916 Easter Rising. In capturing the spirit of a sudden local event that seems to rupture the linear flow of universal history, the photograph speaks to a paradigmatic modernist concern with living in a time that is – in Hamlet’s well-worn phrase – “out of joint.” At the same time, the scene violently reimagines the Irish revival’s literary and institutional responses to the misalignment between ‘Irish Time’ and ‘Colonial Time’, as it inscribes this jarring disjuncture between historical time, clock time, and lived time onto the material surface of Dublin’s buildings and public utilities. The image is charged with connotations that tell us that the insurrection was staged amid, and as a front in, the historical politicisation of time in Ireland. Across these diverse contexts, the motif of the stopped clock comes to symbolise Ireland’s strangely liminal semi-colonial status, under which *time* itself becomes at once an aesthetic, political, and legal dispute.

1 This chapter is extracted from the lecture “Revive/Revisit: The Rising and Irish Modernism,” delivered at the Vienna Centre for Irish Studies on 19 May 2016 as part of the *Easter 1916: Representing the Rising* lecture series, organised by Werner Huber and Dieter Fuchs.

The 1880 Definition of Time Act instituted Greenwich Mean Time (GMT) as the standardised legal time throughout Britain, except for Ireland, which would operate at Dublin Mean Time, established at Dunsink Observatory as 25 minutes 21 seconds behind GMT. As Luke Gibbons underlines, “while modernity sought to standardize time to facilitate synchronic timetabling at a global level, the imperial connection and the need to facilitate shipping from Britain imposed another time scale on Irish society, undermining that simultaneity” (“Spaces” 80). A few weeks after the Rising, on 21 May, the Summer Time Act 1916 implemented Daylight Saving Time (DST) in Britain and Ireland, turning the clocks forward one hour in the summer, leading to “the incongruous situation [...] where as many as four different time scales could have been operating in Ireland” (Gibbons, “Spaces” 80). The measure was undertaken, ostensibly, to enact savings to the Exchequer amid the spiralling costs of the First World War, but it stirred political sentiment in Ireland where it worked to the disadvantage of farmers and agricultural workers. The fault lines were not only between British and Irish politicians and activists, but also between financial, industrial and agricultural sectors within Irish society (Shorten). Four months after the insurrection – indeed, “as if in retaliation” for it (Gibbons, “Spaces” 180) – the House of Commons passed the Time (Ireland) Act of 1916. The Act abolished Dublin Mean Time once and for all, supplanting it with a Britain and Ireland-wide standard GMT.

These erasures of ‘Irish Time’ were a significant component of private and public responses to the Rising and its fallout. In a 1918 letter to London-Irish solicitor JH MacDonnell, Countess Markievicz charged that “public feeling is outraged by forcing of English time on us” (qtd. [sic] in Parsons). An August 1918 letter to the editors of the *Irish Independent* openly asked “whether we should give up this mark of our national identity to suit the convenience of shipping companies and a few travellers” (qtd. in Ó Coimín). In his 1927 *Dublin Magazine* essay “Irish Time,” J.F. MacCabe ties these politically transformative temporal events together in the public imagination: “It cannot be disputed that the imposition of ‘Summer Time’ on Ireland was a definite invasion of our national habits of thought, work, and outlook. It was, and is, a product of English town and industrial life” (35-36).

Recent work by Luke Gibbons, David Lloyd, and Gregory Dobbins, among others, has retraced this history of the politicisation of ‘Irish Time’ and focused the critical lens onto a direct concern: “What impact would the assertion of a distinct Irish temporality have for an understanding of Irish narrative?” (Dobbins 180). The immediate creative response to the 1916 Rising provides a revealing point of departure for such an inquiry. In their labour to capture the spirit of the moment, and to interrogate Post-Rising frictions over definitions of Irish nationalism (and of the imagined Irish nation), these texts endeavour to take stock of, and re-evaluate, the legacy of literary renderings of ‘Irish Time’. In Yeats’s *The Dreaming of the Bones*, for instance, “a rebel fugitive in 1916 is haunted by ghostly lovers” as he is “faced with the spectre of a primordial sin, an originative historical rupture, which led [...] to his own, contemporary impasse” (Pierse). Even as it continues the revivalist theatricalization of myth as a time-

less link between the nation and its origins, Yeats's spectral plot complicates this mode through a sense of complicity with the events of the Rising, and of a cultural and aesthetic impasse in its wake. In their reflections on the Rising's failures in *The Death of Fionavar from the Triumph of Maeve*, Markievicz and Eva Gore-Booth invoke the Irish warrior-Queen Maeve both to engage in "a coded conversation about the ethics and politics of insurgency" and to challenge the masculinist myth-making which had positioned Irish mythic women as "passive emblems for an occupied country" (Eide 25). Crucially, as Marian Eide underlines, for Markievicz and Gore-Booth "the Irish mythic tradition provided the allegorical medium through which to explore present concerns" (25) even as the Rising and its aftermath have compromised the politics of these literary models and stances. And during the Rising scenes of Eimar O'Duffy's *The Wasted Island*, we are informed how the protagonist Bernard "[i]n a few hours [...] went through an eternity of torment. He had lost all sense of time, all feeling of reality. Existence had become phantasmagorical" (530). The scene captures a pointed sense of living in a time-out-of-joint, which necessitates a break with the linearity of realist 'clock time' in favour of phantasmagorical modes and devices that desynchronise narrative.

In my intervention into this conversation, I focus on James Joyce's attempts to develop a mode of literary representation that could capture the aesthetic, philosophical and political stakes of 'Irish Time', which shapes his writing from the outset and reaches its apex in the events and aftermath of Easter 1916. Joyce's labour to represent the disjuncture between 'clock time' and 'lived time' has long been understood as a defining and distinguishing feature of his modernist poetics. It is in response to such a "haunted modernity" that is "never contemporaneous with itself," Jean-Michel Rabaté argues, that the modernist writer endeavours to assume a ghostly vantage that "constantly projects, anticipates, and returns to mythical origins, but [...] also teaches us more about the 'present' which it historicizes" (3). Rabaté's genealogy of *The Ghosts of Modernity* draws a lineage from Chateaubriand's posthumous *Mémoires d'Outre-Tombe* to the spectral vantages and temporalities of key high modernist texts such as *Finnegans Wake* and Beckett's *L'Innommable*. And yet, as these post-Rising examples suggest, Joyce's place in this lineage needs to be thought also in its relation to diverse cultural responses to the material and political reality of 'Irish Time' – from the allochronic textures of post-famine trauma narratives to the revival's employment of myth as a means of leveraging a spectral vantage by which to see the present moment more clearly. As Lauren Arrington insists, "[t]he persistence of multiple temporalities in modernizing Ireland was the concern of modernist writers who were very different from Joyce" ("Irish Modernism"). By examining the development of his temporal poetics alongside Catholic, revivalist, and nationalist attempts to reckon the consequences of a distinct Irish temporality, I mean to bring to the fore some of the uniquely Irish contexts of Joyce's "resistance to synchronicity" (Gibbons, "Spaces" 71). Concurrently, by retracing the historical politicisation of 'Irish Time' along the arc of Joyce's aesthetic project, I hope to shed light on certain affinities and continuities

(as well as antipathies and discontinuities) between the efforts of these diverse movements to develop a literary mode that can capture the stakes and experience of a peculiarly Irish time-out-of-joint.

To better view Joyce's development of a distinct literary image of 'Irish Time', I first situate *Dubliners* more firmly at the nexus of *fin de siècle* Irish temporal debates and trace the contours they leave on his emerging temporal poetics. Next, I consider how *Ulysses*, in its "vested interest in rethinking history" (Hansen 86), continues as a part of, and not apart from, this effort to both engage and reimagine the legacy and crisis of 'Irish Time'. Finally, I argue that to achieve these aims, Joyce works to develop a unique literary image that both diagnoses 'Irish Time' as a time-out-of-joint and attempts to rethink its politics. This image hinges upon the creative confluence of four distinctly temporal motifs that recur throughout his *œuvre*.

First, the stopped, slowed, or otherwise misaligned timepiece; a motif which Joyce inherits from Irish Catholic, nationalist, and revivalist literary traditions, and which indexically signals his engagement with the political and aesthetic stakes of 'Irish Time'.

Secondly, the *Hamlet* metaphor of living in a time that has come off its axis:

The time is out of joint – O cursèd spite,
That ever I was born to set it right! (1.5 188-89)

The *Hamlet* metaphor is given new life in modernist writing, as an embodiment of Jacques Derrida's characterisation, in *Specters of Marx*, of a modernity decentred by trauma and of a present haunted and dislocated by the insistent return of the past as a revenant. What distinguishes Joyce's response to the issue of 'Irish Time' is his sustained reflection on the politics entailed in *Hamlet's* foregrounding of hesitation over action in responding to the injunction to set right a disjointed time.

Thirdly, the 1882 Phoenix Park Murders, an historical event which Joyce treats as a displaced site in which to explore the violent events of the present historical moment, and their confluence with his own biography, from a skewed and strangely spectral temporal vantage.

Finally, the legacy of Charles Stewart Parnell, who in Joyce's poetics is refigured to exemplify the Hamletian theme of *hesitation* (through the Piggott forgery affair) in an Irish political context as an alternative to the figure of the *homo religiosus*, embodied by Rising leaders such as Patrick Pearse.

Dramas of Lost Time

In his pioneering analysis of Joycean temporality, Marcel Brion describes "Araby" as "a drama of lost time," an attempt to capture a state of temporal parallax under modernity in which two people can be side by side yet "not live in the same time" (26). The modernist and Einsteinian credentials of such a temporal parallax have been

developed by Laurent Milesi (11) and Katherine Ebury (13-14, 98-99). What has been less commented upon, however, is that this 1905 story (and the broader *Dubliners* collection that approaches this theme from several vantages) is composed at the nexus of Irish Catholic, nationalist, and revivalist contexts in which the disparity between 'Colonial Time' and 'Irish Time' has *already* engendered a peculiarly local "experience of disjunctive or 'allochronic' time" (Gibbons, "Spaces" 71).

The sense of living in a time-out-of-joint is a recurrent theme of nineteenth-century Irish writing, which bears witness to the incursions of dominant concepts of time. Amid the political struggles for Catholic suffrage, and the risings of 1848 and 1867, "Irish fiction takes upon itself the burden of explaining [...] [t]he failure of history to 'take' in Ireland as elsewhere in the so-called United Kingdom" (Nolan, "Joyce" 18). Joyce's interest in "these earlier attempts to devise new narrative forms" by which to capture the sense that history itself has come off its hinges in nineteenth-century Ireland (Nolan, "Joyce" 17) is evidenced in a 1906 letter to Stanislaus in which Joyce mentions that he has asked their Aunt Josephine to send him books by Charles Kickham, Gerald Griffin, William Carleton, and John Banim (*Selected Letters* 124). Emer Nolan observes that Joyce's modernist temporality is anticipated, for example, in Fenian revolutionary Charles Kickham's 1867 novel *Sally Cavanagh: or, the Untenanted Graves*, which exhibits a "preoccupation with [...] the contrast between objectively measured time and time as it is experienced by those who are in severe distress" (*Catholic* 113). Kickham's critique of the brutality of the Irish land system recurrently contrasts the regulatory function of 'clock time' (the text opens and closes with the image of protagonist Brian Purcell checking his watch; Kickham 1, 198) with the local experience of trauma which sets this linear time off its axis and undermines one's certainty that "reality is not a hideous dream" (Kickham 198). Kickham's "sensitivity to this phenomenon of the freezing of time" (Nolan, *Catholic* 114) is borne out in the spectral temporality of the graveyard scenes in which Sally Cavanagh refuses to leave the "untenanted graves" of her five children, who suffered brutal deaths in a workhouse. This narrative scheme – a local political critique that desynchronises the authority of a linear temporal frame through a nested spectral scene of trauma – is paradigmatic for both Joyce and his turn-of-the-century contemporaries in their attempts to render faithfully Ireland's "competing, unresolved temporalities" (Gibbons, "Spaces" 71). More narrowly, Kickham's depiction of the landlord Grinden as having suffered "from an attack of paralysis," which left his "tongue lolling over the under lip" so that his "face was that of a corpse" (Kickham 195) anticipates the depiction of Father Flynn in "The Sisters", whose own attack of paralysis had meant that he "let his tongue lie upon his lower lip" (*Dubliners* 4). In Joyce's story, the narrator's own "hideous dream" of the priest's corpse-like face likewise introduces a jarringly spectral temporal scheme that upsets the realist chronology established at the outset ("night after night I had passed the house (it was vacation time)"; *Dubliners* 1).

After the 1880 Definition of Time Act, this politically inflected theme of Ireland's misaligned temporalities is focused increasingly on the colonial imposition of standard

time and its attendant discourses of progress. In Canon Sheehan's 1901 novel *Luke Delmege*, for instance, the eponymous Maynooth alumnus "sheds his Irish identity" in London (Murphy, *Catholic* 121) and returns to Ireland with the conviction that it is "England's destiny to bring all humanity, even the most degraded, into the happy circle of civilization" (Sheehan 243). Immediately following his humiliation at the hands of a local pastor regarding his insistence upon punctuality ("That needn't trouble you much" here, he is informed; Sheehan 333), Delmege travels to inspect a local school and is struck by the broken clock in the classroom. He "lectures [the pupils] on hygiene and diet, extolling the wholesomeness of oatmeal" (Fleischmann 94), with jarring results: "Before the Angelus bell tolled that evening, it was reported through the parish that a Protestant parson from England had visited the school, and had recommended the children go back to the diet of the famine years" (Sheehan 336). The comparative images of the stopped clock and the tolling Angelus bell capture the scene's irony, as the colonial discourse of progress (organised here around the bio-power coordinates of hygiene and diet) is ruptured by the revenant of the famine. Even as it speaks to "a situation in which modernization occurred in some spheres [of Irish life] (parliamentary politics, colonial administration, the arts) but was retarded in others (industry, agriculture, education)" (Castle 2), the scene works to mock an active, instrumentalist response to such uneven temporality.

Out walking the parish on All Soul's Night, Delmege reflects on his failed project: "Where was the use of talking about economizing to a people whose daily fancies swept them abroad to regions where Time was never counted?" (458). Struck by the spectrality of the surrounding landscape ("the heavens and earth were haunted that night"), Luke is "affected [...] deeply" by "the pathetic remembrance of the dead by these poor people" (458). The immediate resonance with "The Dead" is suggestive, but an even more provocative comparison may be to consider the curious double of Delmege's trajectory and vision to Stephen Dedalus's in *A Portrait*. The "sense of the fragility of Catholicism in the modern world" underpins Delmege's intellectual journey to "distinguish between a true and false intellectualism" (Murphy, "Catholics" 105) and towards an epiphany in which he envisions "the creation of a new civilization, founded on Spartan simplicity of life [...] to which all the aspirations of his race tended, instead of [...] the new dogmas of mere materialism" (Sheehan 459). Even as they arrive at radically divergent programmes by which "to forge [...] the uncreated conscience of [their] race" (Joyce, *Portrait* 253), it is the same problem of the true intellectual response to Irish modernity that underpins Delmege and Dedalus's curiously mirroring and countering trajectories.

The sites and borders of Ireland's uneven temporalities are complicated further in the allochronic temporal structure of *fin de siècle* fieldwork ethnography, which exemplifies Fiontán De Brún's sense that "colonialism effects its own unnatural temporality" in which "the Gaelic language and culture of Ireland were out of step with 'public time'" (23). Synge's *The Aran Islands* (composed in the same year as *Luke Delmege*, although published in 1907 as Joyce was writing "The Dead") is characteristic here in

its projection of a temporal disjunction between the "modern time" of the Anglo-Irish mainlander and the "primitive time" of the islanders:

Few of the people [...] are sufficiently used to modern time to understand in more than a vague way the convention of the hours, and when I tell them what o'clock it is by my watch they are not satisfied, and ask how long is left them before the twilight. (25-26)

In *Time and the Other*, Johannes Fabian argues that by thus positioning the interlocutor as a temporal Other who lives in another time, fieldwork anthropologists implicitly enact a "denial of coevalness" that advances the universalization of "Western progress" and engenders a "politics of time" (xl). David Lloyd draws our attention to the critique staged in Joyce's work of such an historicist narrative, which "views social and cultural elements that resist modernization as residues of ideas and practices that belong to the past and remain to be overcome" (3). And yet, it is worth noting the ways in which Joyce's temporal poetics emerge through an ambivalent relation to such depictions of the Irish West's temporal Otherness.

Anne Fogarty's assessment of how Joyce's "rivalry with Synge was drawn upon productively throughout his career to feed and inform his radical aesthetic" (225) refocuses our attention onto the ways in which Joycean time develops not only in dialogue with, but also through a certain ambivalent inhabitation of such anthropological representations of 'Irish Time'. There is a copy of the 1907 Maunsell edition of Synge's *The Aran Islands* in Joyce's Triestine library,² and its influence is most palpable in Joyce's own travel-writing piece "Il miraggio del pescatore di Aran" [The Mirage of the Fisherman of Aran], published September 1912 in *Il Piccolo della Sera*. In Fogarty's analysis, Joyce likewise frames this "world about to be eclipsed" as an amenable site for contemplating "the tensions between tradition and modernity" in Ireland and "replicate[s] Synge's insights into the Otherness of the Aran islands" (232-33). For instance, the islander that Joyce meets "does not know how old he is, but he says that he will be old soon" (*Occasional* 204).

The sharper distinction between the two pieces lies in Joyce's diagnosis of the islanders' way of life as "less a sign of cultural authenticity than a strangulated attempt to perpetuate a way of life that has lost its vibrancy and potency" (Fogarty 233). To develop this vantage, Joyce labours to complicate (rather than reject outright) Synge's allochronic picture of the Islands. At the outset of the piece, Joyce surveys a map of projected trade routes in a pamphlet envisioning *Galway as a Transatlantic Port*, which would serve as "a safety valve for England in event of war" (Joyce, *Occasional* 201-02, 342-43). Yet, even as he alludes to the domination and exploitation of the temporal relation between England and the Irish West, Joyce desynchronises this narrative of progress through an emphasis on the spectral qualities of the surrounding landscape, which "gave holy burial to the shipwrecked dead" (*Occasional* 203). The disappointed plan for a Galway Harbour is an iteration of a similar, failed 1858

2 See *James Joyce Online Notes*, "Joyce's Trieste Library": <http://www.jjon.org/joyce-s-library/trieste-s>.

scheme; however, Joyce frames it more provocatively as a potential revenant of the region's former *modernity*, when it was home to Dante's precursor St Fursa and the original Western discoverer of America, St Brendan. Thus, even as he draws out the Islands' modern stasis, Joyce imbues the liminal space with complicated temporal signifiers by recasting it as a revenant of 'the (old) New World'. To achieve these ends, he inhabits (though does not necessarily endorse) a certain revivalist, even quasi-nationalist messianic temporal rhetoric, in his aside that "[t]he old decaying city would rise again" (*Occasional* 203).

The distance between Joyce and Synge has also been shortened in the other direction, with Elaine Sisson making a pitch for reading Synge's travel essays as "early modernist" explorations of the tension between the archaic and the progressive, written in a style comparable to Joyce's, that marries "poetic, reflective and [...] elegiac" modes with depictions of inner-consciousness and "emergent discourses of modernity such as photography [...] and documentary realism" (52-53). Integral to this recalibration of the modernist qualities of Synge's fieldwork is his attention to "death and the cyclical nature of life," particularly in his rendering of the scene of a funeral on Inis Meáin (Sisson 62, 60). Joyce picks up on this spectral quality in his characterisation of the Aran hermit: "Under his apparent simplicity there is something sceptical, humorous, spectral" (*Occasional* 204). This phrasing hints that the temporal domination of fieldwork texts is not a totalising discourse; that even as Joyce's "'enthusiastic scholar' [...] implicitly merged the figures of Joyce and Synge" (Fogarty 223), there is an off-text "suggestion that Synge's observation might be his own primitivist projection, a naiveté ready to be exploited by his subject" (De Brún 26).

This merged yet doubled vantage draws our attention to the resonances of Joyce's disturbance of the historicist picture of the islands (underwritten as it is by the rhetoric of rational, active, and industrial progress) with the Irish revival's attempts "to establish an idea of Irishness that extends back into mythological times in an attempt to resist the hegemony of [an] imperialistic modernity" (O'Malley 20). Sisson highlights that "[w]hile many Revivalists' work displays a sentimentalised yearning for more 'authentic' times, the very act of photographing, documenting, recording and describing rapidly disappearing peasant ways of life [...] is in itself part of the technocratic apparatus of modernity" (52-53). Increasingly we discern the extent to which turn-of-the-century Irish revivalists also saw in the tension between time and timelessness staged by rural myths of fairies and ancient gods "a remarkable opportunity for experimental fiction" and "for breaking with the conventions of realism in pursuit of a purer sense of reality" (A. Martin 133). At the same time, Sinéad Garrigan Mattar asks us to leave aside critical "embarrassment" at Yeats's "belief about fairies" in order to "reevaluate the radicalism of [his] animist and revivalist poetics" (137). This experimental break entails a specific vision of the relation of time and the nation, which is manifested in a troubling of the realist novel's public objective 'clock time' in favour of the enduring timelessness, and thus authority, of mythical origins.

A strange rhetoric of *death-in-life* underpins the Irish revival's key works – indeed, the term 'revival' (from Latin *revivere* "to live again") is shot through with the temporality of the revenant. In *The Celtic Twilight*, Yeats identifies 'Irish Time' as uniquely spectral in nature: "[i]n Ireland this world and the world we go to after death are not far apart" (96). A recurring thematic of Katharine Tynan's poetry is that "death is the necessary precursor to rebirth" or revival (Collins 82). Lucy Collins also draws attention to Dora Sigerson Shorter's evocations of "the life of the spirit world and of faeryland," which "emphasise the experience of death-in-life" as "a way of probing the inner life and of engaging with realms of experience that were not the subject of rational discourse" (26).

This programme is engaged directly, if ambiguously, in the closing pages of "The Dead", which capture Joyce's modernist sense of living under "a spectral modernity, emanating from the unrequited voices in the margins" (Gibbons, "Ghostly Light" 371) while echoing the vitalism of the revivalist desire to replace "the finality of death [...] with a radically different temporal scheme, which allows for traffic or even synthesis between past and present, living and dead" (De Brún 18). In a characteristic mode, the story opens with an allusion to the restrictions of regulatory clock time ("it was long after ten o'clock and yet there was no sign of Gabriel and his wife") unsettled by an embedded rhetoric of death-in-life ("my wife here takes three mortal hours to dress herself") (*Dubliners* 122). The text recurrently alludes to the material traces left on public spaces and life by the spectres of past political conflict – for instance, through strategic allusions to the Dublin statues of King William of Orange and Daniel O'Connell. These political fault lines of Ireland's haunted modernity are given voice in Gabriel's heated discussion with Gaelic Leaguer Molly Ivors, and in his rejection of the revival project articulated in his dinner speech, with its injunctions to turn away from the insistent voices and "thoughts of the past [...] of absent faces" (*Dubliners* 190). It is, of course, the revenant of Michael Furey that enacts "the 'hauntological' disturbance that occurs whenever a ghost confounds history by bringing the past to life and giving absence itself a spatial form" (Sword 182). This sudden spectral intrusion profoundly disrupts Gabriel's own narrow sense of the present, and draws his soul towards "that region where dwell the vast hosts of the dead" and "his journey westward" (*Dubliners* 195). Critics have tended to read the closing evocation of the West in Joyce's story "as embodying the national, whether as a vehicle of reconciliation or of division"; yet Marjorie Howes profitably complicates this picture by emphasising how the closing scene rather explores the region's temporal-spatial ambiguity as "a shifting, semi-modern, marginal set of regions that both enables and defies the fantasies that Gabriel, Miss Ivors and Gretta construct" (67).

I would foreground two points at this juncture. First, that Joyce's temporal poetics develop out of, and are continually reshaped by, his creative dialogue with this cultural matrix of converging and diverging aesthetic and political discourses of 'Irish Time', in which the clash between 'Colonial Time' and the spectral time of local trauma is decisive. In recent years the close of "The Dead" has been anchored more

firmly in a complex dialogue with contemporary Irish literary movements and modes. Fogarty notes Synge's *Riders to the Sea* among "the several ghostly intertexts that endow the lyrical ending of 'The Dead' with such force" (226) and Gibbons places Joyce's later Aran travel-writing piece into parodic relation with Gabriel's imagined journey westward ("Ghostly Light" 371). For Barry McCrea, the story's closing imagery "depicts (without embracing it) the revivalist dream that Irish might resolve [contemporary cultural] dilemmas and constitute a lost, utopian language in which body and soul can be as one and find a home" (153). To these "ghostly intertexts" we might add the remembrances of the dead that underpin the politics of Kickham and Sheehan's spectral temporalities and epiphanies. These diverse rejections of modernity and refusals of realism, enacted from different class positions and ideological assumptions, constitute direct engagements with modernity's thresholds in ways that are intimately related to a project of capturing, diagnosing, and, potentially, setting right a peculiarly Irish time 'out of joint'. The relations staged in his writing with and within this matrix leave indelible traces on Joyce's figuring of 'Irish Time'.

Secondly, Joyce's response to politics of 'Irish Time' is characterised by a certain ambivalence that is thematised and aestheticised in his writing. This ambivalence sets up a complex set of engagements with competing fetishisations of 'Irish Time' from diverse ideological positions: merging and doubling their discursive genres, assuming without endorsing their vantages and perspectives. Noting this confluence of thematic concerns, Rónán McDonald conceives the continuities and sharper differences between Irish revivalist and modernist responses to 'Irish Time' not exclusively in terms of tradition and modernity, but also in terms of active and passive responses to an emergent nationalist impulse and crisis. Gregory Dobbins has argued, persuasively, that the cultural politics of Irish modernism hinges upon its deployment of "deliberate idleness" (5) as a critique and rejection of Irish nationalist discourse that frames the past's vitality to the present in terms of an active masculinist programme. McDonald endorses and complicates this reading by arguing that modernism's "insolent indolence, emerges from a history of withdrawal from useful masculine citizenry that can be traced to the literary Revival" (72). Rather than a clean break, "male inaction shifts from early to late Irish modernism, from modes of enchantment and self-sacrifice in Yeats to the more conscious rhetoric of refusal and obduracy in Joyce and Beckett" (McDonald 72). Bolstering this point, Seamus O'Malley underlines the "nationalist doubts" that underpinned Yeats's project in *The Celtic Twilight*, as the folklorist explicitly "highlights the resistance of the peasantry to his project" along the lines of "class, religion, language and politics," thereby "signalling not only the difficulties that would lie ahead for nationalism but also one of the forces that would compel Yeats to distance himself from the movement" (16). And as the foregoing history suggests, this tension between active and passive responses to 'Irish Time' reaches back further still into this tradition; for instance, to Sheehan's operating thesis that "true sanctity is to be found in a certain type of passivity" (Murphy, "Catholics" 106). As I mean to argue presently, such a relational resituating of Joyce's temporal poet-

ics within a field of active and passive literary responses to the history, politics, and aesthetics of 'Irish Time' is key to thinking his response to the Rising in *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake*.

Homerule Sun Rising up in the Northwest

In recent years, the 1904 Dublin setting of *Ulysses* has been read as providing a skewed vantage on the time of the novel's composition, during the build up to and fallout out of the events of 1916. However, critics have tended to emphasise the spatial and topographical rather than temporal dimensions of this parallax perspective. Enda Duffy, for instance, ties Joyce's attention to the intricate detail of Dublin's 1904 streetscapes to "the photographs of ruined streetscapes in Dublin after the 1916 Easter Rising" (37). For Howes, *Ulysses* responds to the Rising by foregrounding the spatial scales of the "local, regional, international" as a means of countering and complicating the "ideology of the nation" (59). Thus conceived, nationalism is at essence a politics of territorialisation, which *Ulysses* counters by both fetishising and 'derealising' the material, memorial and political space of Dublin. I want to complement these insights by emphasising that Joyce's response to the Rising is also firmly anchored in his understanding of Irish nationalism writ large as irreducibly engaged in a 'politics of time', which he likewise fetishises and 'derealises' as he labours to re-imagine the legacy of 'Irish Time' in *Ulysses*.

The Rising's radical programme to bring the heroic or epic qualities of the ancient sagas to bear on the quotidian time of everyday Dublin – to re-activate a paralysed city and actively set right a time-out-of-joint – rises out of the ferment of political and aesthetic discourses of 'Irish Time' in which Joyce had also forged his artistic vision. However, it is distinguished by its nationalist framing of mythical allusions as a distinctly masculinist call to *action*, a framing Joyce inhabits and counters in his casting of Bloom as a passive Odysseus. The Rising's 'politics of time' is inscribed into the very theatricality of the insurrection itself: Pearse prophesied that the "fire and bloodshed" of 1916 would serve as a "cleansing and sanctifying" restoration of a "lost manhood" (F.X. Martin 72), and "wore an ancient sword during the entirety of the Rising" (Crosson 10). Thus, Pearse fits Mircea Eliade's characterisation of the figure of the *homo religiosus* as one who understands his significance as arising from his actions' reiterations of patterns of a glorious past. Richard Kearney directly characterises the Irish nationalist discourse of 'original identity' as a performance of the *homo religiosus* figure that responds to a sense of living in a time-out-of-joint: "symbolic or ritualistic reiteration of the myths is thought to redeem the fractures of the present by appealing to some foundational acts which happened at the beginning of time and harbour a sense of timeless unity" (87). In this messianic narrative, this timeless unity augurs the *coming again* of a glorious past which is projected onto the nation which is *yet to come*.

Several episodes of *Ulysses* work to unhinge such nationalist attempts to synthesise diffuse revenants of the past into a pure, unmixed present. The most obvious is “Cyclops” (composed 1916-1919), which comically deflates the metanarrative of a timeless and stable relation between myth and the nation by staging a bathetic oscillation between ‘clock time’ and ‘Irish mythical Time’. However, here I wish to focus more narrowly on a particular strand of motifs that are developed and interwoven across *Ulysses* in order to forge a literary image that both diagnoses ‘Irish Time’ as a Hamletian time-out-of-joint and attempts to reimagine its legacy and politics.

Stop the Clocks

Joyce’s engagement with the politics of ‘Irish Time’ in *Ulysses* is anchored to the motif of the stopped, slowed, or otherwise misaligned timepiece, which he inherits from previous traditions. Throughout the novel, “[c]lock time, psychological time, and political time are sedimented on the buildings and streetscapes encountered by the various characters” (Gibbons “Spaces” 186). In the “Lestrygonians” episode, for instance, Bloom observes that Dublin’s Ballast Office clock is set to Dunsink time while the copper timeball atop the same building is synchronised to GMT.³ The scene speaks to the ways in which “the instabilities of time in Joyce’s Dublin inhabit public space and coexist with, or may even be actively produced by, the dislocations of colonial modernity” (Gibbons, “Spaces” 184). Yet, Joyce demonstrates how this temporal parallax shapes the subjective and personal, as well as the objective and public. Margaret McBride characterises Bloom as being “obsessed with the clock” as he “fixates on mechanical time because he knows that Molly will meet with Boylan at four o’clock” (357). Anticipating this event, Bloom’s thoughts dwell on the seemingly unstoppable momentum of ‘clock time’: “At four, she said. Time ever passing. Clockhands turning” (250). In “Lestrygonians”, Bloom, planning out his day, is suddenly struck by the thought: “Then about six o’clock I can. Six. Six. Time will be gone then” (166). If Molly and Boylan’s tryst is represented as an event that is at once unstoppable and which stops time, this thought is literalised in the “Nausicaa” episode: “Funny my watch stopped at half past four. [...] Was that just when he, she?” (353).

Again, Joyce sets up a linear realist temporal frame which is disturbed by a series of spectral and phantasmagorical scenes: as James A. Hansen insists, “[t]he text of *Ulysses* is full of ghosts” (89). From the outset, *Ulysses* anchors these mutually informing public and private spectral senses of living in a time-out-of-joint to the guiding metaphor of *Hamlet*. In “Telemachus”, for instance, nationalist discourse is pegged to performances of masculinity against which Stephen is cast as the brooding figure of

3 This disjuncture stays in Bloom’s thoughts throughout the day. In “Ithaca” he contemplates a scheme for turning Dublin’s temporal parallax to his financial advantage by arranging a “private wireless telegraph which would transmit by dot and dash system the result of a national equine handicap [...] at 3 hr. 8 m. p.m. at Ascot (Greenwich time) the message being received and available for betting purposes in Dublin at 2.59 p.m. (Dunsink time)” (670).

Hamlet: dressed in black, in mourning for his mother, proving “by algebra” the temporal impossibility “that Hamlet’s grandson is Shakespeare’s grandfather and that he himself is the ghost of his own father” (18). A key context, then, for Joyce’s foregrounding of a “withdrawal from useful masculine citizenry” (McDonald 72) as a response the question of ‘Irish Time’ is the modernist reflection, through Nietzsche, on Hamlet’s hesitation at setting his disjointed time right. What is at stake for Nietzsche, but also, I would suggest, in part, for Joyce, is the question of what Hamlet’s hesitation might “offer for politics in a world where time is experienced in the complex confluence of the tenses” (Rahman 2). For Nietzsche, comparing Apollonian and Dionysian man,

the Dionysian man resembles Hamlet: both [...] feel it to be ridiculous or humiliating that they should be asked to set right a world that is out of joint. Knowledge kills action; action requires the veils of illusion: that is the doctrine of Hamlet, [...] true knowledge, an insight into the horrible truth, outweighs any motive for action. (37)

This is a key distinction that sharpens our understanding of Joyce’s engagement and quarrel with contemporary renderings of ‘Irish Time’: while the revival, and the sudden actively violent arrival of the Rising proposes to retrieve or reunify ‘Irish Time’ by drawing direct links from the mythological past to the present, Joyce labours to foreground the ways in which these revenants always already inhabit and haunt the borders of the present moment, threatening to arrive undecideably and radically reimagine the (im)possibility of the future. Such a diagnosis necessitates hesitation, a form of aestheticised ambivalence, rather than action, as the only plausible response to a time-out-of-joint.

Bloom’s watch is not the only stopped timepiece in Bloom’s possession. In “Ithaca” we learn that on Bloom’s mantelpiece sits “A timepiece of striated Connemara marble, stopped at the hour of 4.46 a.m. on the 21 March 1896, matrimonial gift of Matthew Dillon” (659). Intriguingly, it is this “marble timepiece”, a broken matrimonial gift, that anthropomorphically discloses his membership of “the cuckolds in Dublin” in the “Circe” episode (444), and thus his oblique relation with King Hamlet. In accounting for the difference from the proto-draft of the chapter, which simply has it that the clock stopped “a long time ago at twenty to eight,” Luca Crispi posits that the stated time is simply an “‘Ithacan’ joke” on uselessly specific detail, especially given “the ridiculous notion that an analogue clock could have stopped at any time in the ‘a.m.’” (182). It is true that the episode’s proliferation of detail works to entice scholarly analysis and then pull the rug out from under such readings. And yet, given the function of the stopped clock at the nexus of discourses of personal and political betrayal in the text, it is possible to see the image pointing to overlapping autobiographical, historical, and aesthetic coordinates. In its evocation of Connemara’s ‘Joyce country’, for instance, or of the tenuous beginning of Joyce’s writing career with the composition of the juvenile essay “Trust Not Appearances” at Belvedere College in 1896; or, more obliquely still, of the 22 March 1907 publication of “Il Fenianismo: L’ultimo Feniano” in *Il Piccolo della Sera*, in which Joyce wrote about the failed Fenian insur-

rection of 1865 (of which the Easter Rising would be a direct revenant) and laid out his understanding of Irish politics as a recurrent betrayal of the living and bad faith celebration of the dead, for which Parnell would offer the main archetype.

As such, the stopped clock both offers and withholds an index of Joycean engagement with an Irish time-out-of-joint through a self-inscription into history *via* a strangely spectral autobiographical vantage. For Ruben Borg, building on Rabaté's thesis, modernism is "a ghost-like moment arising within the historical programme of modernity," which is "characterised by an excess of historical self-consciousness," or an "over-extension [...] of the project of ideal history" that necessitates "a certain spectrality, a metaphoric of the ghost" in "the modern writer's self-inscription in history" (220). As the stopped Connemara timepiece tells us, in pursuing this spectral self-inscription into history, Joyce works to creatively fuse the rhetoric of disjointed temporality and the metaphoric of the ghost offered by *Hamlet* with both his own biography and the historical revenant of Parnell.

Hesitency was clearly to be evitated

Joyce's fascination with Parnell as an Irish nationalist figure who refuses or sidesteps the role of *homo religiosus* is well known from his treatment in *A Portrait*; however, the alliance of Parnell and the Shakespearean revenant in Joyce's thought is most clearly laid out in "The Shade of Parnell," published in *Il Piccolo della Sera* on 16 May 1912. The piece implicitly evokes *Macbeth* in its description of Ireland's betrayed "uncrowned king" as a "shade at the feast" (or "ghost at the banquet") of the anticipated 'New Ireland' (Joyce, *Occasional Writing* 196, 193). Parnell's legacy is thus figured as a uniquely disruptive revenant in the narrative of 'Irish Time': his recurrent rearrival upon the scene – *à la* Banquo's or King Hamlet's ghost – ruptures narratives of teleological progress, even as his failed return disrupts also the nationalist myth of the messianic timelessness of the *homo religiosus*. This alignment of Parnell and Shakespeare anticipates, and localises, Derrida's thought, which "invokes [...] Prince Hamlet's murdered father, as [the] prime exemplar of a spectral subject who haunts future generations by disrupting linear conceptions of history and reminding us, through his uncanny revenance, that 'the time is out of joint'" (Sword 181).

These coordinates coalesce most clearly in *Ulysses's* handling of the Phoenix Park Murders of 6 May 1882, the year of Joyce's birth – a confluence of dates that is particularly germane to a modernist ghostly autobiography that enables a new vantage on the present. Clearly, the fatal stabbings of Lord Frederick Cavendish and Thomas Henry Burke by the Irish National Invincibles are an important part of the pre-history of the Rising. Yet, their place in Joyce's 1904 Dublin is marked by amnesia and paramnesia, in ways that work to disrupt their direct connection to the present moment. Entering All Hallows Church in "Lotus Eaters", Bloom struggles to recall the names of the Invincible James Carey: "Peter Carey, yes. No, Peter Claver I am thinking of. Denis Carey" (78). The Invincibles' "fading exploit is recalled with similar [...] confu-

sion" in "Aeolus", when Myles Crawford, editor of *The Evening Telegraph*, brags about an article on the Murders published on 6 May 1881, and in the process "gets almost all of his details wrong," especially given that the Phoenix Park murders "occurred not in 1881 but 1882" (Fairhall 21).

I would suggest this error offers an attempt both to inscribe and conceal (by temporarily displacing) Joyce's own biography into this history.⁴ At the same time, such forgetfulness disrupts both the linearity of the historical record and the ideological significance of reiterating past events. The text's strange linking of the Phoenix Park Murders both back to *Hamlet* and forward to the Rising are centred on the public political betrayals of Parnell (and intimately linked to the 'time of betrayal' motif of *Ulysses* through Parnell's affair with Kitty O'Shea). While Parnell officially condemned the murders in 1882, in March 1887 the *Times* printed letters purportedly from his hand claiming that his public denunciation of the Phoenix Park assassins had been insincere and that in truth he sympathised with their cause. The letters were spurious, forged by journalist Richard Pigott, as disclosed by Piggott's misspelling of 'hesitancy' as 'hesitency'. This strange coincidence of hesitation/hesitency allows Joyce to position Parnell – and not the mythological figures of the Revival and Rising – as the Hamletian figure *par excellence*, a revenant figure of *death-in-life*, embodying the Irish time-out-of-joint, whose return is messianically assumed, yet crucially disappointed:

One morning you would open the paper, the cabman affirmed, and read: Return of Parnell. He bet them what they liked. A Dublin fusilier was in that shelter one night and said he saw him in South Africa. [...] Dead he wasn't. Simply absconded somewhere. The coffin they brought over was full of stones. He changed his name to De Wet, the Boer general. (*Ulysses* 603)

Joyce would revisit, and continue to develop, this image of living "at disjointed times" in *Finnegans Wake* (104). In a pivotal scene, HCE is "accosted" in Phoenix Park one "Ides-of-April morning" by "a cad with a pipe", who asks him "could he tell him how much a clock it was [...] as his watch was bradys" (35). HCE is put on his guard by the cad's strange Irish greeting "Guinness thaw tool in jew me dinner ouzel fin?" – *Conas tá tú indiu mo dhuine uasal fionn?* – and realises that "Hesitency was clearly to be evitated" as he is "unwishful [...] of being hurled into eternity right then, plugged by a soft-nosed bullet from the sap" (35). His suspicions are further raised by the pealing of church bells in the distance. The scene works through the same coordinates of an unhinged 'Irish Time' that had been deployed in *Ulysses*: the blending of Hamletian hesitation and Irish history through Pigott's misspelled "hesitency"; the evocation of the Easter Rising through the reference to the "Ides-of-April" and the "soft-nosed bullets" used by republicans in the insurrection; the displaced coordinates of the autobiographical (Mary and Padraic Colum recount that the scene restages an anecdote of Joyce's father being asked the time by a "cad with a bicycle" in Phoenix

4 I am grateful to Anne Fogarty for suggesting to me this way of reading the amnesia of historical and biographical dates here, in conversation at the Zürich James Joyce Workshop in 2015.

Park; 159-160); the characterisation of the Rising as a revenant of past events, as alluded to in the reference to the 1867 “fenian rising,” and to the Phoenix Park Murders through the allusion to Joe Brady in the phrase “his watch was bradys”; all tied together in the image of the stopped or slowed clock as a metonym of ‘Irish Time’ (“bradus”, Greek “slow”).

This, then, is the paradigmatic Joycean image of ‘Irish Time’: a radical temporal aesthetic, which evokes the diverse temporal images of Hamlet, Parnell, the Phoenix Park murderers, Joyce’s own autobiography and the 1916 Rising in order to both foreground and disrupt their direct connection to an unhinged present, which is characterised by a confluence of alternative histories, skewed temporalities, spectral vantages, and a decision (unmade, finally) about whether hesitation is to be avoided or embraced. Yet if this is a modernist rendering of this theme, it occurs within and through a series of paradoxically ambivalent yet engaged inhabitations of a lineage of Irish writers such as Kickham, Sheehan, Synge, Tynan, Sigerson Shorter, Yeats, Markievicz, Gore-Booth, O’Duffy, *et al.* At the same time, Joyce’s image of the misaligned timepiece anticipates and informs future renderings of ‘Irish Time’, staged amid the ideological memorialist imperatives of the Irish Free State in de Valera era: the haunted and posthumous late-modernist Irish narrative of Máirtín Ó Cadhain’s *Cré na Cille*; the stopped clocks of Elizabeth Bowen’s *A World of Love*; the lost watch of Flann O’Brien’s *The Third Policeman*; and the allochronic textures of O’Brien’s *At Swim-Two-Birds*, which concludes with the narrator hearing the Angelus bells pealing outside and realising his watch is six minutes slow (214).

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