

'Broken Pillars': The Counter-Monumental Texture of *Ulysses*

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ROBERT, agreeably: Once I made a little epigram about statues. All statues are of two kinds. He folds his arms across his chest. The statue which says: "How shall I get down?" and the other kind (he unfolds his arms and extends his right arm, averting his head) the statue which says: "In my time the dunghill was so high" (Exiles 42–3).

But enough now of stupid monuments (Letters II 146).1

These quotations evidence James Joyce's ironic views of monuments in both art and life. Richard Ellmann cites an incident in Paris in 1920 when 'Valery Larbaud said to him as they drove in a taxi past the Arc de Triomphe with its eternal fire, "How long do you think that will burn?" Joyce answered "Until the Unknown Soldier gets up in disgust and blows it out"' (JJII 486). Accordingly, one might be tempted to say that Joyce was superciliously dismissive of the whole endeavour of making monuments. Yet a closer reading of Joyce's attitude invites a consideration of his ingenious conceptualization of a counter-monumental dynamic that operates across spatial and literary axes.

Joyce's works signal an atypical iconoclastic vision of the monument as a living body resisting its paradoxical ontology of dead materiality and epistemology of non-performative immortality. In this respect, the quotations above articulate a counter-monumental impulse in the monument's imagined awakening from a static and sanitized perpetual past into the material and mobile fluidity of everyday life.

Using an interdisciplinary theoretical-literary approach, this essay offers a fresh perspective on Joyce's representations of monuments: what I refer to as Joyce against monuments. My aim is to explore the ways in which Joyce's texts expand, qualify, and supplement the historical, cultural geographical, and theoretical material in relation to this counter-monumental dynamic. This

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essay is one example of this approach, though here I am limiting the study to only certain monuments, in particular Nelson's Pillar, as it is represented in *Ulysses*.²

In complementary ways this essay is both a revisioning of Henri Lefebvre's thoughts on monuments through *Ulysses* and a reconsideration of monumental space in *Ulysses* along and against Lefebvre. Furthermore, it engages with a theoretical and critical matrix comprising the ideas and perspectives of Maurice Blanchot, Michel de Certeau, Michel Foucault, Jean-Luc Nancy, Pierre Nora, W.J.T. Mitchell, James E. Young, and historical and cultural geographers.³ The starting point has to be a rather long, but extremely useful quotation from Lefebvre's *The Production of Space*:

I am not saying that the monument is not the outcome of a signifying practice, or of a particular way of proposing a meaning, but merely that it can be reduced neither to a language or discourse nor to the categories and concepts developed for the study of language. A spatial work (monument or architectural project) attains a complexity fundamentally different from the complexity of a text, whether prose or poetry. [...] [W]hat we are concerned with here is not texts but texture. We already know that a texture is made up of a usually rather large space covered by networks or webs; monuments constitute the strong points, nexuses or anchors of such webs. The actions of social practice are expressible but not explicable through discourse; they are, precisely, acted — and not read. A monumental work, like a musical one, does not have a 'signified' (or 'signifieds'); rather, it has a horizon of meaning: a specific or indefinite multiplicity of meanings, a shifting hierarchy in which now one, now another meaning comes momentarily to the fore, by means of — and for the sake of — a particular action. To the degree that there are traces of violence and death, negativity and aggressiveness in social practice, the monumental work erases them and replaces them with a tranquil power and certitude which can encompass violence and terror. 4

This is perhaps the most succinctly insightful discussion of the politics of monumental space: its relationship to discourse, the notion of texture, social practice as performance, the multiplicity of meanings that are concretely realized in this space, and the interface of historical violence and tranquil

monumentality. As such, Lefebvre's thoughts can be deployed as a corrective for readings of memorial spaces as merely texts that can be read in terms of a historical semiotics. In this respect, exploring the relationships of memorials, literary texts — namely Joyce's *Ulysses* — and history, Nicholas Andrew Miller contends that: 'Regardless of differences in aesthetic or ideological vocabulary, all memorials are, at the most basic level, textual markers: sites for the reading of history. Indexical signifiers of the past, memorials bring past objects or events into their discursive presence as history, a presence in which they are resolved and identified in the form of legible texts'.5 Instead, Lefebvre's revisioning of the monument from the perspective of the production of space by means of performative actions unsettles the relationship between monuments and textual legibility. Still, beyond Lefebvre, it seems that an effective means for using the textual paradigm to speak of monuments is to think of them as a spatial reconfiguration of Roland Barthes's 'writerly text' that resists stasis by inviting active participation in unravelling its codes and releasing its flux. By conceiving of the monument in relation to a text and against it, Lefebvre's ideas can be the basis for a reflection on the literary representation of monumental space as an overdetermined texture across which social practice and signifying practice interact and wherein different discourses contribute to its 'horizon of meaning'. On this basis, the present essay argues that if Lefebvre's theorizations allow an understanding of the texture of monumental space in *Ulysses*, they are also in many ways contested by its signifying practice and the social activity around this space.

Lefebvre writes: 'Buildings are to monuments as everyday life is to festival, products to works, lived experience to the merely perceived, concrete to stone, and so on'. The following discussion will show how *Ulysses* upsets these binaries by revealing the embeddedness of the monument in a lived spatiality that is dynamically activated in the performance of the everyday rather than merely its interruption through festival. Lefebvre's reading of the potential dynamism of monumental space does not emphasize the significance of the everyday in this respect. Rather, he argues that the *life* of a monument is largely determined by the ideological purposes that underwrite it:

Only through the monument, through the intervention of the architect as demiurge, can the space of death be negated, transfigured into a living space which is an extension of the body; this is a transformation, however, which serves what religion, (political) power, and knowledge have in common.⁷

This focus on the ideological at the expense of the everyday, on the production of space rather than its continuous consumption on material and imaginative grounds, is the theoretical basis of much cultural geographical work as in Yvonne Whelan's writings on Nelson's Pillar, which is central to this essay. Yet what is highly important in Lefebvre's statement above is the suggestive statement about the transformation of the monument into 'a living space which is an extension of the body', and this can be the groundwork for a complex reading of monumental space through but also beyond Lefebvre. The focus of such a reading is a space of mobility where the monument acts together with the multiple bodies that perform around it and that, by means of thought, speech, or action, are able to enliven it, break it, or destroy it along with or against the aims of religion, political power, and knowledge in their various forms.

In *Ulysses*, Nelson's Pillar becomes the nexus at which counter-monumental possibilities emerge by subverting the paradoxical ontology and epistemology of monumentalization as processes that reproduce an image of a living body that is, however, static: either a surreal awakening of the dead object or burying it amid the liveliness of everyday life. These counter-monumental tactics, though apparently marginal in the text, are central to the political history to which *Ulysses* responds and are thus imbricated in a web of historical particulars that encompass violence and terror — creating a literary counterpoint to Lefebvre and Mitchell.

Unveiled on 21 October 1809 at the centre of Sackville Street (now O'Connell Street), Nelson's Pillar was the target of a stream of criticism that attacked it on political, practical, and aesthetic grounds throughout the nineteenth century and the early twentieth century. All attempts to legally and peacefully remove the monument were blocked by the Trustees of Nelson's Pillar. In March 1966, the Pillar was seriously damaged by an explosion that was believed to have been set off by former or 'fringe' members of the Republican Movement and it was then destroyed by army engineers. In 1988, the Pillar Project invited artists and architects to suggest an alternative structure. Interestingly, Joyce's literary legacy was part of the collective imaginative impulse behind the replacement of the Pillar. One of the participating artists, Michael O'Sullivan conceptualized a new monument or counter-monument as follows:

The hod: *Finnegans Wake*; Joyce; a symbol for building, for the city, underground, Finnegan in the coffin. The crane: unfinished, work in progress. Stairs within the column, observation above.⁹

If this proposal exemplifies the dissemination of monumentalization across literary and urban spaces and reflects Joyce's imaginative influence on Dublin's performative urban textuality, *Ulysses* invites us to examine how much this text anticipates twentieth-century perspectives of artists and urban planners on the need for a monument to combine abstract concepts with the reality of everyday life — thoughts that Joyce may have developed further after 1922 particularly through his friendship with the architectural historian Siegfried Giedion.

According to Nuala C. Johnson: 'Not all monuments have the iconic status of Paris's chief visual symbol [the Eiffel Tower], but the role of public sculpture and monumental architecture in framing the geographies of everyday life and anchoring our collective social memory cannot be underestimated'. 10 Nelson's Pillar possessed an iconic status in 1904 Dublin since it had a central position in the space of the main thoroughfare and its summit provided a bird's-eye view — comparable but not identical to the Eiffel Tower due to a major difference in height — of the main features of the city. Yvonne Whelan ends her cultural-geographical study of the history of the Pillar by noting how its role shifted from constituting the centre of Dublin's political life to assuming the core of the spatial fabric of Dubliners' everyday lives. Whelan states that, after being critiqued as a colonial monument and an urban encumbrance, Nelson's Pillar 'became a popular meeting-place and viewing-point, the terminus of the tramway system and a symbol of the city centre that effectively transcended any political connotations'.11 The subsequent discussion will show that Ulysses renders a simultaneity and interdependence rather than a shift in the role of Nelson's Pillar in relation to politics and the everyday as 'Hades', 'Aeolus', 'Wandering Rocks', and 'Circe' unravel the multilayered texture in which the living space of the monument is situated. These episodes illustrate the different textual and narrative techniques by which Ulysses performs, disrupts, or deconstructs instances of monumentalization.

Nelson's Pillar first appears in 'Hades' as one monument in a series of statues passed by a funeral procession of Dublin men on their way to Glasnevin cemetery to attend the funeral of Paddy Dignam:

Mr Power's choked laugh burst quietly in the carriage. Nelson's Pillar.

- —Eight plums a penny! Eight for a penny!
- —We had better look a little serious, Martin Cunningham said.

(U 6.293-5).

The body of the text may seem to highlight the hegemonic character of Nelson's Pillar by having it textually occupy an entire sentence in the same way that, as a material object, it dominated Sackville Street. However, it is equally possible to see the text as performing a marginalization of Nelson's Pillar which is reduced to a name in the text, its prominence and underlying association with a discourse of imperial triumph being undermined by the restriction of the narrative space dedicated to it. Instead, personal lighthearted conversation and stories about the lives and deaths of ordinary individuals dominate the narrative. The dead materiality of Nelson's Pillar is thus registered in the text as it is lost among the chaotic sounds of the everyday and its socio-economic rhythms: laughter, gossip, and plums. This invites a revisioning of Maurice Blanchot's conceptualization of the phenomenological fluidity of the everyday especially with respect to such potentially subversive behaviours as indifference that can elude or destabilize the interpellative demands of the dominant order. 12 In 'Hades', indifference to Nelson's Pillar seems a paradoxical everyday performance that actively responds to the monument by remembering to forget it in the conversation, but not in the phenomenological-topographical stream registered in the text: 'choked laugh [...] Nelson's Pillar' (*U* 6.293). The sense of riotous dynamism with respect to the imperial monument exceeds the body of the text and overflows in implicit narrative detail specifically through what we may overhear in Mr Power's laughter. But Joyce's playful narrative structure makes the object of Mr Power's choked laugh (whether the story of Reuben J. Dodd and his son or Nelson's Pillar) and hence the extent of phenomenological indifference and resistance ambiguous.

The fact that Mr Power is associated with colonial administration through his work in the Royal Irish Constabulary and his dubious links with Dublin Castle, another monumental representation of the British Empire, reminds us that his laughter echoes the noise of power rather than disturbs it. Likewise, the fact that Martin Cunningham, who himself has links with the Castle, appeals to the group of men to 'look serious' also acts as an interpellation on behalf of official power to re-establish the threatened respectability of the Nelson figure. Cunningham's admonition is conservative and authoritarian much like the Pillar itself. Still, the laughter, though not radically subversive, is disruptive of the supposed tranquillity and inviolability of both the monumental space that the funeral procession is traversing and the implied space of the cemetery to which it is proceeding. Since monumentalization essentially perpetuates an illusion of invincibility and immortality, the

laughter that imaginatively shakes it by mocking it can momentarily break this illusion.

Immediately before passing Nelson's Pillar, we read: 'Mr Power, collapsing in laughter, shaded his face from the window as the carriage passed Gray's statue' (U 6.257-8). Sir John Gray's monument was unveiled in 1879 on Sackville Street to commemorate this moderate nationalist MP who was particularly remembered for his effective role in providing Dublin and its suburbs with a water supply.¹³ Just as they pass Gray's statue, Bloom and Martin Cunningham compete to tell the story of the near drowning of Reuben I. Dodd's son. Water is at the heart of the narrative, but instead of the heroic history of the public figure who saved Dublin by giving it a water supply, we get the private but equally heroic story of the man who saved Dodd's son from the water and who ironically got rewarded not with a monument but with a florin. Gossip thus replaces official history as the narrative memorializes a hero from everyday life with a textual space that exceeds that which it dedicates to the official hero. Hence, the foregrounding of the banal and the humorous in the narrative occurs at the expense of both the statue of the moderate nationalist MP, Sir John Gray, and the imperial monument, Nelson's Pillar, thus providing a critique of the politics of monument making by the dominant and emergent powers that competed to define Dublin's landscape in the nineteenth century. This also reflects the unravelling role of coincidence in urban space in as much as it highlights the effect of the monument as a centripetal force that is, however, challenged by the indifference of the passers-by and by the ordinariness of everyday life that gravitate around this space yet both threaten its continuing relevance. More importantly, Joyce's textual tactic participates in the negotiation of cultural memory by exposing and subverting the process of forgetting that regularly affects the numerous non-memorialized heroes of everyday life.

This textual negotiation of cultural memory and the process of forgetting is undertaken in 'Hades' in relation not only to Nelson's Pillar and Gray's statue but also to the various nationalist monuments that the men come across in Sackville Street: the statues of William Smith O'Brien, Daniel O'Connell, and Fr Theobald Mathew, as well as the foundation stone for Parnell's monument. For instance, near the Smith O'Brien statue, Bloom tries to explain the presence of the bunch of flowers on the monument and says that it must be the hero's deathday. His explanation is historically correct for Smith O'Brien died on 16 June 1864. As such, Joyce's 16 June 1904 would be indirectly performing its own narrative commemoration of the nationalist hero. However, this is ironic

because the narrative neither celebrates the physical force of nationalism that Smith O'Brien embodies nor does it explicitly celebrate the hero himself. Furthermore, the sarcastic remark 'For many happy returns' and the suggestive description of 'their unresisting knees' undercut the seriousness and efficacy of the gesture. If we are to judge the magnitude of this commemorative moment by the textual space given to the hero, it would be safe to say that 'Hades' also recalls Thomas Farrell, the sculptor who designed and produced the statue. The textual inscription 'Farrell's statue' hence amounts to a radical move in its own right by displacing the official object of commemoration and replacing him with the artisan. This gesture is repeated a few pages later when the carriage passes the 'stonecutter's yard' and the text notes 'Thos. H. Dennany, monumental builder and sculptor' (*U* 6.462).

While 'Hades' cannot be seen as entirely deconstructive of the monumental and funerary structures of Sackville Street and Glasnevin cemetery, it shows that the lived experience of the spaces of death — whether in a cemetery or in a monumental space — in commemorating the drunkard Paddy Dignam or the 'Apostle of Temperance', Father Mathew, can be potentially democratic particularly because it involves the local citizens negotiating a set of discourses and practices which exceed the religious sermon of the priest at the funeral or the Lord Lieutenant's speech at the unveiling ceremony for Nelson's Pillar and which extend into the details of private thoughts, random observations, social interaction, imagination, and irrelevancy. These aspects of the life of the monument are frequently marginalized if not overlooked by historical and cultural geographers.

In these possibilities of excess and specifically by diverting attention from the grand history inscribed in monumental spaces to the forgotten heroes of everyday life, the stories and performances of the everyday in public commemorative spaces may also become politically dangerous. Such radical possibilities are not based on a binary opposition between a demonized, hegemonic monumental landscape and a redemptive, resistant space in the cemetery. Joyce reveals the haunting familiarity of both spaces and the burden of selective memorialization in both. For instance, in Glasnevin cemetery, Bloom stops at the grave of a certain Robert Emery, and thinks of Robert Emmet whose heroism as a nationalist a century earlier was not, at the time, commemorated with a monument in Dublin: 'Who lives there? Are laid the remains of Robert Emery. Robert Emmet was buried here by torchlight, wasn't he? Making his rounds' (*U* 6.977–8). Here, the memory of an ordinary individual who is forgotten competes for textual space with the memory of a

nationalist hero who was then still not recognized in Dublin's monumental landscape. In Bloom's reflection on Emery's grave, the dialectic of memory and forgetting is thus communicated in terms of a haunting present absence that textually reclaims both heroes in a counter-monumental rebellion against the exclusionary domains of history and monumental space. The textual juxtaposition of 'Robert Emery. Robert Emmet' travesties the juxtaposition of Nelson's Pillar and the nationalist monuments in Sackville Street. Instead of the imperialist and nationalist control of the monumental landscape, Joyce's text allows in its own space the imaginative monumentalization of the nationalist whose statue in 1904, like that of Wolfe Tone, 'was not' (U 10.378) and the monumentalization of an ordinary man whose life would never have been marked by a memorial. From this perspective, the statement in 'Hades', 'This cemetery is a treacherous place' (U 6.657), becomes an implicit indictment of both the erasures and excesses in the national and nationalist practices of commemoration, given that Glasnevin cemetery was at the centre of the republican heroic cult at the beginning of the twentieth century.¹⁴ Moreover, this passage becomes even more significant in light of Bloom's parodic performance of counter-monumentalization at the end of 'Sirens' when Robert Emmet's final words are lost among the natural sounds of the human body: another rebellion of the everyday against the monumental and another twist on Lefebvre's idea of the monument as an extension of the body.

In this context, Joyce's text blurs the boundaries between what Lefebvre interprets as the apparently tranquil space of monuments and what Foucault calls the heterotopic or other space of the cemetery. In *Ulysses*, both spaces are defamiliarized and enlivened by stories and sounds that introduce the banal, the jocular, the equivocal, and the personal as intrinsic to the structure of a lived spatial history. Across these spaces, the talk and thoughts of the men in 'Hades' create a rhetorical poem that expands on and qualifies de Certeau's comments on what he calls 'the long poem of walking' that 'manipulates spatial organizations' and 'creates shadows and ambiguities within them. It inserts its multitudinous references and citations into them (social models, cultural mores, personal factors)'. If 'Hades' juxtaposes a journey in a carriage (a different form of mobility from a walk) with a walk in the cemetery (a place both within and without the city). Yet, in its double texture and different movements, this rhetorical poem reorganizes an imaginative lived spatiality and channels the memorial flux of the city.

As they negotiate communally and individually the significance of spaces of death, the men traversing Sackville Street and Glasnevin cemetery realize

a version of what Jean-Luc Nancy calls an 'inoperative community' which he defines on the basis of 'the presentation to its members of their mortal truth' as it 'acknowledges and inscribes — this is its peculiar gesture — the impossibility of community', 17 which Gillian Rose describes as 'a spatiality of both absence — mortality — and presence — performance'. 18 The rhetorical play of 'Hades' articulates an extension of the concept of 'inoperative community' to performances in the domain of death where present absence is expressed as a lived spatiality haunted by the political figures of the past. This inoperative community is characteristic of the Dublin groups who occasionally undertake journeys that ultimately reveal consciousnesses and uneasily converging routes, thus deflating the performance of bonding in the increasingly common funerary and commemorative processions from the middle of the nineteenth century to the early twentieth century across Sackville Street.

Near the end of 'Hades', Bloom incisively critiques the practice of commemoration in both monumental space and the cemetery:

Mr Bloom walked unheeded along his grove by saddened angels, crosses, broken pillars, family vaults, stone hopes praying with upcast eyes, old Ireland's hearts and hands. More sensible to spend the money on some charity for the living. Pray for the repose of the soul of. Does anybody really? Plant him and have done with him. Like down a coalshoot. Then lump them together to save time (*U* 6.928–32).

The down-to-earth and practical Bloom castigates the whole commemorative practice and deflates the hypocritical ideology and wrong-headed financial policy underpinning it. At the end of an episode about the dead and the claims of the past with its imperial victories and nationalist aspirations, Bloom instead redirects attention to present economic concerns and to the rights of the living. And it is on the rights and the plights of the living in a space dominated by memories and monuments of the dead that 'The Parable of the Plums' focuses. Behind the history of the monumental pillar, there is always the story of the plums — and the slums. The line from 'Hades' '—Eight plums a penny! Eight for a penny!' (*U* 6.294) acts as a proleptic signal for a later narrative occurrence of Nelson's Pillar in *Ulysses*. In 'Aeolus', Stephen's vision of two vestals ascending the Nelson monument is relayed; lived experience contends with a variety of discourses that compete to define Nelson's Pillar.

The first important element manifested in the females' ascent to the top of Nelson's Pillar is the fact that it divests this space of its official purposes of either celebration or protest and instead sheds light on one of its principal functions within the everyday life of the Irish capital as the site of a municipally engineered leisure activity. This is an aspect that gets neglected by historical and cultural-geographical accounts of the Pillar as a living space embedded in local social and economic history. In this respect, the theme of a socio-economic crisis overtaking Dublin is highlighted in the headlines which compete with the scrupulous description of material details in the parable and Stephen's comments on Fumbally's Lane, hinting at its dismal condition and the sense of despair in the slums. As such, the story of the vestals seems to disturb the socio-economic texture of Sackville Street and its vicinity that in the eighteenth-century were occupied by the city mansions of the Lords and gentry of Ireland.

The headlines illustrate the specious spectacle of both journalism and monumentalization, whereby socio-economic despair is reduced to the sensationalism of the declaration, 'SOME COLUMN!' (*U* 7.1006) or the slogans of the nationalist press, 'DEAR DIRTY DUBLIN' (*U* 7.921), and its emphasis on 'LIFE ON THE RAW' (*U* 7.938). Analyzing the dialectical relation of everyday life to newspaper discourse, Blanchot writes:

The everyday is without event; in the newspaper this absence of event becomes the drama of the news item. [...] The street is not ostentatious, passers-by go unknown, visible-invisible, [...]. Now in the newspaper, everything is announced, everything is denounced, everything becomes image.¹⁹

'Aeolus' complicates this relation by parodying the spectacularization of both the visible-invisible monument and the visible-invisible passers-by as ubiquitously exhibited and almost mechanically enlivened bodies and sexual scenes. A 1948 article in the *Dublin Historical Record* mentions that: 'The Pillar figures prominently in the letter-columns of the newspapers from about the middle of the last century; to read through them would give a script-writer material for several humorous sketches'. The parody that is suggested across the diverse discourses of the 'Aeolus' episode implicitly responds to this historically accurate theatricalization of the pillar at the intersection of the everyday and the different forms of storytelling and art that re-imagine it.

The concept of the monument as a stage or a theatre and hence a space for

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counter-monumental everyday performance, emerging in the work of some cultural-geographers, is also central to at least one of the proposals in The Pillar Project. For instance, Dorothy Cross, Niall McCullough, and Valerie Mulvin presented a scheme that:

aspires to be spatially monumental without monumentality — it might last only a day or a week between showers of rain. It has all the illusory elements of the stage-set and some of the bravado of the travelling circus. [...] an installation that contained its own elements — divisive, ambiguous, fantastic — all offering various options to the viewer and feeding on the real or imagined archeological layers of the site.²¹

Without alluding to *Ulysses*, this proposal is a re-assemblage of key features of the theatricality surrounding Nelson's Pillar in 'Aeolus' and its fantastical transformations in 'Circe'.

The women in the 'The Parable of the Plums' appear as spectators viewing the performance of history, politics, and the everyday with a mixture of indifference and irony. There is a strong element of theatricality that oscillates between farcical comedy and understated tragedy as carnivalesque licentiousness and ribald mockery are directed at Nelson's Pillar. Nelson, the agent of imperial history is transformed in the context of the spectacle into an actor in a tragi-comedy that features him as the 'onehandled adulterer' (U 7.1017-18), a reinscription that illustrates the various interpretations of monumental space by the ordinary individuals who experience it. It is particularly ironic since it reverses the rationale of monumentalization by underlining scandalous personal details, here Nelson's adultery with Lady Emma Hamilton, rather than the feats of the imperial hero. It is also a textual or imaginative deconstruction of the elements of triumphalism and healthy male physicality that a monument is expected to embody. This is significant historically, both analeptically and proleptically, since the first page of the 8 March 1966 issue of *The Irish Times* (just after the destruction of the Pillar) featured a column with the headline 'One-Eyed Adulterer' noting that 'The assaults (verbal) began the year it was erected' and citing a number of such abuses.

As for the image of the body, it is present in the parable not only through the 'onehandled adulterer' and the phallic representation of 'SOME COLUMN!' but also in the bodily weakness of the two vestals one of whom

suffers from lumbago. In 'Places of Memory', Karen E. Till notes that: 'Historical narratives and representations of empire, nation, and state were also naturalized through gender relations, in particular through the adulation of male, heroic, bodies in public spaces'. 22 'The Parable of the Plums' upsets the narratives of empire and nation in monumental space as the women's performance on Nelson's Pillar exposes the erasure of individual women from the Sackville Street landscape — except as universal generic representations of abstract ideals as in the O'Connell monument — and highlights disability (physical and metaphorical) as a major feature of both the iconic dead bodies and the living bodies circulating around them. Furthermore, looking at the 'onehandled adulterer' from the perspective of the headline 'HORATIO IS CYNOSURE THIS FAIR JUNE DAY' (U 7.1063), it becomes possible to revisit again Lefebvre's statement about the creation of a living space through the monument and the role of the architect as demiurge. 'Aeolus' shows that death becomes a living space not through the monument itself but through the agency of the passers-by, the everyday readers and visionaries of urban topography, and the literary imagination that from the dead stone of Nelson's Pillar awakens Horatio, the disabled but sensual body of the 'onehandled adulterer'.

Therefore, despite their inability physically to displace the material presence of the monument and to challenge the powerful groups that set it up and conserve it in Sackville Street, the reinscriptions of Nelson's Pillar in 'Aeolus' are capable of imaginatively replacing its official triumphal rhetoric and hence of rebelliously intervening in its signification as part of a politics of everyday life. The counter-monumental potential of the everyday is also expressed in the carnivalesque and licentious behaviour of the women as 'they pull up their skirts' (*U* 7.1013). However, what seems to undercut subversive implications here is that the women 'settle down' as they are 'too tired to look up or down or to speak' (U 7.1017 and 7.1023-4) and that the framing narrative conservatively represses their lively and defiant potential when one of Stephen's interlocutors, Myles Crawford, interrupts him with 'Easy all [...]. No poetic licence. We're in the archdiocese here' (U 7.1015-16), thus referencing the political and religious authorities that censor rebellious behaviour and protect unpopular pillars. This statement, along with the women's eagerness to locate the domes of Dublin churches from the top of the imperial monument, exemplifies the paradoxical entanglement of iconoclasm and idolatry in Irish everyday life and the Irish national imaginary of the time.

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But besides these possibilities, Stephen's narrative envisions a literal destruction of the monument, since the two old vestals 'are afraid the pillar will fall' (*U* 7.1010). Stephen's vision, perhaps anticipated in Bloom's thoughts about 'broken pillars', is a striking reminder of the constant attempts to remove the Pillar in as much as it can be read as an imaginative anticipation of its eventual demolition. That the two old women fear that the monument may topple beneath their feet sheds an ironic light on the fate of the imperial structure and the possibility of it gradually disintegrating under the weight of the disempowered who felt insulted by its continuing presence. However, the irony is double-edged since the possibility of the monument's fall is kept within the boundaries of an imagined vision and an embedded narrative while the framing narrative reasserts the survival of the monument:

J. J. O'Molloy sent a weary sidelong glance towards the statue and held his peace.

—I see, the professor said.

He halted on sir John Gray's pavement island and peered aloft at Nelson through the meshes of his wry smile (*U* 7.1064–8).

Despite the mocking humour and the fragile peace, Nelson's Pillar did not fall at that moment of history. This reminds us that monuments are usually destroyed and socio-political change occurs through acts of vandalism and violence rather than through peaceful resistance. These are levels of violence that are written out of Joyce's positive estimation of the banal and the everyday that however envisions or anticipates revolution.

In 'Aeolus', the Dubliners who traverse their local monumental space invest it with counter-monumental possibilities that hint at forms of resistance that would become, in the late twentieth century, part of the process of making monuments, intentionally setting them in dialogue with an audience. This later phase in the history of monumentalization is embodied in the 'countermonument' that James E. Young defines as a memorial that 'undermines its own authority by inviting and then incorporating the *authority* of passersby'.²³ Nelson's Pillar is not the kind of artistic or architectural production that is constructed in such a way as to undermine its own authority. Rather it is threatened by the multiplicity of uninvited passers-by who observe it, ignore it, climb it, or break it.

The opening newspaper discourse in 'Aeolus' highlights the centrality of Nelson's Pillar as a spatial fixture 'IN THE HEART OF THE HIBERNIAN

METROPOLIS' (*U* 7.1–2). Stephen's 'The Parable of the Plums' seems to allow for the opposite phenomenon: a dynamic narrative that exceeds the discourse of the newspaper and that opens monumental space to the multiplicities of the everyday exposing Nelson's Pillar to a curious crowd of stories and fragments of stories, performances, renamings, and imagined countermonumental insurrections. The exuberant journalistic headlines in 'Aeolus' contend with Stephen's joyless narration of the parable, and the resulting tension is translated in the discursively equivocal 'THOSE SLIGHTLY RAMBUNCTIOUS FEMALES' on top of 'SOME COLUMN!' (*U* 7.1014, 7.1006) where the body (human, monumental, and textual) becomes the site of historical (im)possibilities.

In 'Wandering Rocks', Nelson's Pillar is again the target of another countermonumental discursive transformation, the core of which is an English nationalist song. The song is 'The Death of Nelson', which commemorates the hero's victory at the Battle of Trafalgar. A 'onelegged sailor' sings 'The Death of Nelson' and then 'growl[s] at the area of 14 Nelson street' (*U* 10.1063). There are two important and related points here: firstly, the relationship between 'The Death of Nelson', Nelson street, and by implication Nelson's Pillar; secondly, the one-legged sailor's particular historical agency or voice that lends the song its character in this context.

In his analysis of the relationships between 'Allegory, History, and Irish Nationalism', Luke Gibbons explains that: 'Unlike monuments, ballads were excluded from the public sphere, and hence carried on a fugitive existence in the margins between the personal and the political, charging a personal event or memory with the impact of a political catastrophe — and vice versa'. 24 In 'Wandering Rocks', the song, 'The Death of Nelson', is paradoxically both marginal and central to the public sphere where it implicitly competes with Nelson's Pillar at the crossroads of the text's signifying practice and the social practice it narrates. The one-legged sailor who begs for money as he sings 'The Death of Nelson' while crossing Nelson Street is indirectly appropriating a triumphal textual and material space and investing it with the story of personal tragedy. The original lyrics of the song celebrate the heroism of Nelson and the noble cause of serving the English nation. Just like the Nelson monuments in Dublin and London, the song erases the crucial role of the numerous unnamed sailors who contributed to Nelson's naval triumphs and of those whose deaths on the French side passively secured those triumphs. By having the one-legged sailor, who was disabled in the battles of the British Empire, sing 'The Death of Nelson' while he begs for financial assistance, this

erasure and its material and symbolic costs are implicitly highlighted. Joyce makes the one-legged sailor and his fragmentary song a haunting and recurring presence in a chapter that begins with the reverend Conmee and ends with the viceregal cavalcade and that is punctuated by such historical spaces as St. Mary's Abbey, Trinity College, Goldsmith's statue, Grattan's statue, and the Bank of Ireland. The one-legged sailor's presence and story seem trivial to the onlookers, both Dubliners and tourists, who are more interested in the grand history that is embodied in the monumental landscape around them. Joyce registers this story ironically in the thoughts of the reverend Conmee who 'thought, but not for long, of soldiers and sailors, whose legs had been shot off by cannonballs, ending their days in some pauper ward [...]' (U 10.12–13). But in contrast to his marginal position on the Dublin streets, the one-legged sailor occupies an iconic status in the narrative of 'Wandering Rocks' where he refracts the figure of another disabled body, the 'onehandled adulterer', another sailor for whose monument funds were quickly secured.

In the official 1948 report published by the Nelson's Pillar committee on subscriptions, funds, and expenditures, it is noted that 'The Trustees had hopes to have made provision for one or two disabled seamen, and to have attached them to the Pillar; but adequate funds have not yet been placed in their hands: this object, however, they still keep in view'.25 In 'Wandering Rocks', Joyce seems to point out this important gap and the perpetually delayed project in the design of Nelson's Pillar and to textually perform an alternative form of monumentalization with respect to the non-memorialized, disabled seamen. 'Wandering Rocks' rebelliously erases the wholeness and solidity of Nelson's Pillar from its physical space replacing it instead with the fragments of a song that becomes, through the particular voice of the onelegged sailor, an indictment of monumental distortions and historical injustice. As he sings 'The Death of Nelson' and roves uneasily through Dublin, the one-legged sailor becomes, symbolically, an alternative moving monument and a counter-monumental spectacle of living memory. This is a counter-monumentality that can be read along and against Lefebvre. 'The Death of Nelson' highlights the 'traces of violence and death, negativity and aggressiveness' that, according to Lefebvre, the monument 'erases', and it does that through the body of the onelegged sailor who, in his microhistory, ironically hints at the multiple deaths that are buried in the macrohistorical life of the monument.

In 'Circe', the victorious imperial history and the Pillar that celebrates it become the objects of counter-monumental rebellions in Bloom's whirlpool of mental events and in Joyce's textual animation and carnivalization of Dublin's monumental landscape. As he first appears in 'Circe', Bloom sees his own image reflected and refracted in the images of Nelson, Gladstone, and Wellington. The statues of Nelson and Wellington were two of the most conspicuous landmarks of the British Empire, in its specifically military aspect, in 1904 Dublin. Proposals in the last years of the nineteenth century to erect a statue commemorating Gladstone in Dublin were blocked by popular opposition and by the refusal of the Dublin Corporation to celebrate an English figure before having properly honoured Parnell's memory.²⁶ As such, imperial landmarks — even those that failed to materialize in stone — appear as present absences all over Dublin, even in the depths of the consciousnesses of Dubliners and at the threshold of Nighttown. The imperial figures, like the nationalist ones that mark the exit from Nighttown and that include the imaginary names of non-existent nationalists, seem to spread their panoptical gaze over Dublin's landscapes and dreamscapes and to suggest an obsessive urge for always incomplete memorialization in these interior and exterior spaces. But 'Circe' also allows the opposite phenomenon, for here Joyce subjects monumental spaces to a form of textual surveillance through inversions that break the monuments into multiple surreal images, vanquished phantoms, and scattered figments of the victorious figures they represent.

The apocalyptic vision of 'Dublin's burning! Dublin's burning! On fire, on fire!' (U 15.4660) that reverses Bloom's exclamation before he enters nighttown: 'London's burning, London's burning! On fire, on fire!' (U 15.172) implies a counter-monumental impulse that uncovers, in a variation of WJ.T. Mitchell's argument earlier, both the violence of monumental space and the violence directed against it while revealing how imperial and nationalist memorials, though apparently opposed, refract each other as sites of discursive control and material oppression. As Steve Pile states, 'power can be mobilised through the reterritorialisation — the resymbolisation — of space, and this can be as oppressive as it can be subversive'. 27 'Circe' imaginatively breaks and burns both the imperial monuments and the nationalist ones that fail to achieve their full potential in not only reterritorializing but also fully embedding Dublin's space in a deeply resymbolized and hence positively revolutionized social and political structure. Bloomusalem, built on the debris of previous monuments, embodies this process of the incomplete resymbolization of space.

Throughout 'Circe', we textually experience a geographical rupture in the symbolization of space. In this respect, Bella Cohen's paradoxical utterance, 'This isn't a brothel' (*U* 15.4281), invites us to reconsider the space which 'Circe' carnivalizes. Joyce's nighttown is, in terms of its spatial politics, a deconstruction of the Bakhtinian carnivalesque through the Foucauldian concept of heterotopia. Given that Foucault identifies ancient brothels as heterotopias of 'illusion' that reveal presumably real spaces as even more illusory,²⁸ it is possible to read 'Circe' from this perspective since in this episode Nighttown refracts monumental space as illusory and vice versa, thus unsettling the cultural historical definition of both spaces. Bella Cohen's statement underlines the illusory nature of carnivalesque freedom and extraterritoriality in the brothel as the latter is populated, realistically and fantastically, by a crowd of bodies and animated statues that, through the complex dynamics of objectification, fetishization, reification, disempowerment, and hypermnesia, reveal the impossibility of a utopian 'other' space.

In this context, Nelson's Pillar appears as the most dominant monumental motif in 'Circe' and is subjected to a series of textual interventions that expose it to both parodic performance and discursive sabotage: namely in the women's martyrdom scene on the Pillar after the declaration of 'Bloomusalem' (U 15.1748), in Bloom's acrobatic pantomime as he climbs the pillar (U 15.1842), and in the surreal drama of 'coffin steel shark stone onehandled Nelson two trickies Frauenzimmer plumstained from pram falling bawling' (U 15.4144-5) in Stephen's 'Dance of death' (*U* 15.4139). Interestingly, the first two occurrences of the Pillar in 'Circe' may refer to historically true events, for in at least two recorded instances (in 1881 and 1897), a man climbed over the railings at the top of Nelson's Pillar and, in at least one documented event (in 1917), a man actually committed suicide from the top of the Pillar.²⁹ Moreover, this effects an ironic inversion of the appearance of Nelson's monument in 'Aeolus', 'Wandering Rocks', and 'Hades' especially through the distortion and fragmentation of the monument into dead materiality and 'élan vital' in the last quotation from 'Circe'. As Kenneth Gross argues, 'if statues can be mirrors of our internal objects, they can also become the places where such objects are deformed, and reassembled [...] by the very "gravitational pull" of such statues'. 30 Reading the monument itself as an agent in its space of performance invites a distinction between human and non-human agency and an envisioning of materiality that is invested with intention and desire.

There has been some critical reflection on the imaginary transformations of monumental spaces and even on the surreal or magical agency of monuments.

For instance, W.J.T. Mitchell mentions that the monument 'may become the object of imaginary renderings' which would include 'fantasies'.³¹ Reading this phenomenon in relation to surrealist literature, Sergiusz Michalski astutely notes that, in André Breton's *Nadja*, Philippe Soupault's *Les Dernières Nuits de Paris*, and especially in Louis Aragon's *Le Paysan de Paris*, monuments become 'the stop signs of black magic which interrupt "la flânerie du reveur"'.³² In 'Circe', Dublin monuments come alive in the internal odysseys of Bloom and Stephen across dreamscapes where personal fantasies merge with historical nightmares. This expresses the repercussions of a process of excessive and abusive memorialization inverting the positive implications of both what Lefebvre describes as the transformation of the 'space of death' into 'a living space' and what Pierre Nora alludes to in his notion of 'the memorial nation', wherein: 'Stones and walls come to life, sites begin to stir, landscapes are revitalized'.³³

Anne Fogarty writes that, 'Despite its displacement by the current Spire, Nelson's Pillar in absentia remains as much part of the current fabric of O'Connell street as when it was actually in position there, due to its Joycean fictional afterlife'.34 The notion of present absence is appropriate for a reading of Nelson's Pillar throughout Ulysses especially because Joyce's text reconfigures the paradoxical ontology of the monument as a perpetually incomplete object-process that comes alive through a confluence of real and mental events across past, present, and future time-frames. As we move through the episodes, the fixity and solidity of Nelson's Pillar, textually recorded in 'Hades', are gradually undermined as it imaginatively comes to life in the one-legged sailor's singing of 'The Death of Nelson', in the vision of a falling monument set against the theatricality of 'the onehandled adulterer' posing as the centre of attention 'THIS FAIR JUNE DAY', and finally in its multiple phantasmagorical transformations at the crossroads of the human and the object in 'Circe'. The implicit animation fantasy that underlies these monumental awakenings communicates the complex interconnections between the psychological and material lives of Dubliners and the imagined lives of the Pillar. This fantasy is also the expression of the interrelation between the threatening violence that Nelson's Pillar represented and the iconoclastic violence that threatened to break it and that eventually toppled it.

Flowing through the counter-monumental energies of *Ulysses* is a strong sense of a crippled or illusory revolution, whose seed falls on stony ground or, instead, a revolution that risks being reduced to a sensational story in the news. But the counter-monumental energies of *Ulysses* are also part of microhistories erupting into macrohistory through the channels of the

everyday as the circulation of bodies, words, and dreams in a landscape-theatre orchestrates a phenomenology of stone to the rhythms of human life that build, conserve, ignore, insult, awaken, attack, and destroy monuments. In this respect, Joyce's statement in a 1907 lecture on James Clarence Mangan that the monument 'is the most polite and effective way to assure a lasting oblivion of the deceased' (*CW* 176) is partially contradicted by *Ulysses* itself since it demonstrates that, despite the ineluctable relation of modern urban indifference to monumentality, the flux of material and conceptual lives traversing monumental space transform it into a site of myriad, seldom polite, engagements with the figure of the deceased.

In *Ulysses*, monumentalization signifies and is acted out on various levels: as object, historical-political and social practices, literary motif, and shifting metaphor across the spaces of the ontological, epistemological, phenomenological, spatial, and textual. As this essay has shown, approaching Nelson's Pillar from this perspective not only reveals the monument's overdetermined horizons of meaning as *Ulysses* captures the texture of social practice. It also suggests the ways in which Joyce's multiple representations of the Pillar allow a reconsideration of monumentalization and of the theoretical work on both this subject specifically and its larger significance with respect to related issues including memory and forgetting, iconoclasm, spatial and discursive relations, the everyday, performance, and performativity, and the real and fantastical dimensions of counter-monumentality. Accordingly, *Ulysses* is part of the counter-monumental discourse supplementing the Pillar Project, for it invites every reader to imagine a replacement for Nelson's Pillar through the history that the text creates for this monument.

NOTES

- 1. This statement appears in a letter Joyce addressed to his brother Stanislaus on 7 August 1906 from Rome. The comment follows Joyce's description of the experiences of Nora and himself in the Colosseum in Rome that captures his irritation at the attitude of tourists, guides, and postcard sellers who take over monumental spaces.
- 2. Although this essay is primarily concerned with monumentalization in *Ullysses*, it seems important to note that *Finnegans Wake* forms a fertile ground for exploring the material conditions of monument-making across the intersecting histories of capitalism, imperialism, and urban planning. One particularly interesting area for investigation is the relation of HCE, as a property developer and as a figure of imperial power, to the architects and builders of monumental space.

Connected with these issues are the political meanings of violence in and against monumental space in the *Wake*. W.J.T. Mitchell has distinguished between three levels of violence in public art: '(1) the image as an *act* or *object* of violence, itself doing violence to beholders, or 'suffering' violence as the target of vandalism, disfigurement, or demolition; (2) the image as a *weapon* of violence, a device for attack, coercion, incitement, or more subtle 'dislocations' of public spaces; (3) the image as a *representation* of violence, whether a realistic imitation of a violent act, or a monument, trophy, memorial, or other trace of past violence'. See W.J.T. Mitchell, 'The Violence of Public Art: *Do the Right Thing*', in *Art and the Public Sphere*, edited by W.J.T. Mitchell (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), pp.37–8.

In this respect, reading *Finnegans Wake* in dialogue with 'The Violence of Public Art' allows us to look at how the literary text can be countermonumental: it uncovers the oppressive politics of monumentalization as a material practice and deconstructs it as a performative metaphor.

The *Wake* creates a complex relation between differently coded political monuments within the text and the world. It sets up a dynamic indicative of the processes of counter-monumentalization, specifically between, on the one hand, the Wellington and William III monuments, and the O'Connell and Parnell monuments, on the other. In this web of relations, it is essential to look at how a certain monumental space functions contrapuntally in different historical and textual moments. But these questions should be left for a more extensive study that need not restrict itself to the interpretive approach of this essay.

- 3. Two excellent articles, by Anne Fogarty and Andrew Thacker, have considered monumental space in *Ulysses* on the basis of some of Lefebvre's theories. While both articles have engaged with Lefebvre's theorizations of space in general ('representation of space' in contrast to 'representational space' in Thacker and 'absolute space' in contrast to 'abstract space' in Fogarty), my essay redirects attention to Lefebvre's thoughts on monumental space specifically. See Anne Fogarty, ' "Stone Hopes": Statues and the Politics of Longing in Joyce's Work', *Dublin James Joyce Journal* 1 (2008), 69–83, and Andrew Thacker, 'Toppling Masonry and Textual Space: Nelson's Pillar and Spatial Politics in *Ulysses'*, *Irish Studies Review* 8.2 (2000), 195–203.
- 4. Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, translated by Donald Nicholson-Smith (1974; Oxford: Blackwell, 1991), p.222.
- 5. Nicholas Andrew Miller, *Modernism, Ireland and the Erotics of Memory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p.24.
- 6. Lefebvre, p.223.
- 7. Lefebvre, p.221.

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- 8. The history of the construction, maintenance, and destruction of Nelson's Pillar can be studied through the committee's report *A Description of the Pillar with a List of the Subscribers. To Which is Added, the Amount of the Funds, and the Account of the Expenditure Thereof* (Dublin: John Chambers, 1846); in contemporary articles in *History of the City of Dublin, 1818, The Irish Builder* (especially the issues of 15 July 1890 and 15 April 1894), *The Hibernian Magazine*, and later *The Irish Times*. This historical information is expanded on and critically supplemented by the cultural-geographical work of Yvonne Whelan and less extensively in Judith Hill. See Yvonne Whelan, *Reinventing Modern Dublin: Streetscape, Iconography and the Politics of Identity* (Dublin: UCD Press, 2003) and Judith Hill, *Irish Public Sculpture: A History* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1998).
- 9. *A Monument in the City: Nelson's Pillar and its Aftermath,* edited by John O'Regan (Oysterhaven, Ireland: Gandon Editions, 1998), p.52.
- 10. Nuala C. Johnson, 'Public Memory', in *A Companion to Cultural Geography*, edited by James S. Duncan, Nuala C. Johnson, and Richard H. Schein, Blackwell Companions to Geography (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004), p.316.
- 11. Whelan, p.207.
- 12. Maurice Blanchot, 'Everyday Speech', *Yale French Studies* 73 (1987), 12–20 (p.13).
- 13. Whelan, p.69.
- 14. See Joep Leerssen, *Remembrance and Imagination: Patterns in the Historical and Literary Representation of Ireland in the Nineteenth Century*, Critical Conditions: Field Day Essays and Monographs (Cork: Cork University Press, 1996) pp.142–3.
- 15. Michel Foucault, 'Of Other Spaces', translated by Jay Miskowiec, *Diacritics* 16.1 (1986), 22–7 (p.25).
- 16. Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, translated by Steven Rendall (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), p.101.
- 17. Jean-Luc Nancy, *The Inoperative Community*, edited and translated by Peter Connor, et al, Theory and History of Literature 76 (Minneapolis, Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 1991), p.17.
- 18. Gillian Rose, 'Performing Inoperative Community: The Space and the Resistance of Some Community Arts Projects', in *Geographies of Resistance*, edited by Steve Pile and Michael Keith (London: Routledge, 1997), p.201.
- 19. Blanchot, p.18.
- 20. A Monument in the City, p.15.
- 21. A Monument in the City, p.38.
- 22. Karen E. Till, 'Places of Memory', *Companion to Political Geography*, edited by John Agnew, Katharyne Mitchell, and Gerard Toal, Blackwell Companions to Geography (Oxford: Blackwell, 2003), p.292.

- 23. James E. Young, 'The Counter-Monument: Memory against Itself in Germany Today' in *Art and the Public Sphere*, edited by W.J.T. Mitchell (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), p.61.
- 24. Luke Gibbons, *Transformations in Irish Culture*, Critical Conditions: Field Day Essays (Cork: Cork University Press, 1996) p.145.
- 25. A Description of the Pillar, p.21.
- 26. Whelan, p.70.
- 27. Steve Pile, 'Opposition, Political Identities and Spaces of Resistance', in *Geographies of Resistance*, p.30.
- 28. Foucault, p.27.
- 29. *A Monument in the City*, p.16.
- 30. Kenneth Gross, *The Dream of the Moving Statue* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993), p.37.
- 31. W.J.T. Mitchell, Preface to *Landscape and Power*, edited by W.J.T. Mitchell, second edition (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), p.xi.
- 32. Sergiusz Michalski, *Public Monuments: Art in Political Bondage 1870-1997* (London: Reaktion, 1998), p.48.
- 33. Pierre Nora, 'The Era of Commemoration', in *Rethinking the French Past: Realms of Memory*, III, edited by Pierre Nora, English edition by Lawrence D. Kritzman, translated by Arthur Goldhammer, 3 Volumes, European Perspectives (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996–8), p.636.
- 34. Fogarty, p.70.



Plate 7: Newspaper seller at General Post Office, with the half-demolished Nelson's Pillar in the Background. (National Library of Ireland, WIL 18 [12]).