DION BOUCICAULT, *ARRAH-NA-POGUE*, AND STAGE IRISHRY IN *FINNEGANS WAKE*

Richard Barlow

James Joyce's interest in drama informs both his fiction and his non-fiction. Ibsen was one of Joyce's early literary heroes and theatrical matters are explored in some of his early non-fiction pieces, such as "Drama and Life," "Ibsen's New Drama," and "Day of the Rabblement." Joyce also wrote a play titled *Exiles*, and Stephen Dedalus' elaborate literary theory in the "Scylla and Charybdis" episode of *Ulysses* is possibly based on an inventive reading of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* (and a creative treatment of the scant details we know of Shakespeare's life).[1] The "Circe" episode of *Ulysses* reads like a hallucinatory closet drama and *Finnegans Wake* also has a 'dramatic' chapter of sorts, "*The Mime of Mick, Nick, and the Maggies*" (*FW* 218.18-19).[2] There are also hundreds of references or allusions to plays and theatres in the text of *Finnegans Wake* as a whole (especially Dublin theatres such as the Gaiety and the Abbey). As part of the dramatic themes and scenes in *Finnegans Wake*, there are a number of references to melodrama and to the work of the most prominent nineteenth-century source of that type of drama, Dion Boucicault.

While Joyce's debt to English and continental drama (Shakespeare, Ibsen) has been well documented in previous criticism and scholarship, his interest in Irish drama and critically neglected popular theatrical forms has been overlooked to some extent. Joyce alludes to Boucicault's work on several occasions in *Finnegans Wake*. These aspects of the text have been neglected within criticism somewhat, alongside a tendency in some quarters to dismiss Boucicault's work as commercial and sentimental trash with an overabundance of Stage "Oirishness" (O'Toole 5), and a lack of attention towards the political dimensions and contexts of the work. However, an understanding of the place of Stage Irishry within the history of Irish (and English) drama – coupled with an examination of the political context of Boucicault's work – will help us to understand Joyce's allusions to these subjects in *Finnegans Wake* and to appreciate Boucicault's influence on modern Irish literature. Responding to recent work on Boucicault's plays, this chapter will study the roles of Stage Irishry and Boucicault in Joyce's work – with specific reference to Boucicault's play *Arrah-na-Pogue*. In *Finne-*

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1 This theory is perhaps partly based on lectures Joyce gave on *Hamlet* at the Società di Minerva in Trieste in 1912 and 1913. However, these lectures have not survived.

2 Throughout this chapter, references to *Finnegans Wake* will be cited with page and line number, as is standard practice in Joyce studies. The play mentioned above, put up "Every evening at lighting up o'clock sharp and until further notice in Feenichts Playhouse" (*FW* 219.1-2), involves a children's game in which one child, Glugg (a version of the Shem figure), must solve a riddle.

gans Wake, Stage Irishness is bound up with Englishness and the presence of English culture and traditions in Ireland. However, in typical Wakean fashion, and in a manner suiting a form of theatre popular in both England and Ireland, Stage Irishness is also associated with rebellions against British rule in Ireland and with Celtic matters.

According to Elizabeth Cullingford, the Dublin-born Boucicault (1820-1890) was the most popular English-language playwright between the years 1840 and 1900 (300). Boucicault was a global cultural figure in the late nineteenth century and Irish-themed dramas such as *The Colleen Bawn, or The Brides of Garryowen* (1860) and *Arrah-na-Pogue; Or, The Wicklow Wedding* (1864) make up only a fraction of his output. Recent decades have seen performances of a number of Boucicault plays, including productions of *The Shaughraun* at the Abbey in 1990 and 2004, a staging of *Arrah-na-Pogue* in 2010, also at the Abbey, and a Druid nationwide tour of *The Colleen Bawn* in 2014. However, Boucicault's work is omitted from collected volumes of modern Irish drama such as John P. Harrington's *Modern and Contemporary Irish Drama* (2008), which tend to focus on twentieth-century works. Still, there has been an attempt in recent years, particularly in Deirdre McFeely's book *Dion Boucicault: Irish Identity on Stage* (2012), to reconsider Boucicault's work, especially in the political context of mid-nineteenth-century Ireland and its diasporic communities.

One of the reasons Boucicault is important to the tradition of Irish commercial theatre is because he attempted to modify the stage presentation of the Irishman (and Irishwoman). An 1864 piece in *The Irish Times* states that:

> [N]ever was a country better abused by strangers than Ireland by its own dramatists […]. It is to their productions and not to the injustice of strangers, that we owe the disparaging estimate of the Celt which, until recently, prevailed in England. A thing of rags and tatters, of blunders and mischief-making, of noise and absurdity – a compound at best of rollicking good nature, impracticable obstinacy, and effervescent courage, was the stage Irishman. If Mr Dion Boucicault did no other service, he rectified this ridiculously false impression of Irish character. (Anon. 3)

This piece was written in response to the opening night of *Arrah-na-Pogue* in Dublin in 1864, the only play of Boucicault's to have a premiere in Ireland. Aside from his renovation of the Stage Irishman, Boucicault was an innovator in many aspects of theatre production and management.[3]

Echoing the sympathetic press response mentioned above, critics such as Seamus Deane and Cullingford have stressed the transformative aspects of Boucicault's work. Deane points out that "[a]lthough Boucicault has often been misrepresented as purveying the worst kind of Irish stereotypes, his declared intention was to *abolish* Stage Irishry" (234). According to Cullingford, "English dramatists created the drunken, stupid, and violent Stage Irishman; the Irish dramatist Dion Boucicault […] reinvented him as drunken, clever, and charming" (1). For Cullingford, the political resonances of Boucicault's plays are limited: "Boucicault's plays seldom betray the overt

3 "Boucicault introduced many innovations […] including fireproof scenery, touring companies for metropolitan productions, and royalty payments for playwrights" (Welch 57).

hostility to imperialism of his little-known pamphlet, *The Story of Ireland* (1881), which describes his country as 'the victim of a systematic oppression and contemptuous neglect, whose story will appear to you unparalleled in the history of the world'" (291). However, Deane has suggested that hostility to imperialism is encoded in the Irish landscape itself in Boucicault's play *Arrah-na-Pogue*: "In this play […], the landscape is in effect politicised. The scenery itself, not just the Irish character, is shown to be resistant to colonial occupation" (234). In *Arrah-na-Pogue*, Ireland is an unsettled, depressed land where nature itself seems to recognise a sense of pain and injustice. In this passage, the rebel leader Beamish MacCoul praises Ireland ahead of his exile:

> In a few hours I shall be on the sea, bound for a foreign land; perhaps never again shall I hear your voices nor see my native hills. Oh, my own land! Bless every blade of grass on your green cheeks! The clouds that hang over ye are the sighs of your exiled children, and your face is always wet with their tears. *Eirne meelish, Shlawn loth*! Fair ye well, dear Abbey of St Kevin, around which the bones of my forefathers are laid. (Boucicault 440)[4]

In *Arrah-na-Pogue*, mountains are both a romantic area and a dangerous, politicised terrain. As MacCoul mentions during the play's trial scene, "I have been organising an insurrection in the mountain districts of Wicklow" (Boucicault 467). The Irish landscape is also politicised through the presence of prison towers, blatant symbols of English power and control. When Shaun escapes from his cell in the tower, he places "the curse of Crumwell [*sic*]" on the stones of the building (Boucicault 473). In *Arrah-na-Pogue*, Ireland is a place of beauty and ancient culture but also a space of ruins, colonial oppression, and underground conspiracy against that oppression.

In the play, set during the 1798 Rebellion, the rebel Beamish MacCoul has returned from forced exile in France in order to instigate an insurrection. During the opening scene, Beamish robs the rent collector Oiny Feeney in the moonlight by the resonant ruins of St Kevin's Abbey at Glendalough. Beamish uses the young woman Arrah Meelish's cottage as a safe house and gives her some of the stolen money as a wedding present (she is to be married to Shaun, the play's main Stage Irishman, later that day). Four years previously, Arrah helped Beamish to break out from prison by smuggling a paper with escape instructions to him with a kiss. Feeney suspects Shaun of the robbery, confronts Arrah, and finds the stolen money. So, Arrah is suspected of involvement with the rebel Beamish and the play's authority figures Major Coffin (a Stage English character) and Colonel O'Grady plan to raid her cottage. That night, a celebratory gathering takes place in a barn and a band plays "The Wearing of the Green," much to Shaun's dismay.[5] A group of soldiers then raid the party as

4 As McFeely has observed, "in setting [the opening scene], Boucicault used potent symbols of romantic Ireland: 'Glenda Lough; Moonlight. The Ruins of St. Kevin's Abbey, the Round Tower, the Ruined Cemetery, the Lake and the Mountains beyond'" (40).

5 The idea that "The Wearing of the Green" was banned has become accepted in some quarters (see Welch 22). According to McFeely: "It has become a part of Boucicault myth that the song was banned from performances of the play following the Fenian bombing of London's Clerkenwell Prison in December 1867. However, […] Boucicault's

Beamish disappears. The money is discovered, but Arrah heroically refuses to say where it came from. She is to be arrested, but Shaun takes responsibility for the robbery, is apprehended in her place, and is sentenced to death. Beamish races to Dublin to confess to the Secretary of State and obtain a reprieve for Shaun. Beamish is then freed on condition that he returns to exile. However, before Shaun can learn of his reprieve, he escapes his cell and scales the walls of the tower in which he was being held. A figure falls from the tower and is presumed dead. This turns out to be Feeney, who had tried to kill Shaun, not "Shaun himself" (*FW* 405.2). Arrah and Shaun are reunited.

Aside from its connections with 1798, *Arrah-na-Pogue* has become associated with other significant eras in Irish history (as well as commemorations of historical events). As McFeely explains:

> [T]he London premiere and subsequent revival of *Arrah-na-Pogue* coincided with extraordinary political events. Equally, the Dublin revival in late 1868 took place amidst an atmosphere of heightened political tension. […] While Boucicault was singing "The Wearing of the Green" and escaping from prison every night on the London stage, the Fenians were planning a rising for 20 September, the anniversary of Robert Emmet's execution for treason in 1803. (30-45)[6]

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version of 'The Wearing of the Green' was never actually banned. In fact, Boucicault's rendition of the rebel song proved to be a popular highlight for English audiences" (30). Nevertheless, the highly charged nature of the song is made apparent in *Arrah-na-Pogue*:

> SHAUN. Will, ladies, its for you to choose the time of it. What shall it be?
>
> REGAN. The "Wearing of the green."
>
> ALL. Hurroo! The "Wearing of the green."
>
> SHAUN. Whist, boys, are ye mad; is it sing that song and the soldiers widin gunshot? Sure there's sudden death in every note of it. (Boucicault 453)

There are numerous allusions to "The Wearing of the Green" in *Finnegans Wake*, especially to the line "I met with Napper Tandy and he took me by the hand." For example, "I met with dapper dandy" (*FW* 464.24).

6 McFeely continues, "Boucicault wrote *Arrah-na-Pogue* at a time when the Fenians had upwards of 50,000 supporters and were so confident of support nationally that they were planning a rising for the following year. By setting the play in 1798, Boucicault evoked the revolutionary spirit of that year and all its connotations while avoiding direct links to contemporary politics" (35). Boucicault also produced a play titled *Robert Emmet* in 1884. However, it appears that Boucicault was not the main author of this play (see McFeely 139). A section of *Arrah-na-Pogue* is included in the 'Fenianism' subsection of the 'Political Writings and Speeches 1850-1918' section of the *Field Day Anthology of Irish Writing*, vol. II alongside, for example, writings by Jeremiah O'Donovan Rossa and John Devoy. Boucicault's new charming, intelligent Stage Irishmen – such as Shaun the Post in *Arrah-na-Pogue* – entered the scene at the same time as a wave of transatlantic paranoia and hostility towards the Irish and a concomitant increase in anti-Irish caricatures in English and American publications. In Joyce's *Stephen Hero* the activist Madden denounces the "old stale libels – the drunken Irishman, the baboon-faced Irishman that we see in *Punch*" (64).

Later in the nineteenth century, the Irish Revival sought to banish Stage Irishry from Irish culture. In the *Irish Literary Society Gazette* for January 1900, W.B. Yeats wrote that the new Irish Literary Theatre would "expound Irish characters and ideas," and that plays would be written as "one writes literature, and not as one writes for the Theatre of Commerce" (197). Meanwhile, his collaborator Augusta Gregory wrote that the theatre would "show that Ireland is not the home of buffoonery and of easy sentiment as it has been represented" (20).[7] However, Boucicault and Stage Irish culture return to Irish literature in *Finnegans Wake*.

To some extent, the international contents and contexts of Boucicault's career are reflected in *Finnegans Wake*. There are allusions in Joyce's text to Boucicault's play *The Corsican Brothers*, based on the 1844 novella by Alexandre Dumas ("the corks again brothers," *FW* 465.1), and to the slavery-themed, America-set *The Octoroon*, adapted from the Irish novelist Thomas Mayne Reid's 1856 book *The Quadroon* ("Orcotron," *FW* 468.36). However, most of the allusions to Boucicault's work in *Finnegans Wake* are to the playwright's Irish plays. Joyce attended productions of Boucicault's work at the popular 2000-seat venue the Queen's Royal Theatre on Great Brunswick Street (now Pearse Street) in Dublin, including performances of *Arrah-na-Pogue*. According to James Atherton, the words "Shaun himself" in *Finnegans Wake* (*FW* 405.2) were probably remembered by Joyce from a performance of *Arrah-na-Pogue* at the Queen's Theatre, which was putting on political melodramas well before the establishment of the Irish Literary Theatre/Abbey Theatre (161).[8] The words "Shaun himself" are spoken in Boucicault's play after a figure – ostensibly Shaun – falls from a tower at the play's denouement and is presumed dead (before it is revealed that Shaun is alive and that it was another character who fell from the tower). A figure falling to his apparent death before being miraculously 'resurrected' resembles the incidents narrated in the folk song from which Joyce derived the title *Finnegans Wake* (see Ellmann 543-44).[9]

Book 1 chapter 3 of *Finnegans Wake* contains a list of 111 insults directed at the text's central figure HCE, including the phrase "stodge arschmann" (*FW* 71.34). As John Gordon has noted, book 1 chapter 3 is

7 Negativity towards Stage Irishry also features in conversations among the students in Joyce's early, abandoned work, *Stephen Hero*: "I suppose you heard that sentence in some 'stage-Irishman' play. It's a libel on our countrymen" (62).

8 Leopold Bloom thinks about Boucicault and the Queen's Theatre in the "Lestrygonians" episode of *Ulysses*: "Where Pat Kinsella had his Harp theatre before Whitbred ran the Queen's. Broth of a boy. Dion Boucicault business with his harvestmoon face in a poky bonnet. Three Purty Maids from School. How time flies, eh?" (137).

9 Furthermore, the name of the character Beamish MacCoul in *Arrah-na-Pogue* links him with Fionn mac Cumhaill, the legendary figure of Irish high medieval literature, one of HCE's many 'avatars' in *Finnegans Wake*. As will be discussed later in this chapter, the name 'Shaun the Post' has a Boucicault connection.

> the *Wake*'s 'English' chapter, in several ways. The scenes and characters tend to be English. [Here, HCE] […] is uncommonly, and unguardedly, proud of his British connections […], so much so that at the chapter's end the one hundred and eleven epithets directed against him are […] equated with the one hundred and eleven anti-English votes of the Irish Parliament against the Act of Union. (129)

The hail of vituperation also recalls the abuse and invective directed at Bloom in the "Cyclops" episode of *Ulysses*. Indeed, there are important similarities between HCE and Bloom: "HCE and Bloom are both attacked because members of the Dublin community regard then as not belonging […]. Quite plainly, the hostility of the visitor to the pub recalls the abuse of the Citizen in the 'Cyclops' chapter of *Ulysses*" (Kitcher 95).[10] Here, the barman HCE is attacked because he is, according to the Cyclops-like customers, not a 'real Irishman,' only a Stage Irishman. In other words, his Irishness is – to his one-eyed, abusive customers – something performative. Like the theatrical stock figure of the Stage Irishman, HCE has come to Ireland from abroad.[11] Not only did the Stage Irish concept come to Ireland from England (the first Stage Irishman was probably MacMorris in Shakespeare's *Henry V*), so did theatre itself. As Christopher Morash has noted, "while almost every other aspect of Irish culture could claim an authenticating, pre-Conquest genealogy, the theatre in Ireland was not only lacking in antiquity, it was a cultural form introduced – and, to a certain extent, maintained – by the colonial administration in Ireland" (13). Elsewhere, as I will discuss, HCE is associated with King Mark of Cornwall in a section with Boucicauldian connections. In *Finnegans Wake*, Stage Irishness is inseparable from Englishness and the presence of English culture and power in Ireland, hence the note in the 'night lessons' section (book 2 chapter 2) that reads "A stodge Angleshman has been worked by eccentricity" (*FW* 284. L 1-4).[12] English drama introduced the Stage Irish hetero-stereotype which Boucicault adapted and rehabilitated in his auto-stereotypical Stage Irish characters. In Joyce's work, Stage Irishry is often associated with a hostility towards outsiders or those who are not considered fully or authentically Irish. Joyce's responses to Boucicault's work specifically will be considered later in this chapter.

The phrase from book 1 chapter 3 of *Finnegans Wake*, "stodge arschmann," contains the word 'stodge' rather than 'stage.' According to the online *Cambridge English Dic-*

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10 However, not all of the abuse is particularly stinging. The list also includes the fairly innocuous insults "Funnyface," "Hoary Hairy Hoax," "Muddle the Plan," "Boose in the Bed," and "Hooshed the Cat from the Bacon" (*FW* 71.12, 71.15, 71.27, 72.15, and 71.24).

11 HCE is associated with England in book 1 chapter 3 of *Finnegans Wake* but he is also given Scandinavian origins in the text. As Philip Kitcher has noted, "HCE, as others see him, [is] an outsider, impious [and] destructive" (219).

12 See also "trying to copy the stage Englesemen" (*FW* 181.1). As Stephanie Boland has observed, "In *Finnegans Wake*, a series of stage Irishmen – including, perhaps most prominently, Dion Boucicault's – regenerate to take on new, shifting roles that morph with the Wake's changing metaphysics […]. Just as Joyce reclaimed and manipulated the stage Irishman from its place at the margins of empire, so too did he draft the stage Cockney, a comic caricature of the working-class East End, into radical service" (81).

tionary, "Stodgy food is heavy and unhealthy, sometimes in an unpleasant way" ("Stodgy" n.p.). In book 1 chapter 4 of the *Wake*, HCE's health problems are described through a play on Boucicault's name: "his dyinboosycough" (*FW* 95.08). Stodgy can also mean "Boring, serious, and informal." As for "arschmann," this suggests 'erse,' a name for the Irish language (as well as a name for Scottish Gaelic) and contains the German for 'arse' (*Arsch*). Elsewhere in the text, HCE is rather unkindly referred to as "bargearse" and there are references to his "big white harse." The arse is associated with usurpation and/or defeat in *Finnegans Wake*, as one of the repeated stories in the text involves a soldier shooting a general while the latter is voiding his bowels. Elsewhere, the word "culosses" (*FW* 261.12) combines arse with colossal, but also with colossus – something that is liable to be toppled, like the Colossus of Rhodes (generally, anything that is oversized in Joyce's work is liable to deflation, vandalism, or destruction). So, the insults in book 1 chapter 3 connect with the father figure HCE's fear of his eventual downfall and usurpation by the next generation. As we shall see, one of the son figures of the text, Shaun, is associated with incidents of Irish rebellion against "Saozon ruze" (*FW* 411.30) or 'Saxon rule.' Indeed, the final epithet hurled at HCE is "*Deposed*" (*FW* 72.16). The name "arschmann" also contains the German for man (*Mann*), but this may be an allusion to the character Danny Mann, a malevolent humpback servant in *Arrah-na-Pogue* (elsewhere in *Finnegans Wake*, HCE is described as having a humpback). HCE is regarded as false, inauthentic, unhealthy, un-Irish, but also as someone whose very existence is somehow an insult to Ireland or, to borrow a phrase from the Buckley and the Russian general section of the book, an "instullt to Igorlands!" (*FW* 353.18-19).[13]

An important nexus of allusions to Boucicault's work appears in book 2 chapter 4 of *Finnegans Wake* (also known as "Mamalujo"), a section that depicts the text's four old men watching "the big kuss of Trustan and Usolde (*FW* 383.18) on their ship "amid the bludderings from the boom and all the gallowsbirds in Arrah-na-Pogue" (*FW* 388.24-6). In this chapter, there are allusions to Boucicault's *The Colleen Bawn* and *Arrah-na-Pogue* as well as to Boucicault himself. One of the central figures involved in this chapter, Isolde, is an Irish girl like 'the Colleen Bawn' and Arrah. In *Finnegans Wake*, Isolde is associated with Issy, the daughter of the central family of the text, with Tristan generally functioning as a composite of her brothers Shem and

13 According to Chrissie Van Mierlo, "The *Wake*'s ironic reference to 'the good old bygone days of Dion Boucicault' (*FW* 385.2-3) reinforces the sense that the world of the plays is nought but a sham […], there is no real sense that the popular dramatist is taken particularly seriously in the *Wake*. It is easy to see why some of Boucicault's twee, absurd and chaotic themes appealed. For example, raucous celebrations are a feature of *Arrah-na-Pogue* […]. Here, Shaun-the-Post (a character name purloined by Joyce) buoyantly jumps atop a barrel during a party to celebrate his marriage, an act that is mimicked in [book 3 chapter 1] of the *Wake* when Shaun likewise delivers a speech from atop a floating barrel. The climax of the play's second act – a rollicking courtroom scene […] finds a parallel in the courtroom-style inquisition of Shaun-Yawn that takes place in [book 3 chapter 1] of the *Wake*" (20).

Shaun. HCE, the father figure, is usually associated with the King Mark character of the romance. In the “Mamalujo” episode’s phrase “the good old days bygone days of Dion Boucicault, the elder, in Arrah-na-pogue, in the otherworld of the passing of the key in Two-Tongue Common” (*FW* 385.2-5), Joyce draws together the kissing of Tristan and Isolde with the kissing mentioned in *Arrah-na-Pogue*. The words ‘Arrah’ and ‘Anna’ are intricately linked in *Finnegans Wake*. Indeed, in 1925, Joyce replaced the words “Anna Livia” with “Anna-na-Pogue” in the ‘Anna Livia Plurabelle’ section of what was to become *Finnegans Wake* (see Fordham, *Unravelling Universals* 76). Since Arrah suggests ALP (or Anna Livia Plurabelle), the central mother/wife figure of Joyce’s text, and since “the elder” suggests the father/husband figure HCE, it seems that a vision of the two young lovers is being compared to, and complicated by, a vision of “bygone” loves of ancient times such as that of the older figures ALP and HCE.

In the “Mamalujo” section of *Finnegans Wake*, Boucicault’s work – specifically *The Colleen Bawn* – is connected with memories of a romantic, erotic past: “cuddling and kiddling her, after an oyster supper in Cullen’s barn” (*FW* 385.1), “when he was kiddling and cuddling and bunnyhugging scrumptious his colleen bawn” (*FW* 384.20-21). As such, HCE’s relationship with his wife becomes mixed and confused with his relationship with his daughter (in addition to the word “kiddling,” ‘colleen’ is an anglicisation of *cailín*, the Irish for girl). Here, as with the “stodge arschmann” phrase mentioned earlier, HCE is presented as a deposed figure of a previous era who, like King Mark and Dion Boucicault, has been left behind or rejected. However, HCE’s identification with inauthenticity and Englishness is complicated by the Boucicault/Tristan and Isolde connections, since Mark was a Cornish rather than an English king. Furthermore, Joyce’s interest in the Tristan and Isolde story was due, to a large part, to its strong Celtic connections.[14] Still, HCE is again linked to non-Irish figures. These kissing scenes connect with a further image of kissing at the ‘end’ of *Finnegans Wake*. As I will discuss, this later image also alludes to Boucicault’s work.

Joyce takes the name of one of his son figures in *Finnegans Wake*, Shaun the Post, from *Arrah-na-Pogue* (in the play, Shaun is the driver of the mail car between Hollywood and Rathdrum in Wicklow). After 1916, postage attained political implications in Ireland, since much of the fighting during the Easter Rising occurred at the General Post Office in Dublin.[15] Furthermore, during the revolutionary period, the imperial red of post boxes was painted over with Irish green, an act referred to in *Finnegans Wake*

14 See Boland, “Cornish Tokens.” For analysis of the Tristan and Isolde section of *Finnegans Wake*, see Bishop, 220-24, and Hayman.

15 On the subject of stages and theatre, Pearse’s reading of the Proclamation of the Irish Republic has often been discussed as a kind of theatrical performance. As Nicholas Grene has noted, “The conscious theatricality of the Rising involved *mise-en-scène* as well as costume and script (‘the para-theatre of the Proclamation’). Occupying the GPO, with its pillared neo-classical façade at the dead centre of Dublin’s central shopping street, was a grand manifestation of the revolutionary design, however mad it might have been as a military strategy” (142). Michael Collins suggested that Pearse’s performance had an “air of Greek tragedy” about it (qtd. in Foster 482-3).

through the phrase “painted our town a wearing greenridinghued” (*FW* 411.24), a line that plays on the title of the song “The Wearing of the Green,” which is sung in *Arrah-na-Pogue*. *Finnegans Wake* ‘ends’ with a slightly misremembered image from *Arrah-na-Pogue*, as the river/mother figure Anna Livia Plurabelle – or “Anna-na-Poghue” (*FW* 203.36) flows out to sea: “Lps. The keys to. Given! A way a lone a last a loved a long the” (*FW* 627.34-628.16). As mentioned earlier, in *Arrah-na-Pogue* it is discussed that Arrah once hid an escape plan in her mouth and delivered it to the imprisoned rebel Beamish MacCoul through a kiss (this is why the play’s heroine Anna Meelish is known as Arrah-na-Pogue, ‘Arrah of the Kiss’).[16] In *Finnegans Wake*, the escape plans become a key.

So, *Finnegans Wake* ‘ends’ – like *Ulysses* – with a kiss: “Lps. The keys to. Given!”[17] But the image is also one of escape (not least for the reader). Again, there is a similarity to the “Penelope” episode of *Ulysses* where Molly, in one of the text’s self-reflexive moments thinks “O Jamesy let me up out of this” (*U* 18.1128-29) as though she cannot bear to be contained by the text any longer. Since the text ends with keys, we can perhaps think of the end of the book as a kind of door (keys are also a ‘key’ symbol in Joyce’s work, especially in *Ulysses*, where they are linked to power, ownership, and control).[18] The final chapter of *Finnegans Wake* concerns Easter, dawn, resurrection, and the act of waking up (see Tindall 306).[19] Commenting on the phrase “Array! Surrection. Eireweeker […] O rally” (*FW* 593.2-3), Tindall notes that “‘Eireweeker,’ more than Earwicker alone, is the Irish rising of 1916, during Easter week. ‘O Rally,’ more than Persse O’Reilly, is [The O’Rahilly], killed at the Post Office in the Easter Rising, and ‘Sonne feine’ […] more than the rising son, is [Sinn Féin]” (306). Still, the reference to *Arrah-na-Pogue*, which is set during the 1798 rebellion, fits the theme of risings and uprisings at the close of *Finnegans Wake*.[20] Since Shaun

16 At one point, Fanny suggests that “No one but a woman would have thought of such a post office” (Boucicault 448). One of the first tasks of the actor playing Shaun in *Arrah-na-Pogue* is to sing the song “Open the Door Softly.”

17 See also, “there’s a key in my kiss” (*FW* 279.F08).

18 According to Atherton, “A meaning which can be expressed quite simply as that it is Love which is the basis of our existence [*sic*]. The symbol taken from Boucicault – the passing on of a message from a woman to a man by a kiss – was used by Joyce in *Ulysses*. It is significant that it was seed-cake that Molly put into Bloom’s mouth from her own. Boucicault’s [Shaun] uses the same image in his first scene with Arrah: ‘There’s a griddle in the middle of your face, Arrah, that has a cake on it always warm and ready to stop a boy’s mouth’” (158). For a discussion on the role of doors in the end of book 4, see Van Hulle.

19 According to Tindall, the “divine abounds” in the final episode (305). Tindall continues: “Like Chapter I, Chapter XVII has an intricate introduction. After this, in place of Waterloo, comes a saint’s life” (305-6). The saint in question Kevin of Glendalough. This provides another connection to *Arrah-na-Pogue*, since the play is set at Glendalough in Wicklow.

20 There are also allusions to Pearse and Erskine Childers in the chapter at *FW* 596.5 and FW 620.24.

the Post is a postman in *Arrah-na-Pogue*, the allusion to Boucicault at the end of Joyce's text can be read as a link to both 1798 and to 1916, as the character is from a play set during the earlier rising while his occupation links him to a central location of the latter event.[21] The different Irish risings alluded to in the chapter also suggest the theme of repetition (the chapter is also a '*ricorso*') and the cyclicality of the text is one of the ways in which the novel delays or resists its own completion. The image of keys, as well as suggesting potential solutions or explanations, implies that the book is a kind of prison from which it might be possible, at long last, to escape. This symbol of escape corresponds with the scene's imagery of the river rushing into the sea (while a homophone of "keys" – quays – places the word among the river and sea terms of the chapter). Of course, keys are turned in locks. This suggests that this passage is a turning point – the moment in which we open the lock, turn to the beginning of the book, and move from the final word "the" (*FW* 628.15) to the text's opening "riverrun" (*FW* 3.1).[22] *Finnegans Wake* is a cyclical text in which the incomplete 'final' sentence of the book links up with the incomplete 'first' sentence.

Stage Irishry in *Finnegans Wake* is related to Englishness and the English and is part of HCE's perceived inauthenticity. This is unsurprising since the Stage Irish trope originated in England. However, Stage Irishry is also linked in *Finnegans Wake* to Irish history, especially to Ireland's history of armed struggle against British rule. So, in *Finnegans Wake*, Boucicault's work can be linked to the eras on either side of the period in which Joyce composed the work. Joyce began writing *Finnegans Wake* in 1922 and finished work on it in 1939, dates that coincide roughly with the existence of the Irish Free State, when debates over the definitions and borders of Irishness took on a highly contested, political nature. Furthermore, the Tristan and Isolde kiss scene (which partly derives from *Arrah-na-Pogue*) was written early in the overall composition of *Finnegans Wake*, in 1923, and the 'final' section was written late in the process, in 1937/38. So, the two key kiss scenes bookend the interval between the Revolutionary/Civil War period and the final break from the UK marked by the new Irish constitution of 1938.[23] This suggests the importance of the Arrah/kiss moments for Joyce as he composed *Finnegans Wake*. The Arrah/kiss sections have strong associations with English culture, but they also express a sense of escape and release that assume a political resonance when considered within the historical context of their composition.

As the reductive and overly negative appraisals of Boucicault's work are stripped away and the political resonances of his plays are revisited, we can continue to re-

21 As Colin MacCabe has suggested, "*Finnegans Wake*, with its sustained dismemberment of the English language and literary heritage, is perhaps best understood in relation to the struggle against imperialism" (4).

22 As Finn Fordham has noted, "Though written in different ways over different periods, the Epilogue (book 4) and the Overture (book 1 chapter 1) are in large part conceived, composed, and recomposed as a unit" ("'~~The~~ End'; 'Zee End'" 462).

23 For a discussion of the "Soft Morning City" phrase, see Van Hulle 453-54.

evaluate the Dublin playwright's place in Irish literature, Stage Irish drama, and *Finnegans Wake*. There is a typically Wakean ambiguity or duality in Joyce's approach to Boucicault and Stage Irishry. The phrase "Stodge Arschmann" is used as an insult against HCE in the English-themed book 1 chapter 3 section of *Finnegans Wake*, suggesting that the text's central figure is an inauthentic and offensive presence to his aggressive patrons. The bloated, old, and suspiciously foreign figure at the centre of the text is compared to a Stage Irish character and linked to the old and spurned figure Mark of Cornwall. However, Stage Irishry is also associated in *Finnegans Wake* – through Shaun the Post – to Irish resistance and rebellion since Shaun's name comes from a play set during the 1798 rebellion. As such, Boucicault's work is connected in the text to the period of revolution and transition in which Joyce composed the work (1922-1939) in which most of Ireland moved from British rule to independence. Boucicault's plays are also associated with either side of that turning point. Dion Boucicault, a transitional figure who did much to renew Irish theatre, is also present at one of *the* major turning points of *Finnegans Wake*. A 'key' image from Boucicault's *Arrah-na-Pogue* – probably the most important Stage Irish intertext in *Finnegans Wake* – forms part of a pattern of references to the repetitions of Irish political resistance in the book and contributes to the powerful sense of escape and release at the temporary conclusion of Joyce's final text.

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