



Fig. 1: 'Injustice to Ireland'. The politicization of time in Ireland is evident in this comic postcard in which 'Pat' protests over the fact that under Greenwich Mean Time, the sun rises in London before Dublin.

# Spaces of time through times of space

## Joyce, Ireland and Colonial Modernity

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‘Joyce with his own material can do what no painter can within the limits of colour and flat surface. He can build up his picture of many superimposed planes of time’. — Frank Budgen<sup>1</sup>

- 1 Frank Budgen, *James Joyce and the Making of Ulysses* (New York, 1934), 42
- 2 Mahaffy’s dismissal of Joyce has passed into literary folklore: ‘James Joyce is a living argument in favour of my contention that it was a mistake to establish a separate university for the aborigines of this island — the corner boys who spit into the Liffey.’ See Richard Ellmann, *James Joyce* (New York, 1965), 59.
- 3 Stephen J. Kern, *The Culture of Time and Space, 1880–1918* (Cambridge, Mass., 1983), especially 60–64
- 4 Michel Foucault, ‘Of Other Spaces’, *Diacritics*, 16 (1986), 22, cited in Edward Soja, *Postmodern Geographies: The Reassertion of Space in Contemporary Social Theory* (London, 1989), 10
- 5 Joseph Frank, ‘Spatial Form in Modern Literature’ [1945], in *The Idea of Spatial Form* (New Brunswick, NJ, 1991), 5–66

On one of his forays into the Irish countryside, J. P. Mahaffy, distinguished Provost of Trinity College, Dublin, and no friend of James Joyce, missed a train because the time on the clock outside the station differed from that on the clock inside. When he took one of the locals (or ‘aborigines’, as he might refer to them) to task for this affront to efficiency, he received the timely answer: ‘If they told the same time, they’d be no need to have two clocks!’<sup>2</sup>

Even the clocks, as well as the trains, failed to run on time in this outpost of modernity. This resistance to synchronicity (if it can be so elevated) questions one of the key assumptions in theories of modernity, namely, that new technologies in transport and mass communications work their way inexorably through traditional communities, transforming their experience of time and space out of all recognition. According to the conventional understanding of modernity, the vagaries of local memory were abolished by the advent of railways, the postal system, the wireless telegraph, the telephone and, above all, by the greater accuracy and availability of clocks and watches. In his magisterial study of the culture of time and space at the beginning of the modern era, Stephen Kern argues that this realignment of sense of time affected all forms of public experience: what was left of diversity and contingency retreated into psychological space, exiled, as Hegel said of

religion under modernity, to the private lair of the skull.<sup>3</sup> But what if it is not possible to make such a clear-cut division between inner and outer worlds in the first place? In Joyce’s *Ulysses* there are indeed different senses of time, but it is not at all clear that they require, for the establishment of their difference, a separation of public and private experience. Instead, the difference occurs within these zones, as different temporalities and relationships to place cut across the routines of the everyday world of that day in Dublin, 16 June 1904.

In opening up the city to competing, unresolved temporalities, the experience of disjunctive or ‘allochronic’ time, *Ulysses* makes a significant departure from the new modalities of space and time that were coming to define modernity in the metropolitan centre. For the proponents of modernity, in Michel Foucault’s account, the onset of the twentieth century saw the triumph of the ‘determined inhabitants of space’ over ‘the pious descendants of time’.<sup>4</sup> Long before Foucault, Joseph Frank proposed his influential thesis on the ‘spatialization’ of form in the modern novel, according to which the unfolding of time through narrative is ‘flattened out’ by, and converted into, the co-ordinates of the spatial imagination.<sup>5</sup> The modern novel, on this reading, approximates to the flat two-dimensional plane of a modernist painting, or — more germane to *Ulysses* — to the layout and composition of the *newspaper*,

in which events are related to each other, not through the linear progression of an overarching narrative, but solely on the grounds that they all took place on the same day.

The recourse to ‘spatial form’ in modern culture represents an attempt to register, in artistic terms, one of the most pervasive features of the machine age: the experience of *simultaneity*. The new transport and communications systems brought widely separated regions and different cultures into contact with a rapidity previously unimaginable. This process was greatly facilitated by the International Meridian Conference, convened in Washington in October 1884, which sought to universalize time by establishing Greenwich as the zero meridian in a longitudinal grid of twenty-four world-wide time zones. Through the narrative techniques of crosscutting and parallel action, transverse time was incorporated into the syntax of early cinema, providing the cue for the innumerable chases and last-minute rescues that enthralled popular audiences. According to Arnold Hauser, ‘the new concept of time, whose basic element is simultaneity and whose nature consists in the spatialization of the temporal element, is expressed in no genre so impressively as in this youngest art’. Hauser goes on to argue that of the key modernist writers, none is more cinematic than Joyce:

[Joyce] pushes the spatialization of time even further than Proust, and shows the inner happenings not only in longitudinal but also in cross-sections. The images, ideas, brainwaves and memories stand side by side with sudden and absolute abruptness; hardly any consideration is paid to their origins, all the emphasis is on their contiguity, their simultaneity. The spatialization of time goes so far in Joyce, that one can begin the reading of *Ulysses* where one likes, with only a

rough knowledge of the context. ... The medium of the novel in which the reader find himself, is in fact wholly spatial, for the novel describes not only the picture of a great city, but also adopts its structure to some extent, the network of its streets and squares, in which people stroll about, walking in and out and stopping when and where they like.<sup>6</sup>

But a question arises here: is Dublin, or for that matter the Ireland out of which Joyce emerged as a writer, to be defined solely, or even primarily, in terms of space as conceived by high modernism? Certainly there have been enough studies of geographic and topographical relationships in Joyce, but for the most part they assume the sovereignty of space in Joyce’s imagination, as if Dublin were simply another metropolis like Paris, Berlin or Boston. In *Ulysses*, Robert M. Adams writes, ‘Joyce does not seem to have an antiquarian’s eye for old Dublin’, but is it indeed the case that Joyce’s Dublin is confined to the extended present which modernists claimed to be the product of the spatializing drive of painting and of cinematic form?<sup>7</sup> Is the past simply erased and, thereby, are the disparities of time removed from the public sphere to the domain of what Edmund Husserl referred to as ‘internal time-consciousness’?

### *The Past and Its Phantoms*

Francis was reminding Stephen of years before when they had been at school together in Conmee’s time. He asked about Glaucon, Alcibiades, Pisistratus. Where were they now? Neither knew. You have spoken of the past and its phantoms, Stephen said. Why think of them? If I call them into life across the waters of Lethe will not the poor ghosts troop to my call?

James Joyce, *Ulysses* (1922)<sup>8</sup>

- 6 Arnold Hauser, *The Social History of Art*, vol. 4 (London, 1972), 255. The comparison of the novel to a city that could be entered in any direction is derived from Edmund Wilson’s pioneering discussion of Joyce’s modernism in *Axel’s Castle* (New York, 1950), 210.
- 7 Robert M. Adams, *Surface and Symbol: The Consistency of James Joyce’s Ulysses* (New York, 1962), 199
- 8 James Joyce, *Ulysses*, ed. Hans Walter Gabler with Wolfhard Steppe and Claus Melchior (New York and London, 1984; London, 1986), 14.1110–14; hereafter cited in text.

- 9 Kern, *Culture of Time and Space*, 77
- 10 Stuart Gilbert, *James Joyce's Ulysses* (London, rev. edn. 1952), 200
- 11 Joyce's use of ellipsis and cinematic techniques to expose the gaps in both space and time in the 'Wandering Rocks' is signalled by Christopher Butler in 'Joyce, Modernism and Postmodernism', in Derek Attridge, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to James Joyce* (Cambridge, 1990), 270.

According to Kern, 'the highpoint of simultaneous literature' in the modern novel is *Ulysses*:

In *Ulysses*, he [Joyce] improvised montage techniques to show the simultaneous activity of Dublin as a whole, not a history of the city but a slice of it out of time, spatially extended and embodying its entire past in an extended present.<sup>9</sup>

Echoing what is virtually a critical consensus, Kern points to the 'Wandering Rocks' episode as the most vivid example of 'spatial form'. Indeed, if we are to believe Stuart Gilbert, it is a microcosm of the novel as a whole.<sup>10</sup> In this episode, the action (such as it is) takes place in nineteen sections (or cross-sections), connecting by spatial contiguity and temporal coincidence a series of random and seemingly inconsequential activities happening all over Dublin. As Kern observes, several narrative devices are deployed to convey this effect: multiple accounts of an action in different sequences; recurrence of the same object in different places; cross-cutting and eventual convergence of movement to suggest the spatial interrelatedness of the city and to provide points of juncture for all that was happening.

In the light of these co-ordinates, the narrative shifts in the 'Wandering Rocks'

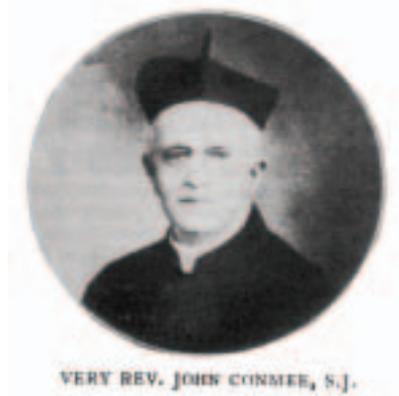
episode may be examined, particularly as they affect that punctilious man of the clock, 'the very reverend John Conmee S. J.' (Fig. 2). The episode begins with Father Conmee resetting his 'smooth watch' (well-worn from regular use we conclude) as he leaves the presbytery near Belvedere College to walk to the orphanage at the O'Brien Institute in Artane, to secure admission for the late Paddy Dignam's son (motivated not just by compassion, we later learn, but also by a concern to prevent him falling into the hands of Protestant soupers). No sooner has he left the presbytery than he passes a one-legged sailor begging for alms, before crossing Mountjoy Square where he encounters the wife of a prominent Home Rule parliamentarian:

He walked by the treeshade of sunnywinking leaves: and towards him came the wife of Mr David Sheehy M. P. — Very well, indeed, father. And you, father? [10.16–18]

This brief exchange introduces the kind of narrative ellipsis that acts as a stylistic marker of the chapter: the tendency for things to happen 'off the page', whether in the form of unspoken words, unseen presences, or actions which occur in 'off-screen' space.<sup>11</sup> As Conmee proceeds on his errand of mercy, he gives a letter to a young boy to post in the pillar-box at the corner of Fitzgibbon Street, an action followed by another that disrupts the apparently coherent visual field of the action:

Master Brunny Lynam ran across the road and put Father Conmee's letter to father provincial into the mouth of the bright red letterbox. Father Conmee smiled and nodded and smiled and walked along Mountjoy square east. Mr Denis J. Maginni, professor of dancing, &c, in silk hat, slate frockcoat with silk facings, white kerchief tie, tight lavender trousers, canary gloves and pointed patent boots, walking with grave

Fig. 2: Fr. John Conmee SJ, Rector of Clongowes College which Joyce attended as a young boy. Fr. Conmee later moved to Belvedere College and was instrumental in admitting Joyce to the school when the family had fallen on hard times.



deportment most respectfully took the curbstone as he passed lady Maxwell at the corner of Dignam's court. Was that not Mrs M'Guinness? Mrs M'Guinness, stately, silverhaired, bowed to Fr Conmee from the farther footpath along which she sailed. And Father Conmee smiled and saluted. How did she do? [10.52–65]

Everything in the episode up to this point has been within Father Conmee's field of vision, so we would expect the colourful Mr Maginni and lady Maxwell to be on his route alongside Mrs M'Guinness. In fact, the mention of Dignam's Court, close to O'Connell Street, indicates that they are a considerable distance away. The unity of space and time has already begun to disintegrate.<sup>12</sup>

Fr. Conmee's walk quickly takes him to North Strand Road, where he passes Corny Kelleher totting figures as he chews a blade of hay in O'Neill's funeral establishment, before making his way to Newcomen Bridge where he steps on board the Dollymount tram. The description of boarding the tram is repeated, as in a double-take, thus signalling another variant on spatial form identified by Kern, viewing the same scene from a different perspective:

On Newcomen bridge the very reverend John Conmee, S.J. of saint Francis Xavier's church, upper Gardiner street, stepped on to an outwardbound tram. Off an inward bound tram stepped the reverend Nicholas Dudley C.C. of saint Agatha's church, north William street, on to Newcomen bridge. At Newcomen bridge Father Conmee stepped into an outward bound tram for he disliked to traverse on foot the dingy way past Mud Island. [10.107–14]

The boarding of the tram is replayed again in more abbreviated form in the next section of the chapter ('Father Conmee stepped into

the Dollymount tram on Newcomen bridge' [10.213–14]), where it coincides with Corny Kelleher's relieving himself of the contents of his mouth, but also with another arc-like action:

Corny Kelleher sped a silent jet of hayjuice arching from his mouth *while* a generous white arm from a window in Eccles Street flung forth a coin. [10.221–23; *my italics*]

This is the only explicit use of the preposition 'while' in a cross-cutting context, so central to the narrative techniques of early cinema ('Meanwhile, back at the ranch ...'), but its implicit presence underlies the unfolding of simultaneous action throughout the entire chapter. Apart from the visual resemblance, then, what has the gesture of throwing the coin to do with Corny Kelleher? We learn in the third section that a one-legged sailor has ambled up Eccles Street where a woman, whom we later take to be Molly Bloom, throws him a coin. Though we are not expressly told, we take it that the one-legged sailor who crops up in Eccles Street is, in fact, the same character Fr. Conmee has encountered a short while earlier. Other items that catch Conmee's attention, however, prove to be more enigmatic, and their interrelations take us far from the initially secure co-ordinates of his gentlemanly stroll through the northside of Dublin just before he steps on the tram:

Moored under the trees of Charleville Mall Father Conmee saw a turfbarge, a towhorse with pendent head, a bargeman with a hat of dirty straw seated amidships, smoking and staring at a branch of poplar above him. It was idyllic: and Father Conmee reflected on the providence of the Creator who had made turf to be in bogs whence men might dig it out and bring it to town and hamlet to make fires in the houses of poor people. [10.101–06]

<sup>12</sup> For a perceptive discussion of the incongruities of space in 'Wandering Rocks', see Ruth Frehner, 'Why a Thinsocked Clergyman Walks Through Other People's Kitchen: Simultaneity in "Wandering Rocks"', in Fritz Senn et al., eds., *James Joyce: 'Thought Through My Eyes'* (Basel, 2000), 176–89.

- 13 The leisurely pace of the *Bugabu* was the butt of the satirical ballad, 'On Board the *Bugaboo*', which imagines it as an ocean-going vessel, braving the high seas: 'We soon weigh'd anchor and set sail to plow the raging surf / We were bound for the Bog of Allen to get a full load of turf'; see Colm Ó Lochlainn, *More Irish Street Ballads* (Dublin, 1965), 225–26. In the *United Ireland* cartoon, it becomes a vehicle for the rudderless Home Rule party after the fall of Parnell, Mr. David Sheehy MP being one of those who defected to the anti-Parnellite side.
- 14 Shari Benstock and Bernard Benstock, *Who's He When He's at Home: A James Joyce Directory* (Urbana, 1980), 170
- 15 The 'brown straw hat' clearly echoes the 'hat of dirty straw' which Fr. Conmee sees, indicating they are one and the same turfbarge. This feature is taken from 'On Board the *Bugaboo*': 'The Skipper he wore a wide straw hat and a body coat of blue / He'd made a lovely figure head to adorn the *Bugaboo*'.

The language of Conmee's reflections is taken from his nostalgic pamphlet on his native county Westmeath, *Old Times in the Barony*, which he 'thought of' a little later. But what connects Westmeath with the turf barge? The cultural (and mental) geography of the episode becomes apparent if we revert to a moment earlier in the day, recounted in the 'Hades' chapter, in which Leopold Bloom sits in the hearse (supplied by O'Neill's funeral establishment, Corny Kelleher's workplace) as Paddy Dignam's funeral wends its way across the city to Glasnevin cemetery. Crossing the Royal Canal at Crossguns Bridge in Phibsborough, we get the following description:

Water rushed roaring through the sluices. A man stood on his dropping barge, between clamps of turf. On the towpath by the lock a slacktethered horse. Aboard of the *Bugabu*. [6.439–41]

Is the legendary *Bugabu* (Fig. 3) recalled by Bloom the same barge perceived by Fr. Conmee later in the day?<sup>13</sup> Shari and Bernard Benstock think so, equating the two bargemen in their directory of Joyce characters, but while it is highly improbable that there were two one-legged sailors in the same vicinity that afternoon, it is very possible that there were two turfbarges on the Royal Canal.<sup>14</sup> There is no way of definitively settling whether the turfbarge(s) establish a *spatial* link between the two episodes, but as we shall see, they are linked through a *temporal* connection, albeit one that breaks up the intricate simultaneity of the action.

As the hearse passes the barge at Crossguns bridge, Bloom's thoughts turn to his fifteen-year-old daughter Milly, who has taken up a job as a photographer's assistant in Mullingar, county Westmeath:

Their eyes watched him [the man on the barge]. On the slow weedy waterway he had floated on his raft coastward over

Ireland drawn by a haulage rope past beds of reeds, over slime, mudchoked bottles, carrion dogs. Athlone, Mullingar, Moyvalley, I could make a walking tour to see Milly by the canal. Or cycle down. Hire some old crock, safety. ... Perhaps I will without writing. Come as a surprise, Leixlip, Clonsilla. Dropping down lock by lock to Dublin. With turf from the midland bogs. Salute. He lifted his brown straw hat, saluting Paddy Dignam.<sup>15</sup> [6.442–46; 449–52]

Bloom's desire to pay a surprise visit to his daughter Milly perhaps is motivated by his worries about her sexual precocity. These fears may not be entirely groundless, for we hear her suitor, Alec Bannon, boasting that he has procured what he euphemistically refers to as 'a cloak' to protect her from 'wetting' on their amorous trysts at Lough Owel, near Mullingar. [14.771–84] Bloom's anxieties about Milly are enmeshed with his deep distress over his wife's adultery with Blazes Boylan; Bannon, it transpires, also sings Boylan's risqué ditty about 'Those Lovely Seaside Girls', and when in 'Circe' Bloom is taunted about Molly's infidelity by Bello, the brothel owner, in the midst of the sexual delirium of the 'Nighttown' episode, he imagines he sees his wife on their first encounter years ago:

I see her! It's she! The first night at Mat Dillon's! But that dress, the green!  
And her hair is dyed gold and he ...

BELLO

(*Laughs mockingly*) That's your daughter, you owl, with a Mullingar student. [15.3162–66]

— 'owl', it would seem, being a particularly appropriate term of abuse, given the location (Lough Owel) of Bannon's seduction of Milly.

Can the barge linking these episodes, the *Bugabu*, heavily freighted with associations of an inner erotic economy, be the same as



Fig. 3: This cartoon appeared at the height of the Home Rule leadership crisis in March 1891, when several of Parnell's opponents were manoeuvring to oust him. The Parnellite *United Ireland's* caption adjoining the image reads: 'Our perplexion represents the cartoon of Pat as to whether Mr. Justin M'Carthy or Mr. T. M. Healy is "the man at the wheel" on board of that magnificent craft "The Bugaboo"'.<sup>16</sup>

that noticed by the highly un-erotic Conmee, with his sentimental thoughts of old times in the barony? Or, to revert to the original point, is the spatial logic of simultaneity sufficient to establish a link between them (Kern's 'multiple accounts of a character from different perspectives')?<sup>16</sup> As Fr. Conmee reads his breviary on the Malahide Road, he encounters a young man, later identified as Lynch, coming through a gap in a hedge with a young woman who 'with slow care detached from her light skirt a clinging twig'. ('Twig?', we read later in 'Oxen of the Sun', 'Bold bad girl from the town of Mullingar. Tell her I was axing at her. Hauding Sara by the wame. On the road to Malahide ...'). [14.1493-96] Just before this incident, the priest's thoughts turn to the Malahide of long ago, and it is this which expressly calls to mind his pamphlet about life in the midlands. This is then followed by a strange, abrupt cut to a new paragraph rendered in the same tense as the 'objective' description of Conmee's perambulations:

Those were old worldish days,  
loyal times in joyous townlands,  
old times in the barony.  
Father Conmee, walking, thought of his

little book *Old Times in the Barony* and of the book that might be written about jesuit houses and of Mary Rochfort, daughter of lord Molesworth, first countess of Belvedere.

A listless lady, no more young, walked alone the shore of lough Ennel, Mary, first countess of Belvedere, listlessly walking in the evening, not startled when an otter plunged. Who could know the truth? Not the jealous lord Belvedere and not her confessor if she had not committed adultery fully, *eiaculatio seminis inter vas naturale mulieris*, with her husband's brother?<sup>17</sup> [10.159-69]

The last paragraph appears to usher in a revenant from another time, the shadowy, tragic figure of the first countess of Belvedere, who underpins (or undermines) the narrative logic linking Belvedere College, Fr. Conmee, the turf barge, Bloom, Mullingar, Milly, Molly's adultery, and the 'nature lessons' of Lynch and the young woman on the road to Malahide.<sup>18</sup> In 1743, Mary Rochfort (Fig. 4) had been locked away by her husband, Lord Belvedere, on his estate near Lough Ennel at Mullingar, for an alleged adulterous liaison

- 16 Kern, *Culture of Time and Space*, 77
- 17 The Latin translates as 'ejaculation of semen within the natural female organ'.
- 18 Among the few studies to address Joyce's relation to the Irish midlands are Eoin O'Mahony, 'Father Conmee and his Associates', in John Ryan, ed., *A Bash in the Tunnel: James Joyce by the Irish* (Brighton, 1970), 147-55; Jane Ford, 'Why is Milly in Mullingar?', *James Joyce Quarterly*, 14, 4, (Summer 1977), 436-49; Tilly Eggers, 'Darling Milly Bloom', *James Joyce Quarterly*, 12, 4 (Summer 1975), 386-96; and Leo Daly's invaluable *James Joyce and The Mullingar Connection* (Dublin, 1975), a meticulous reading of Joyce through the lens of local history.

- 19 James Joyce to Stanislaus Joyce, 13 Nov. 1906, *Letters of James Joyce*, vol. 2, ed. Richard Ellmann (London, 1966), 193–94. John T. Gilbert's monumental *History of the City of Dublin*, 3 vols. (Dublin, 1854–59) was the bible of antiquarian lore about Dublin, and Joyce's interest in it is hardly consistent with Robert M. Adams's charge (note 7 above) that he lacked an antiquarian eye for old Dublin. William Dara owned a house near Belvedere College.
- 20 O'Mahony, 'Father Conmee and his Associates', 155
- 21 Benstock and Benstock, *Who's He When He's at Home?*, 182. Kathleen McCormick argues in favour of a 'similarity between the countess of Belvedere and the elderly female that goes beyond being involved in court cases ... three women become associated by the lines that are repeated about them and ... continue to act out the past events in the repetition and reenactment of phrases and stories as if they were present'. Kathleen McCormick, Ulysses, *Wandering Rocks and the Reader: Multiple Pleasures in Reading* (Lewiston, 1991), 120–21. McCormick's argument here draws on Leo Knuth, 'A Bathymetric Reading of Joyce's *Ulysses*, Chapter X', *James Joyce Quarterly*, 9, 4 (Summer 1972), 412.

with Arthur Rochfort, the lord's younger brother. Belvedere College, of which Fr. Conmee had once been rector, was built by the countess's son; it was said to be haunted by her. Joyce had attended Belvedere. This sad story of betrayal and revenge loomed large in his imagination, as is clear from as early as 1906 when he first conceived of writing a story about *Ulysses*. In a letter to Stanislaus, he states, 'I thought of beginning my story Ulysses, but have too many cares at present', and then he mentions another possible venture:

You remember the book I spoke to you of one day in the Park into which I was going to put William Dara and Lady Belvedere? Even then I was on the track of writing a chapter of Irish history. I wish I had a map of Dublin and views and Gilbert's history.<sup>19</sup>

The story was of sufficient importance to the overall conception of *Ulysses* for Joyce to feel compelled, as late as 3 October 1921, when the novel was at the printers, to check again about its historical accuracy in a letter to Fr. Doyle, Conmee's successor as rector at the college. But as Eoin O'Mahony has pointed out, Doyle did not provide accurate information on the story. He confused Belvedere House on Lough Ennel with the family mansion at Gaulstown, miles away.<sup>20</sup>

Does the cutaway to Lady Rochfort's walking by Lough Ennel represent a sudden eerie intrusion of the historical past upon the present, thereby radically disturbing the simultaneity of events in the chapter — or can it be accounted for solely as a *memory* on Fr. Conmee's part, in keeping with Kern's demarcation between public and subjective time? Clearly it is precipitated by Fr. Conmee's meditations on history, but there are indications from subsequent apparitions (if such they are) in the chapter that Mary Rochfort's appearance may not be an entirely subjective phenomenon, and that

the reverberations of her transgression and punishment persist into the present. Just as there are two descriptions side-by-side of Fr. Conmee's boarding the tram at Newcomen Bridge, one objective, the other indicating his state of mind, so also there are *two* consecutive descriptions in one sentence of the countess walking by Lough Ennel — the first possibly objective, the second touching on her subjective responses to her environment:

A listless lady, no more young, walked alone the shore of lough Ennel, Mary first countess of Belvedere, listlessly walking in the evening, not startled when an otter plunged. Who could know the truth? [10.164–66]

Moreover, this 'listless lady' is apparently linked to a mysterious woman who was involved in court proceedings in Dublin on 16 June 1904. Later in the episode, we read of a court case in Dublin on that day in which

An elderly female, *no more young*, left the building of the courts of chancery, king's bench, exchequer, and common pleas ... [10.625–26; *my italics*]

In the Benstocks' directory, this woman is identified in turn with a woman in an earlier reference:<sup>21</sup>

Lawyers of the past, haughty, pleading, beheld pass from the consolidated taxing office to Nisi Prius court ... and heard rustling from the admiralty division of king's bench to the court of appeal *an elderly female* with false teeth smiling incredulously and a black silk skirt of great amplitude.<sup>22</sup> [10.470–75; *my italics*]

These latter two women are considered identical, yet the 'semantic ghost' (to use Fritz Senn's insightful term) of the phrases 'no more young' and 'an elderly female'



Fig. 4: Mary Rochfort (1720–90), countess of Belvedere. Her portrait is painted in the style of Mary, Queen of Scots (mentioned earlier in the chapter [10.65]).

links them both to the anachronistic ‘listless lady’ at Lough Ennel — or at least establishes them as having as much in common as the two descriptions of Fr. Conmee boarding the tram, or his notice of the appearance of the *Bugabu* with the barge noticed by the priest.<sup>23</sup> The point is not that the truth can be finally ascertained but that, if we adhere to a register of simultaneity, it is essentially *undecidable*. Fr. Conmee, hitherto so sleekly chaste amid all the intimations of sexual misbehaviour and secrecy, is now shown to be a figure in whom the secret, internal world of the sexual can be locked up, via the confessional, and the outward show of respectability sustained. Even the act of reading his breviary, so outwardly respectable, connects him again to the nature of the inner world of sin and its relationship to holiness. Conmee is himself comically sexualized and transported back into ‘old times’ — ‘Don Juan Conmee walked and moved in days of yore’. [10.173] Although a mock Don Juan figure, he is also seen as a confessor to the nobles, the priest who seals in public marriage the private sexual relationship, in a ceremony under a high ceiling in a splendid mansion. The inescapable references to the Rochfort story lead back, via sky and ground (inverted), to the Jesuit houses of Clongowes and Belvedere where Conmee had been rector. Even as he looks at the sky, and thinks of

- 22 The elderly female reappears at the end of the chapter in the crowd that watches the viceregal cavalcade. [10.625] My discussion of the enigma of the ‘listless lady’ is indebted to Jo-Anna Isaak, *The Ruin of Representation in Modernist Art and Texts* (Ann Arbor, 1986), 38–39 — a pioneering text which remains the best account of Joyce’s highly distinctive modernist treatment of space and time.
- 23 Fritz Senn, ‘Charting Elsewhereness: Erratic Interlocations’, in Andrew Gibson and Steven Morrison, eds., *Joyce’s ‘Wandering Rocks’*, *European Joyce Studies*, 12 (Amsterdam, 2002), 176. As Senn points out, the ‘lawyers of the past’ passage was inserted in the margins of the early Rosenbach manuscript, and the ‘elderly female, no more young’ added in later revisions.

24 See Lady Maxwell's first appearance in this episode, cited above [10.56].

25 It may be that the dislocation is itself a brief interpolation, a cross-cut to the site of the Royal Canal that first introduced disturbances into the cross-cutting of the chapter. Fr. Conmee does indeed pass a poster of Eugene Stratton at Annesley Bridge [10.141], but this crosses the river Tolka, just above the Royal Canal.

26 Hugh Kenner, *Ulysses* (Baltimore, rev. edn. 1987), 73–75, 127, 151

the French verb 'Moutonner', 'to cover with white fleecy clouds', associates 'mouton' ('sheep') with 'sleep', as in 'counting sheep' and with 'covering' (secrecy), he associates sheep with grass (in French slang 'mouton' is also a 'grass', an informer) and the 'stubble' of the field, thereby coming back down to ground:

Fr Conmee, reading his office, watched a flock of muttoning clouds over Rathcoffey. His thinsocked ankles were tickled by the stubble of Clongowes field. He walked there, reading in the evening, and heard the cries of boy's lines at their play, young cries in the quiet evening. He was their rector: his reign was mild. Fr Conmee drew off his gloves and took his rededged breviary out. An ivory bookmark told him the page. Nones. He should have read that before lunch. But lady Maxwell had come.<sup>24</sup> [10.184–92]

At one moment Fr. Conmee is on the Malahide Road; the next moment he has travelled back in time to his period as rector at Clongowes: but whether the latter is a subjective memory on his part, or an objective flashback, remains unclear as intrusions from the past disrupt the apparently homogeneous spatial form of the present. That the logic of spatial form no longer applies amid the switching currents of time in the 'Wandering Rocks' episode is finally evident as the episode draws to a close with the slow procession of the viceregal cavalcade through the opposite side of Dublin. Mimicking Conmee's walk, the procession too crosses a canal, albeit under the gaze of the racialized face (white face, black mask) of the performer, Eugene Stratton, grinning from a poster:

In Lower Mount street a pedestrian in a brown mackintosh, eating dry bread, passed swiftly and unscathed across the viceroy's path. At the Royal Canal bridge, from his hoarding, Mr. Eugene Stratton, his blub lips agrin, bade all comers

welcome to Pembroke township. [10.1271–74]

The difficulty here is that it is the *Grand Canal Bridge* that follows Lower Mount Street, not the *Royal Canal*. Just as everything is finally converging, as in a D. W. Griffith film, things fall apart. Both space and time are out of joint.<sup>25</sup> Whatever the truth of the ghost in Belvedere College, Mary Rochfort herself haunts the pages of *Ulysses*, introducing tremors from the past into the apparently firm spatial logic of a city defined by the regulated circuits of the representatives of both Church and State.

### *The Parallax View*

Some differences of opinion exist as to whether the Free State is, indeed, free. There can hardly be freedom which ignores the laws of space and time and the profound implications of these, to which we have only recently awakened.

J. F. Mac Cabe, 'Irish Time',  
*The Dublin Magazine* (1927)

The breakdown of simultaneity in Joyce's Dublin, the dislocation of synchronicity by aberrant senses of time, is nowhere more evident than in the phenomenon of *parallax*, which Hugh Kenner and others have rightly identified as one of the key organizing (or disorganizing) motifs in the novel.<sup>26</sup> As Bloom approaches the Ballast Office (Fig. 5) from O'Connell Bridge in the early afternoon, he does his best to put the painful thought of Molly's impending rendezvous with Blazes Boylan out of his head:

Mr Bloom moved forward, raising his troubled eyes. Think no more about that. After one. Timeball on the ballast office is down. Dunsink time. Fascinating little book that is of Sir Robert Ball's. Parallax. I never exactly understood, There's a priest. Could ask him. Par it's Greek: parallel, parallax ... [8.108-12]

A short time later, Bloom realizes he has made a mistake and that it is not in fact one o'clock:

Now that I come to think of it that ball falls at Greenwich time. It's the clock is worked by an electric wire from Dunsink. Must go out there some first Saturday of the month. If I could get an introduction to professor Joly or learn up something about his family. That would do to: man always feel complimented. Flattery where least expected ... lay it on with a trowel. Cap in hand goes through the land. Not go in and blurt out what you know you're not to: what's parallax? Show this gentleman the door.  
[8.571–79]

As Bloom understands it, the timeball on top of the Ballast Office registered Greenwich Mean Time as an aid to shipping and for communications with England, but the clock on front of the building (Fig. 6) registered Irish (Dunsink) time, which was twenty-five minutes behind London, as established at the Washington Conference in 1884.<sup>27</sup> So 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. Perhaps this explained the double standards of the rural railway station where J. P. Mahaffy missed his train. Though Bloom's musings on parallax lead him into abstract speculations on astronomy (prompted by Sir Robert Ball's famous handbook on astronomy, *The Story of the Heavens* [1885], which he has on his shelf), discrepancies in time were in fact a bitterly contentious political issue in Ireland at the turn of the century, and particularly during the 1914–21 period that Joyce was writing *Ulysses*. In August 1916 — as if in retaliation for the Easter Rising four months before — the Time (Ireland) Act was passed by the British government, abolishing

Dublin (Dunsink) mean time, and replacing it by what Fr. R. S. Devane described as 'English or Greenwich Time'. 'So,' according to Devane, 'by a few lines of a British Act we lost our own Irish Time, conferred on us by an international congress, and, shall I say, an Irish sun was replaced by an English sun':

It was not asked for by the Irish people, nor were they consulted as to whether they desired it or not. As a matter of fact the nation was too upset at that time to think of anything but arrests, raids, shootings and executions. This was the period immediately following the Rising of Easter Week, and fourteen of the leaders of the Rebellion had been executed the previous week. It is unnecessary to recall the mental state and strain of this country during these awful days to anyone who lived through. It was at this unforgettable time Daylight saving was imposed on Ireland.<sup>28</sup>

Nor was the alteration of Hibernian time restricted to twenty-five minutes. In 1907, following the innovation of Daylight Savings Time to facilitate early morning factory schedules in Britain, another hour was lopped off the Irish clock, thus leading to the incongruous situation in late 1916 where as many as four different time scales were operating in Ireland:

Dunsink Time (11.35 am)  
Greenwich Mean Time (12.00 pm)  
Summer Time (Ireland) (12.35 pm)  
Summer Time (England) (1.00 pm)

This was one step too far for patriotic Irish sentiments and for those who sympathized with the plight of farmers of the Irish countryside who had to rise almost an hour and a half earlier to facilitate their British working-class counterparts. Stating that for rural dwellers, an early September morning was now little different than a cold

27 Deborah Warner, 'The Ballast Office Time Ball and the Subjectivity of Time and Space', *James Joyce Quarterly*, 35, 4 / 36, 1 (1998), 863 contends that there is no evidence for Bloom's and Hugh Kenner's (*Ulysses*, 74–75) assertion that 'the Ballast Office presents two different times simultaneously, "Greenwich Time" by the ball for mariners, "Dunsink Time" by the dial for pedestrians'. As we shall see below, the political issue was the perception that Irish national time was being subsumed into English imperial time.

28 Fr. R. S. Devane SJ, 'Summer Time: An Imposition and an Anomaly', *Irish Ecclesiastical Record*, 53 (Feb. 1939), 127–28

- 29 Rev. C. Mangan,  
‘Greenwich Time  
in Ireland’, *The Catholic  
Bulletin*, 8 (Aug. 1918),  
395
- 30 J. F. Mac Cabe,  
‘Irish Time’, *Dublin  
Magazine*, 2, 1  
(Jan.–Mar. 1927), 35

December one, another priest, the Rev. C. Mangan, remonstrated:

Why should the body of the people be penalized by having to rise prematurely and to grope in the dark for a match which has a way of not being easily found on such occasions, and to face all the rawness of the elements on a winter’s morning before the sun has come to shed his mellow influence on them, and to use artificial light for the preparation and taking of their morning meal to suit the fanciful convenience of a few ... The whole thing is utter retrogression ... it is due to no honest desire to benefit any Irish interest, but rather to the insufferable arrogance of the ruling caste in England and its complacent garrison in Ireland. There is a suspicion that it was motivated by a desire to check the national sentiment which the people might have in distinct Irish time.<sup>29</sup>

Ten years later the matter was still unresolved, provoking J. F. Mac Cabe in *The Dublin Magazine* to note that the conflict was indeed one of different tempos and rhythms in the life of the nation. His

comment raised wider questions about economic development and the insertion of Ireland into global capitalism. Drawing on the social distributivist critiques of industrial capitalism advanced by G. K. Chesterton and Hillaire Belloc, Mac Cabe pointed out that both agricultural labour and the Irish factory floor involved elements of craft and skill that did not answer to the automated routines of mass industrial production:

Some differences of opinion exist as to whether the Free State is, indeed, free. There can hardly be freedom which ignores the laws of space and time and the profound implications of these, to which we have only recently awakened ... 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, the product of English town and industrial life.<sup>30</sup>

Ireland had broken free in name from British rule, yet not only Irish human beings but even Irish cattle were still held captive by the work disciplines of British industry:

Fig. 5: The Ballast Office and O’Connell Bridge. The timeball was positioned in the Ballast office so that ships at the Custom House Quay could see it — their view was blocked off by the building of the Loopline Railway Bridge in 1890.



The beginning of all these things is, necessarily, our own time standard. In itself it is an indication of our own separate, Irish entity ... It would also convenience our Irish cows and help our harvesters ... So let us blaspheme neither space nor times but combine them for Irish purposes.<sup>31</sup>

Notwithstanding the distributivist diction, Mac Cabe was drawing attention to a key issue relating to decolonization under capitalist modernity: whether the cultural logic of development in the West — in particular, the Protestant work ethic, time-discipline, Taylorism, and so forth — provides the only successful modes of entry into the modern world system. As Fredric Jameson argues, there is only one world system, and to that extent a ‘singular modernity’; but Jameson himself is careful to point out that there are ‘alternate historical paths’ leading into, traversing, and indeed traducing, this global network of capital.<sup>32</sup> What may be anachronistic or dead weight in one society need not be so in another, and still less need it be a form of romantic regression. A famous advertisement by the Irish Development Authority (IDA), designed to attract the international investment that helped develop

the Celtic Tiger economy, showed a sepia photograph of a grim, Victorian factory, with the caption: ‘MISSING THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION WAS THE BEST THING THAT EVER HAPPENED TO THE IRISH’.<sup>33</sup> Of course, Fordism, not to mention sweatshop labour, are still very much part of late capitalism, but it does not follow that this is due to the intrinsic laws of capital, rather than to the political/imperial aggrandizement policies of particular ‘national capitals’.<sup>34</sup> As Dipesh Chakrabarty, in taking issue with E. P. Thompson’s attribution of ‘time-discipline’ to the structural logic of market economies, argues:

Even if ... a place like India suddenly and unexpectedly boasted human beings as averse to ‘laziness’ as the bearers of the Protestant ethic are supposed to be, we would still ... never know for sure whether this condition ... was a genuinely universal, functional characteristic of capital, or whether world capitalism represented a forced globalization of a particular fragment of European history in which the Protestant ethic became a value. A victory for the Protestant ethic, however, global, would surely not be a victory for any universal.<sup>35</sup>

31 Mac Cabe, ‘Irish Time’, 37. Mac Cabe goes on to stake a claim for an early Irish contribution to the theory of relativity, citing the Trinity College scientist G. F. Fitzgerald’s discovery that ‘a measuring scale in motion would be affected by its own motion’ (38).

32 Fredric Jameson, *A Singular Modernity: Essays on the Ontology of the Present* (London, 2002), 218

33 I discuss this in greater detail in ‘Coming out of Hibernation: The Myth of Modernity in Irish Culture’, in *Transformations in Irish Culture* (Cork, 1996), 82–94.

34 For the argument that the post-September 11, and more generally post-Cold War, era has intensified new, nationally driven forms of globalization, dominated by American pursuit of global market hegemony, see Perry Anderson, ‘Force and Consent’, *New Left Review*, 17 (Sept.–Oct. 2002), 5–30.

35 Dipesh Chakrabarty, ‘The Two Histories of Capital’, in *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (New Delhi, 2001), 69



Fig. 6: The Ballast Office, facing Westmoreland Street. The clock was only visible from the street, and is understood by Bloom as relaying Dunsink time, by contrast with the timeball above which followed Greenwich Mean Time. The clock in the present rebuilt office, however, faces the quays.

36 Pier Paolo Pasolini, 'Observations on the Long Take', *October*, 13 (1980), 5–6, cited in Mary Ann Doane, *The Emergence of Cinematic Time: Modernity, Contingency, The Archive* (Cambridge, Mass., 2002), 105

37 Max Horkheimer, *Critique of Instrumental Reason* (New York, 1994), 22, cited in Chakrabarty, 'The Two Histories of Capital', 66

38 Dipesh Chakrabarty, 'A Small History of Subaltern Studies', in *Habitations of Modernity: Essays in the Wake of Subaltern Studies* (Delhi, 2002), 12

39 See above, note 36.

40 Miriam Hansen, 'The Mass Production of the Senses: Classical Cinema as Vernacular Modernism', in Christine Gledhill and Linda Williams, eds., *Reinventing Film Studies* (Oxford, 2000); Mary Ann Doane, *The Emergence of Cinematic Time*, especially 103–07

41 Ruth Leys, *Trauma: A Genealogy* (Chicago, 2000), 241

### *Flashbacks and the Public Sphere*

As soon as montage intervenes ... the present becomes past: a past that, for cinematographic and not aesthetic reasons, is always in the present mode: *that is, it is a historic present.*

Pier Paolo Pasolini<sup>36</sup>

At one point in his analysis of the psychic life of (western) capitalism, Chakrabarty has occasion to cite Max Horkheimer's famous dictum: 'Machinery requires the kind of mentality that concentrates on the present and can dispense with memory and the straying imagination.'<sup>37</sup> In the interests of calibration, uniformity and built-in obsolescence, part of this process was to remove the discontinuities and fragmentation of time under modernity from public space — political or economic — to an inner life, re-created in the image of the new culture industries. The paradox here, however, is that in the very sundering of the past from the present, new media technologies such as cinema also created — or articulated — ways of reliving memory with an unprecedented, almost visceral immediacy. The issue here is not one of residual traces of the past: remnants from other eras which have survived into the present, like the herding of those cattle through the streets of Dublin for the boat to Britain which the mourners at Paddy Dignam's funeral momentarily glimpse on their way to Glasnevin. [6.386–405] As Chakrabarty points out elsewhere, to speak of the 'survival' of such practices is not to challenge 'stagist' or stadial theories of progress, for it is clear that their days are numbered: they can 'be seen as leftovers from an earlier period, still active, no doubt, but under world-historical notice of extinction'.<sup>38</sup> By contrast, the instabilities of time that surface in Joyce's Dublin inhabit public space and co-exist with, or may even be actively produced by, the dislocations of colonial modernity. 'Time shocked

rebounds, shock by shock', according to Stephen, and it is this which recalls Pier Paolo Pasolini's argument that, with the introduction of cinematic montage, past and present are juxtaposed in hitherto unthinkable ways.<sup>39</sup> [2.316–17]

Moreover, it is not as if this is simply a cinematic or literary device, purely a new mode of *representation*, while 'life' carries on regardless, oblivious to such innovations in the art-world. As the recent work of film scholars such as Miriam Hansen and Mary Ann Doane suggests, one of the most radical changes brought about by new mass-media technologies of modernity is precisely the restructuring of our senses, and our frames of knowledge.<sup>40</sup> The psychological diagnosis of trauma — or 'shell-shock', as it was initially called — in World War I, with its symptomatology of flashbacks, nightmares, broken narratives, and the like, coincides with the appearance of flashbacks and the aesthetics of shock in early cinema:

The term flashback implies the cinematic possibility of literally re-producing or cutting back to a scene from the past and hence expresses the idea that the trauma victim's experiences are exact 're-runs' or 'replays' of the traumatic incident.<sup>41</sup>

The reappearance of such shocking experiences are disturbing. They are like apparitions from another world. In the first Irish feature film, *The Lad from Old Ireland*, shot on location in Ireland for the American Kalem Company in 1910, the male hero, Terry (Sidney Olcott), emigrates to America to seek his fortune, and is shown on the deck of the ship overcome by nostalgia, pining for his sweetheart, Aileen (Gene Gauntier). She suddenly appears beside him, superimposed on the deck of the ship. Is this a flashback, an attempt to visualize his memory or inner life? Terry does not think so, for he reaches out to embrace her — at which point she vanishes



Ormond Quay, Dublin, 1904. Photograph: Clarke Collection 91, courtesy of the National Library of Ireland

- 42 Maureen Turim, *Flashbacks in Film: Memory and History* (New York, 1989), 27
- 43 Turim points out that in Hugo Munsterberg's pioneering critical work, *The Psychology of the Photoplay* (1916), the use of dissolves or fades signals subjectively motivated flashbacks, as in memory: by contrast, 'flashbacks that are not subjective do not use dissolves or fades, but are simple cuts' (31) — which corresponds with Joyce's practice in 'The Wandering Rocks'.
- 44 Isaak, *Ruin of Representation*, 36

into thin air. As Maureen Turim argues of 'the early period of cinema, before 1910':

Flashbacks in this period are extremely difficult to distinguish from 'vision' scenes that are meant to be understood as imaginary, or actions that happen simultaneously, but are 'seen' by a character in no position to observe them ... A 1914 text called *Playwriting for the Cinema: Dealing with the Writing and Marketing of Scenarios*, gives us a section on 'visions' but none on flashbacks. It suggests abandoning the superimposition for the sequential presentation of dreams punctuated by fades-in and -out, a preference presented as more economical for producers.<sup>42</sup>

This latter 'scenario' corresponds to Joyce's interpolations of Mary Rochfort/lady Belvedere in the 'Wandering Rocks', except — crucially — there are no fades-in or -out to signal their imaginary status.<sup>43</sup> As Jo-Anna Isaak observes in her acute discussion of Joyce's dissident modernism, the various characters in *Ulysses* move around, not just in different spaces, but also through different time-frames or 'chronotopes' which overlap and interpenetrate each other: clock-time, psychological time, and the political time sedimented in the buildings and streetscapes encountered by the various characters:

Numerous planes of space and time have been superimposed. What distinguished this technique from the common novelistic technique of flashback is that Joyce, concerned with surface and texture, is not so much interested in entering the past as he is in having segments of the past (or the future) overlap upon the present.<sup>44</sup>

There is no regression in time here: but it is not abolished either. As Isaak notes, in the use of cinematic flashbacks there is a clear separation of *now* and *then*: what we find

in Joyce are *unannounced* flashbacks, or rather 'flash-cuts', in which the pressure of the past forces its way into the present. In the course of teaching his history lesson in 'Nestor', Stephen reflects that the past is over but it is not done with, and may contain narratives whose time has yet to come — 'Or was that only possible which came to pass?' [2.52] The realm of possibility is opened up rather than closed down by the contingency of fact, and draws on the unrealized past as much as the future. It is not that such possibilities only remain in 'thought' but that the boundaries between thought and reality, inside and outside, past and present, come apart in Joyce's Dublin. The alternative histories with which *Ulysses* abounds (many of which trace the genealogy of an independent Ireland) were still part of a contested *public* sphere in Ireland, and were not therefore in a position to accept their relegation by modernism to private, psychological space. Rejecting Kern's assertion of a clear boundary between inner and outer worlds, public and psychological space, the new mass media infiltrated not only the conscious but even the unconscious, leaving little space beyond the reach of art. It is not even a matter of finding in the public sphere the equivalent of trauma, or related notions of 'involuntary memory' that are normally allocated to personal experience; rather, the true measure of psychic dislocation under colonial modernity is that both public and private are permeable, and that the unrequited past comes across with the lived intensity of personal experience. Whatever about the ahistorical triumph of space over time in metropolitan modernism, in *Ulysses* space, both outer and inner, is historicized through and through. This is the true nightmare of history to which Stephen bears witness: 'Fabled by the daughters of memory. And yet it was in some way if not as memory fabled it ... I hear the ruin of all space, shattered glass and toppling masonry, and time one livid final flame. What's left us then?' [2.9–10] ■