

“...or else, they *lie around*”

Time, Space and the Everyday in Post-Independence Dublin

Abstract

The overall aim of the essay is to understand the *time* and *space* of *the everyday* through a critical hermeneutical approach. Specifically, the analysis focuses on post-independence Dublin. Three theoretical conceptualisations of the everyday are discussed. Using the works of Martin Heidegger and Henri Lefebvre, an ideal everyday is conceptualised in terms of “dwelling;” the human appropriation of time and space. The concept of “dwelling denied” describes the disrupted everyday life of the modern Westphalian state. Then, a critical epistemological approach to the everyday as an existence in “non-synchronous” time and space is outlined using Homi Bhabha’s “the unhomely.” The empirical analysis has two focal points: the Magdalen Asylums and Irish emergency legislation. The investigation of the infamous Magdalen Asylums describes the everyday urban temporality as time bifurcated: While time is “quarantined” and made into an eternity for the institutionalised women progression is made a feature of the new capital. In terms of spatiality, a reading of the Offences against the State Act 1939 in relation to urban politics and policing outlines how Dublin inner-city is moulded on the troublesome Northern Ireland and made into a space of “urban terror.”

Key words: the everyday, dwelling, dublin, irish politics, time, space, lefebvre, heidegger, bhabha, urban politics

Words: 9,730

Acknowledgements

I would like express my gratitude to my supervisor Dr. Annika Björkdahl for her guidance, patience and enlightening comments. Without her encouragement, this essay would not have been what it is today.

Thank you also to Professor Dermot P. J. Walsh at the University of Kent for invaluable information on the Offences of the State Act 1939 and Dr. Aogán Mulcahy of University College Dublin for sharing with me with his interesting articles and insights on spatial politics in Ireland.

Last but not least, a thank you to my skilful proof reader Robert Farren and great friend Colm Farren for helpful comments and suggestions.

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1 Introduction

Almost a century has passed since the Irish War of Independence (1919-1922). Despite the tumultuous Civil War (1922-23) which tainted the birth of the Irish Free State, the nation is held up as a prime example of successful post-conflict transition (Lee 1989). The maintaining of peace and stability is usually linked to the centralised police authority, homogeneous population and nation-wide welfare system run by the Catholic Church (Lee 1989; 77). Freedom, peace and democracy would finally mark everyday life in Dublin, this “reflection” of Independent Ireland (Kincaid 2006; 67). Or would it? Does freedom on state level mean freedom in day to day life? Is it possible to generalise vertically, from the big picture to the infinitely small?

In *The Location of Culture* (1994) Homi Bhabha points out how politics stir in the everyday matters of life. In the end, it comes down to a question of immediate *space*: “Where you can sit, or not, who you can love, or not, how you can live, or not” (Bhabha 1994; 21). But, if we think about it, politics is also a question of everyday *time*: When you can sit, or not, when you can love, or not. In certain circumstances even: When you can live, or not. So, while a vertical relationship exists between the big picture and the small, one is not a perfect reproduction of the other. On the contrary, state politics can become distorted in the everyday. Indeed, as Hanna Arendt (1963) discovered: political evil is essentially all about the banal. Thus, national liberation, this appropriation of everyday space and time from an objective viewpoint *sub specie aeternitatis*, can be the same as oppression.

This essay aims to understand the time and space of the everyday in post-independence Dublin. Methodologically, the approach is hermeneutic. Theory and method can thus not be separated: while being an empirical investigation it is also a heuristic pursuit. The Magdalen Asylums¹, an urban network of coercive state-religious institutions for unmarried women, forms the empirical focal point for the reading of time and the everyday. The question of everyday space is addressed by reading national emergency law² and Dublin north inner city. Everyday life has long been obscured from view; not only from the national political sphere, but also from the field of research. To date, discussions on Ireland have mainly focused on the Northern conflict or Irish democratisation³. While Irish

¹ The Asylums formed a network of urban coercive institutions for unmarried mothers, female prisoners and “girl delinquents,” which continued to be in existence from the inception of the state¹ until as late as 1996 (MacInerney 1925; 60).

² Primarily the Offences against the State Act 1939.

³ For more on this, see research by Kissane (2002).

nationalism has been investigated, scholars tend to focus on unifying ideas⁴ rather than their everyday effects (Kincaid 2006; xvi). The time has come for this to change.

1.1 Aim and Purpose

The overall purpose of this essay is twofold. In the abstract, I aim to conceptualise the everyday in relation time and space. More specifically, the purpose is to understand the time and space of the everyday in post-independence Dublin. My research questions are:

- *How can we understand the time and the space of the everyday?*
- *How can we understand the time and the space of the everyday in post-independence Dublin?*

1.2 On Methodology

I will start with a few words on the fundamental methodological standpoints of this essay. This is important in order to understand the overall purpose of the text as well as any choices made in terms of theoretical concepts, structure and analysis.

The methodological approach in this essay could be described in terms of critical hermeneutics (Eisner 1998). Hermeneutics is a way of understanding: “[T]he whole in terms of the detail and the detail in terms of the whole” (Gadamer 1960; 291). The “critical” addition outlines a fundamentally ideological standpoint. As Eisner suggests, this is what makes hermeneutics into: “an art of saying useful things about complex and subtle objects and events” (1998; 3). The keyword here is “useful” (Eisner 1998; 3). Because, the purpose is to: “see and understand what they did not see and understand before” (Eisner 1998; 3). In turn, seeing and understanding a situation from a different angle provides us with a platform for action. Like Kearney points out, the critical methodology aims at producing a reading that sees beyond “the dangers of polarized thinking” (2003; 43). To see also that which is absent. Only when we see the problem, it becomes possible to deal with it.

The explicit aim of understanding the details in relation to the whole makes hermeneutics into a fundamentally holistic methodology. Theory and

⁴ Kincaid correctly points out that many scholars of Ireland have “fallen prey to its romantic image and bought into the notion of Irish exceptionalism” (2006; xvi).

method can therefore never be considered in separation. Consequently, the concepts used should never be thought of as simply “applied” to a course of events – like in the structured empirical investigation – but as a fundamental way of understanding the world. What is more, from this methodological viewpoint, it becomes impossible to discuss “levels of abstraction” in the traditional sense. Instead, as Bhabha suggests, political policy and ideas, national legislation and international relations will inevitably stir in the “banalities” of life (1994; 21). For the detail and the whole are essentially constitutive of each other.

What does it mean to read a city holistically? As Björkdahl notes, the urban is inextricably linked to the “local” (2013; 209). Therefore, the city itself provides the natural focal point for an investigation of time, space and the everyday. But the city is also a “local” in relation to the sovereign state: It is marked by “state-consolidation processes, nationalism and processes to construct national identities” (Björkdahl 2013; 213). By focusing on Dublin, it becomes possible to investigate Irish national politics and the everyday in simultaneity. Instead of repeating and rereading Westphalian boundaries, their arbitrariness can be addressed through an investigation of the urban everyday. It becomes possible to undermine the big picture by focusing the small; but also see how the national is continuously constructed in the local. Reading Dublin is a way of dissecting the Irish paradox. Because, although the Irish Free State of 1922 has been described as a successful attempt at establishing democracy, there are “neglected texts” of urban everyday life complicating this description of reality (Kinsella 2006). The aim of this essay is, as Jardine suggests: to “call these traditions to account, compelling them to bear witness to the lives we are living” (1999; 2). By searching behind the binaries of sovereign time and space in Dublin, the analysis will let us see the city anew.

1.3 Scope and Structure

Many things fall outside the scope of this essay. Although I draw on works by numerous philosophers in the text, it is not my intention to present the reader with any comprehensive discussion of their writings. This, I leave to the students of philosophy to do. As for empirical material, the scope is broad: Dublin from the time of independence in 1922, until today. Nevertheless, my empirical focus is concentrated on two distinct phenomena in relation to time, space and the everyday: The Magdalen Asylums and The Offences against the State Act 1939. What is more, the critical hermeneutical approach works to narrow down the scope. Because, by continuously reading the empirical “part” in the context of a theoretical “whole,” the focus of this essay becomes simultaneously highly abstract and fundamentally concrete.

The structure of the essay is the following. Chapter two focuses on outlining the concept of everyday life in time and space. The approach is threefold. First, everyday life is conceptualised as a *dwelling* in *time* and *space* through the works of Martin Heidegger and Henri Lefebvre. Second, the obstacles to everyday life in

relation to time and space are discussed, based on the same concepts. Third, an analytically positive concept of everyday life is outlined using Homi Bhabha's take on Sigmund Freud's *Das Unheimlich*. Lastly, some conceptual and empirical boundaries are outlined. The question of scale, the relationship between time and space, as well as the empirical cases are further discussed here.

Chapter three begins with a short historical background of Dublin followed by the analysis. The analysis is divided into two subsections. The first part, "Past is Present," elaborates on everyday temporality in Dublin after independence by investigating the Magdalen Asylums. The second section, "Here and There," discusses urban space, everyday life and emergency legislation after 1939.

Finally, chapter four features a concluding discussion on time, space and the everyday as well as some thoughts on how to proceed with future research.

2 Everyday Life in Time and Space

To dwell, to be set at peace, means to remain at peace within the free, the preserve, the free sphere that safeguards each thing in its essence.

Heidegger in *Building, Dwelling, Thinking* (1951)

The human being: the uncanniest of uncanny.

Heidegger's translation of Sophocles' *Antigone* §10

This chapter introduces the concept of everyday life. What is the essence of the everyday? Using Martin Heidegger's conceptualisation of man as a *dweller* and Henri Lefebvre's discussion of *habitation*, the first section outlines the relationship between everyday existence, *time* and *space*. Part two discusses the obstacles to the everyday, the idea of the modern everyday as "dwelling denied," as visible in Heidegger's *inauthenticity* and Lefebvre's discussion of *Pax Estática*. In the last part, using Homi Bhabha's reading of Sigmund Freud's *Das Unheimlich*, I will introduce a conceptualisation of the modern everyday in time and space that goes beyond the dialectical "negation of dwelling" initially outlined. This positive definition of the everyday – the everyday as *something* – will help us form a *critique* of everyday life.

All three conceptualisations of the everyday – the ideal everyday as *dwelling* in space and time – the negative everyday as "dwelling denied" and the modern everyday as an "unhomely" existence – are essential parts of this essay. Taken together, they form an analytical prism through which I will read everyday life in Dublin.

2.1 The Everyday as Dwelling

In *Building, Dwelling, Thinking* Heidegger suggests that "to dwell" is the most human of states (1951; 359). To be a human *is* to dwell (Heidegger 1951; 359). The act of dwelling thus captures the very essence of man, his Being. But what does this mean? And what are the wider implications for everyday life?

We might begin with the concept itself. Etymologically, the Gothic word for dwelling is *wunian*: To "be at peace," "to be brought to peace" or to "remain in peace" (Heidegger 1951; 350-51). The word for peace, in turn, is inherently

connected with the concept of *freedom* (Heidegger 1951; 351). On a purely linguistic basis, then, the argument points to an intimate connection between everyday life⁵ and freedom in relation to the surrounding environment. For Heidegger, dwelling is the activity which creates lived space while being simultaneously manifest within it. Heidegger further elaborates on the concept through the metaphor of a “journey” (1942; 21). Authentic human everyday life is here likened to a river. This ever flowing water, “locality” and “journeying” in itself, is “the abode of human beings upon the earth” (Heidegger 1942; 21). Hence, through movement in time and space, river borne dwellers determine “to where they belong and where they are homely” (Heidegger 1942; 21). Furthermore, only in a continuous encounter with the foreign, a moving into the unknown, does authentic homeliness emerge (Heidegger 1942; 21). Thus, the “fitting” everyday can be described as a making oneself at home through journeying (Heidegger 1942; 21). This everyday life of simultaneously moving into the foreign and making homely is what is “destined” to humankind (Heidegger 1942; 21).

A similar relationship between time, space and everyday life is put forward by the philosopher Henri Lefebvre (1966). Lefebvre uses the concepts of *inhabiting* and the *habitat* when describing the human everyday (1966; 123). A clear difference is made between verb and noun; to create and to be essentially disconnected from. Hence, the built environment, this “habitat,” is not the same as an *inhabited* space. The fundamental difference lies in the degree of freedom a specific environment will allow for, but also the opportunity for humans to be part of its construction in everyday life. Lefebvre underlines that the human being should always be allowed to call himself “*creator*” (1966; 124. original emphasis). This everyday “creation” of space is referred to as *appropriation* (Lefebvre 1966; 130). Similarly to Heidegger’s journey of dwelling, appropriation is the making of space, nature and biology into human property (Lefebvre 1966; 130). This notion of appropriation is furthermore extended to time. Instead of being subjects to time, human beings need to make time their own. For: “On the human scale [...] space and time become creations that can be compared with works of art” (Lefebvre 1966; 124). The ideal city, in Lefebvre’s version, is not simply an urban “habitat,” but an *oeuvre* (Lefebvre 1974; 294). It is a homely creation for inhabitants by inhabitants. It is *inhabited* time and space.

To recapitulate, human beings need to make themselves at home in *time* and *space* in order to live authentic everyday lives. We need to “persist in” or, figuratively speaking, *own* our immediate environment (Heidegger 1951; 351 and 359). We also have to meet with the foreign and make it our own. This freedom of action, freedom to be agents of creation, should form the basis for everyday life.

⁵ It should be noted that I am the one equalling “dwelling” and “authentic everyday life.” Heidegger also discusses an “everydayness” disconnected from “dwelling” (1927; 164). The two concepts should not be confused.

2.2 Dwelling Denied

If an authentic everyday life is the appropriation of time and space, what constitutes its opposite? Surely, it must be a lack of appropriation. A persistent lack of dwelling. But how does this come about?

Heidegger (1927) discusses the alienation of man from his essence. If the built environment cannot be thought of as separate from man – if “*Space is neither in the subject nor is the world in space* – what happens when we attempt to separate the two? (Heidegger 1927; 103., original emphasis) In Heidegger’s version, “*inauthenticity*” in everyday life is a result of the separation of subject and object (1927; 164). In such a situation, the “being-in-the-world” act of dwelling is made into a floating existence *beside* the world (Heidegger 1927; 49). As it happens, this is the fundamental curse of modern life. Hence, when space is measured through Cartesian coordinates, human beings become disconnected from their immediate environment (Heidegger 1951; 358). Similarly, if time is made into “historical time” or progressive time, everyday existence is no longer “in the Moment *for “its time*” (Heidegger 1927; 352., original emphasis). Instead, the everyday becomes “*futural*” or focused on the abstract past, never “historical in the grounds of its existence” (Heidegger 1927; 352. emphasis in original). Consequently, the modern everyday turns inauthentic, without self-sufficiency (Heidegger 1951; 362). In such an existence, human beings act in accordance with “*the they:*” like *one* does (Heidegger 1927; 119. original emphasis). Instead of being “oneself,” she becomes a “*they-self*” (Heidegger 1927; 121. original emphasis). In this world, the journey in time and space which brings humans to foreign shores has come to a halt. Freedom is lost.

A similar process is described by Lefebvre (1974). This crisis of everyday life is also stated to be a consequence of making *time* and *space* into external objects (Lefebvre 1974; 1). Lefebvre specifically points to the spatial domination of the modern sovereign state as a key factor (Lefebvre 1974; 319). The logic is referred to as *Pax Estática* (Lefebvre 1974; 387). In the name of security, the state creates an abstract and homogenising space (Lefebvre 1974; 387). While superficially “against any violence” such a space, in fact, becomes “inherently violent” (Lefebvre 1974; 387). It is an “imposed” space (Lefebvre 1974; 387). The state ceases to be a site of “the human condition” (Lefebvre 1968; 72). Instead of being linked to inhabiting, everyday life becomes inhabited. Citizens in *Pax Estática* become their own objects “of consideration” (Lefebvre 1968; 72). Like Heidegger’s “they-selves,” these citizens regard themselves from the outside. Thus, everyday life in the modern state turns into a “space-time of voluntary programmed self-regulation” (Lefebvre 1968; 72). A homogeneous mass of sameness, this everyday life always keeps the foreign at a distance.

2.3 Unhomely Lives

A boundary is not that at which something stops but, as the Greeks recognized, the boundary is that from which something *begins its essential unfolding*.

Heidegger in *Building, Dwelling, Thinking* (1951)

The discussion has thus far outlined “the everyday” as *dwelling* and its absence as a “crisis in dwelling.” But what are the consequences of reading the city through these terms? Although such a reading would be critical, it would not constitute a *critique*. An explicit aim of this essay is to read the everyday beyond the binaries of modern sovereign time and space, to bring forth texts which become neglected through this universalising epistemological lens (Kinsella 2006). For that we need a positive definition, in the strict analytical sense. This “crisis in dwelling” has to be defined as *something*.

Together with Heidegger, we could ask: What are the boundaries of the modern? And, following upon this: How can they be recalibrated? As R.B.J. Walker (1993) suggests in his critique of the Westphalian system, the modern state is a rather “particular” construction in terms of *time* and *space*. Discussing Thomas Hobbes’ *Leviathan* (1651), Walker (1993) describes how sovereignty is necessarily conceptualised in terms of *inside* and *outside*. Linear progress, peace and order are located within the state, whereas endless repetition, war and anarchy, reign outside its borders. Hence, the state is a delineated geographical space containing “the future” (Walker 1993; 177). This understanding of modern sovereignty is essential for outlining the relationship between *Pax Estática* and everyday life, as presented by Lefebvre. Because, like the international, “the local” is treated as either the same as the state, or as an irrelevant phenomenon in the great beyond (Walker 1993; 152). In the Hobbesian logic, the locus of everyday life must therefore be a domesticated site of progress *or* part of an international geography of repetition. In any respect, Walker suggests that: “To engage with the local is to be side tracked into the trivial” (Walker 1993; 152-153). Clearly then, there is a need for concepts of time and space with the potential to unpack this “destructive” relationship holding the everyday hostage (Lefebvre 1974; 387).

But how is this best achieved? Together with his pessimistic view of modern life, Lefebvre outlines a critical conceptualisation of the everyday as existing in the spatiotemporal “middle” (1968; 61). It is located between the “non-accumulative” rhythms of human nature concerned with mundane matters of eating, sleeping, living and dying, and the distinct boundaries of the sovereign state focused on planning and regulating the surrounding environment (Lefebvre 1968; 61). The everyday thus becomes the particular undermining every universal. A similar conceptualisation is presented by Homi Bhabha (1994). Outlining the political boundaries of everyday life in politicised space, Bhabha returns to the

Freudian concept of *Das Unheimlich* (1994; 21). In the original version, the “*unhomely*” is something that “ought to have remained...secret and hidden but has come to light” (Schelling in Freud 1919; 3). It is visible in the banality, in the trivial, in the minute details of life (Bhabha 1994; 21). It is a trace of the personal in the political (Bhabha 1994; 21). Freud himself characterised *Das Unheimlich* with mental conditions arising from a blurred sense of space and time (1919). His essay focuses on experiences of involuntary repetition, hauntedness and schizophrenia (Freud 1919; 10-11). In Bhabha’s political version, the concept is used to describe a condition springing from a sense of spatiotemporal displacement. The *unhomely* characterises an existence between “the home and the world,” the “past and present,” “the psyche and the social” (1994; 20 and 19). Hence, like the Lefebvrian concept, Bhabha’s “unhomely” points to an existence in “non-synchronous” and non-accumulative time and space (1994; 11 and 21). This is the time and space of Walker’s “trivial;” the neglected everyday of the modern world (1993; 152-153).

In summary, if we intend to read “the everyday,” to bring back that which has been repressed through the logic of *Pax Estática*, we have to read between the lines of progressive time and homogeneous space while simultaneously taking these aspects into consideration. It becomes necessary to shift focus to the “*essential unfolding*” part of modern spatiotemporal boundaries (Heidegger 1951; 356. original emphasis). Such an epistemology allows everyday life to see the “*extraordinary in its very ordinariness*” (Lefebvre 1968; 113. emphasis in original). This is where our story of the city will have to begin.

2.4 Boundaries

This section discusses conceptual and empirical boundaries. This forms an important bridge from theory to practice. The first part outlines the concept of “scale;” part two proceeds with a discussion of the approach to time and space in relation to the material and part three introduces the two empirical cases.

2.4.1 On Scale

Overall, the conceptual discussion above distinguishes three “locations”: The individual in the world; the modern sovereign state and the “local” human within-the-state. It is important to note that these “locations” should be understood of in terms of *scale*; never as distinct levels-of-analysis. The difference is essential. As True suggests, the drawing of arbitrary boundaries between different geographies, as done through levels-of-analysis, serves to “mystify” these spheres (1995; 227). Alas, this is how the everyday is reproduced as “trivial” in the first place; how the analytical vision turns blind to phenomena that are not “linear” and “distinct” (Sjoberg 2008; 478). Seeing these “locations” in terms of scale makes it possible to regard local and global, urban and national, material and individual, as

inherently connected (Sjoberg 2008; 479). This approach is in line with the holistic methodology of hermeneutics as always synthesising the part with the whole, as well as the decision to use the city as a focal point. Again we are reminded of the fundamental standpoint as formulated by Heidegger, that: “*Space is neither in the subject nor is the world in space*” (1927; 103., original emphasis). While the essay attempts to understand the everyday point-of-view of the individual, this individual is always situated in a spatiotemporal nexus. By using scale in order to read the city it becomes possible to see the arbitrariness of these spatiotemporal “locations;” how they both have an effect on, and are constructed in, the urban everyday.

2.4.2 On Time-Space

While I essentially agree with Heidegger in that one “cannot aim [...] at deducing space from time,” this will be done in the analysis (1927; 336). However, this is for purely analytical purposes. The division is not absolute. Rather, it should be regarded as an analytical “bracketing” (Gubrium and Holstein 1997; 118). Fundamentally, I believe that two distinct readings of time and space in relation to the everyday will produce a more in-depth understanding of the phenomenon at hand. Also, due to the multifaceted concepts of time and space used, there is a need for analytical clarity. A higher level of stringency can be maintained if the concepts are kept separate throughout the analysis.

In practical terms, the first section of the analysis focuses on the forgotten and endless temporality between dwelling and progression: it is titled “Past is Present.” Section two focuses on non-synchronous geographical delineations where urban and state borders overlap: this part is called “Here and There.”

2.4.3 Empirical Cases

Firstly, the investigation of everyday non-synchronous time focuses on the infamous Magdalen Asylums. The Asylums formed a network of urban coercive institutions for unmarried mothers, female prisoners and “girl delinquents,” which continued to be in existence from the inception of the state⁶ until as late as 1996 (MacInerny 1925; 60). Throughout the analysis, I draw on political debates, contemporary legislation and institutional practice, in order to understand the production of the Asylum as a locale for the quarantining of time in the middle of state progression. As always, other empirical focal points would have been possible; I could, for instance, have read the everyday temporality of Dublin suburbia after independence. However, the explicit aim of this essay is to read the previously neglected aspects of Dublin everyday lives and, as previously pointed out, the unifying aspects of Irish nationalism have already been thoroughly

⁶ This is when the state involvement in the Asylums began (DJE 2013; 166).

mapped. The distinction here is between the traditional “politics of memory” and my “politics of forgetting.” Also, it could be argued that the Magdalen Asylums could have been approached as primarily a confined *space*. While this is true, the overall most striking aspect of the Asylums was their ability to stop time; to make time *endless*. It is this particular feature that will be explored in this essay.

Secondly, the analysis of space and the urban everyday has its main focus on the Offences against the State Act 1939. The 1939 Act is a piece of legislation with the power to suspend “normal constitutional rights” while simultaneously being a part of permanent and ordinary criminal law (O’Mahony 2002; 75). The section begins with the parliamentary discussions on the Offences against the State Bill in 1939 and then draws on exceptional legislation, policing and urban politics in the 1960s and 1970s in order to understand the spatiality of the everyday in Dublin. In line with the critical approach, the urban focal point is the so-called “north inner city⁷” and citizens internally excluded from sovereign space. Legislative effects on everyday life in inner city Dublin is a neglected area in contemporary research in urgent need of address (Mulcahy and O’Mahony 2005). Despite the limited timeframe of my focus, it should be underlined that the situation described is still ongoing. My aim has been to outline the seeds of the current circumstances. Lastly, another highly interesting empirical focal point for the investigation of non-synchronous space and the everyday would have been the juxtaposition of onshore-offshore banking in the previously disadvantaged Dublin Docklands District. Yet, such a reading would have been less holistic in terms of time; it would not have captured the essence of post-independence Dublin.

⁷ The “north inner city” here refers to the area described by Kerrigan (1977): i.e. the inner city area immediately north of the river Liffey with the commercial O’Connell Street as a linking area between north and south.

3 “...or else, they *lie around*”

This chapter of the essay is divided into three sections. First, I present a historical overview of Dublin as a colonial city until the inception of the Irish Free State in 1922. This is done in order to provide a backdrop to the analysis as a whole. In “Past is Present,” I elaborate on the politics of forgetting and the everyday urban through a theoretical investigation of the infamous Magdalen Asylums. Three separate subchapters made up this section: Politics of Forgetting; Endless Time; Legislation Left for Later and Ever After. In the second part, “Here and There,” the politics of space and life in the city is discussed through the lens of Irish emergency law. This chapter is divided into the sections: Politics of Split Space; Urban Terror; An Honest Suspect and Double Vision.

3.1 Citizens of Independence

“The streets, as you pass along, speak of the foreigner and of the foreigner's power [...] we are going to start from the beginning.”

Deputy Joseph MacBride 1924, Dáil Éireann Debate

“Suddenly a new order of universal things acted upon the city.”

Fernando Pessoa in *The Book of Disquiet*

Dublin is divided by the river Liffey. *An Liphe* or *Life*, the original Irish name, refers to the plain that the river runs through (Byrne 2001; 150). On a symbolical level, then, the city was once characterised by unity. However, this was not the case for most of the last millennium. Between 1170 and 1542, a *de facto* apartheid system separated the Irish from the Anglo-Norman settlers: The Irish were housed upstream, outside of the city walls and urban jurisdiction while the Anglo-Normans inhabited the urban core (Christopher 1997). By the time of the Reformation this pattern of segregation, which had become lax over time, was again reinforced on religious grounds (Christopher 1997; 153). The divisions continued into the late colonial era. Affluent Protestant middle-classes inhabited the southern suburbs while poor Catholic workers dominated in the run-down north inner city (Christopher 1997). In this way, mundane spatial references came

to outline separate lives in the city. North and South, upstream and downstream, were worlds apart.

Just as Dublin had been a reflection of colonial divisions, the city became an important symbol of independence. The city centre formed the backdrop for conflict in the 1916 Easter Rising, War of Independence and Civil War. Throughout this time of upheaval, parts of the inner city were destroyed (Kincaid 2006; 67). As a consequence, upon the establishment of the Irish Free State in 1922, focus shifted to rebuilding the capital (Kincaid 2006; 67). Dublin became situated at the centre of “debates about power, history, memory, and the shape of independence” (Kincaid 2006; xii). Streets that spoke of “the foreigner and the foreigner’s power” now had to reflect the national unity of free Ireland (Dáil Éireann 1924). Old colonial divisions between North and South, inner city and suburbs, were to be erased. Questions of suburbanisation, new national identities and renewal of everyday urban space moved to the top of the political agenda (Kincaid 2006; 77). As Deputy MacBride underlined, the time had come to “start from the beginning” (Dáil Éireann 1924). This is also where my analysis will begin.

3.2 Past is Present

Once upon a time...and they all lived happily ever after.

R.B.J. Walker (1993; 144)

The Committee is gravely concerned at the failure by the State party to protect girls and women who were involuntarily confined between 1922 and 1996 in the Magdalene Laundries

The UN Committee against Torture 2013

Margaret Bullen was 50 years old when she died in 2003 (Ryan 2013). At that point, she had been institutionalised for 48 years (Long 2013). Almost a lifetime. Yet, that Lefebvrian “repetitive tick-tock of the clock” which turns human moments into minutes, days and years – cyclical time into linear progression – never seemed to reach the Seán Mac Dermott Street Laundry where Margaret was an internee (Lefebvre 1992; 76). Inside the walls of the north Dublin institution, time was measured in laundry cycles: It was an abstract *durée* without beginning or end (Bachelard 1950; 112). Officially, the Asylum closed in 1996. However, as Margaret’s daughter points out, her mother “died whilst still on the inside” (Long 2013).

What happened to the women of the Magdalen Asylums can be described as the politics of forgetting. However, it was a very particular kind of forgetting. In

order to properly understand Margaret's life, we have to return to the early years of the Irish Free State.

3.2.1 Politics of Forgetting

In 1925, the Dominican priest Father Humbert MacInerny raises concern about a “mighty mass of evil” infesting the streets and lanes of the new Irish capital (59). In his view, Dublin Corporation immediately had to take measures and “circumcise the evil by segregating those unfortunate characters to a secluded quarter of the city” (MacInerny 1925; 60). This, argues MacInerny, was done with great success by the Popes in Rome (1925; 60). Initially referring to criminal elements in the inner-city slums of Dublin (publicans, night prowlers, lodginghouse keepers), the article suddenly changes focus to young country girls who “gravitate” towards the city (MacInerny, 1925; 61). Unless something is done, Father MacInerny is convinced that the girls might become “lost in the underworld” and, as a result, immorality will be “broadcast” over Dublin (1925; 60). Of course, we recognise this discussion as one of religious zeal. But it also highlights an important aspect of post-independence urban politics. This emphasis on segregation highlights the struggle for *appropriation* of The City after independence: the making of time and space into human property; or not (Lefebvre 1966; 130).

Father MacInerny argues that Dublin can be saved through the isolation of dangerous urban “haunts” (MacInerny 1925; 60). He even formulates a hands-on plan: Rescue Societies, religious movements working to morally “reform” girls and arranging “respectable” parents for their children, should be able to “stop the channel that feeds the underworld” (Sagart 1922; 46 and MacInerny 1925; 61). Thus, by transforming fallen women into “distinctly respectable member[s] of society,” institutions like the Magdalen Asylums⁸ could be used to keep in check the glitches between state politics and the prosaic everyday (MacInerny 1925; 61-62). Recent statistics show that MacInerny was not the only one with this idea. The 2013 “Magdalen Report”⁹ states that the number of state referrals to Asylums more than doubled over a ten-year period after independence (DJE 2013; 166). Starting with approximately 200 internees in the 1920s, the number rose sharply to 496 in the 1930s and 516 during the 1940s¹⁰ (DJE 2013; 166). And the connection between the state and the Catholic institutions was to continue. In 1957, Taoiseach Eamon De Valera arranged a meeting with the Archbishop of Dublin, John Charles McQuaid, to discuss alternatives to prison for female

⁸ There is a sliding scale between what MacInerny referred to as Rescue Homes and Magdalen Asylums. An earlier article makes a distinction between the two, portraying the latter as a somewhat harsher place (Sagart 1922; 47).

⁹ Full title: “Report of the Inter-Departmental Committee to establish the facts of State involvement with the Magdalen Laundries”

¹⁰ The percentage of state referrals also went up from 9.4% to 23.4% from the 1920s to 1930s. However, the overall numbers of girls admitted was much higher (DJE 2013; 161).

offenders (O’Sullivan and O’Donnell 2012; 14). As a consequence, with the new 1960 Criminal Justice Act, “girl delinquents” could be interned in the north Dublin Sean Mac Dermott Street Laundry instead of serving a limited prison sentence (O’Sullivan and O’Donnell 2012; 14).

In all, Father MacInerny’s suggestion was wholeheartedly embraced in independent Ireland. The Magdalen Report shows that, for almost a century, thousands¹¹ of fallen women, “girl delinquents” and girls “wholly gone astray” were kept isolated in plain view (MacInerny 1925; 60-61 and O’Sullivan and O’Donnell 2012; 14). Instead of appearing in ubiquitous urban “haunts,” these women were institutionalised in the city (MacInerny 1925; 60). Meanwhile, the asylums came to quarantine time. Because, when the new capital was constructed according to a logic that “puts an end to conflicts and contradictions,” everyday appropriation, this making of time into human property, became severely restricted (Lefebvre 1974; 23). The end result was twofold. On the one hand, the new capital became a site of progress: an appropriate reflection of “the spirit of a free Ireland” (Kincaid 2006; 69). On the other hand, an eternity was created within the asylum walls. This is the politics of forgetting.

3.2.2 Endless Time

But how do you live a *durée*? What is it like being forgotten for those who experience it? A former internee of a Magdalen Asylum sums up her ordeal with the words: “it was repetition all the time” (DJE 2013; 941). Another describes life behind the institutional walls as “[l]aundry and prayer, laundry and prayer, laundry and prayer” (DJE 2013; 943). A third woman states: “At the laundry, it was constant” (DJE 2013; 942). What the interviewees are describing, then, is nothing like Lefebvre’s harmonious time-cycles of appropriation; that everyday temporality which, like music, is flow, time and movement and yet is founded in repetition (1968; 20). Instead, it is a detached cyclical time. A time secluded from progression; a Hobbesian repetitive anarchy of the trivial. The unconventional use of the personal pronoun by one former internee can shed some light on the situation. She says: “*we were* just mass, breakfast, silence, mass again, then work in the laundry” (DJE 2013; 935, my emphasis). They *were* laundry. In this tautological “repetition all the time” there is no room for appropriation (DJE 2013; 941). Any free act of dwelling, this “*basic character of being*,” was actively denied them (Heidegger 1951; 362 original emphasis). They were appropriated by the task itself.

The women of the Magdalen Asylums became prisoners of time. A Committee Report describes how the “complete lack of information about why they were there and when they would get out” was the single worst aspect for many of the internees (DJE 2013; 951). One girl states that she thought she was there “forever” (DJE 2013, 952). Another describes how she “seen all these older

¹¹ The Magdalen Report states that 11,198 women were interned between 1920 and 1996 (DJE 2013; 161).

people beside me, I used to cry myself to sleep” (DJE 2013; 952). This was not just a feeling. For women like Margaret Bullen, it was reality. While some were released one day without warning, others were buried in local cemeteries¹² (DJE 2013; 955 and Culliton 1996). Consequently, any decisions concerning everyday life, both fundamental and banal, were denied them. This “when you can sit, or not; when you can love, or not; when you can live, or not,” was regulated by a minutious schedule. Returning to Lefebvre, the Laundries favoured a temporality of “productive labour time” while reducing the “living rhythms” into “localized gestures” (Lefebvre 1974; 408). Remaining for the women was only the monotonous repetition of laundry and prayer, laundry and prayer, laundry and prayer. Thus was everyday life for the “fortunate cases” cared for by Rescue Societies (MacInerny 1925; 60).

3.2.3 Legislation Left for Later

But in more practical terms: How could time be made so endless? Both the 1922 Constitution of The Free Irish State and the 1937 Constitution of Ireland grant the citizens certain basic rights. For instance, Article 6 in the 1922 Constitution states that the “liberty of a person is inviolable” while Article 40.4 in the 1937 Constitution underlines that “no citizen shall be deprived of his personal liberty save in accordance with law.” Despite this, the Laundries continued to operate until Margaret Bullen’s Seán Mac Dermott Street Laundry closed down in 1996 (O’Sullivan and O’Donnell 2012b; 254). And, by simple necessity, beyond this date¹³ (Long 2013).

Of course, a key could be this: “save in accordance with law.” What about the law? The Magdalen Report underlines that a “significant part” of the legislation regulating entry to the Laundries was carried over from the British period (DJE 2013; 71). One peculiar and central piece was the 1908 Children Act¹⁴, by which a police officer was empowered to take an ill-treated child to a “place of safety,” defined as “any *workhouse* or police station, or any hospital, surgery, or any other suitable place” (Children Act 1908, Section 131. my emphasis). Consequently, while the Parliament of the Irish Free State had purposefully and symbolically abolished all workhouses, this institutional “stamp of British rule in Ireland,” The 1908 Act was kept in its entirety (Powell 1965; 3 and Ryan 2012). Thus, many young girls were transferred to work for no pay in the Magdalen Asylums from unbearable conditions in their own family or from Industrial Schools run by the new state (DJE 2013; XVII). The Act only applied

¹² In numerous cases, bodies of internees have later been found buried without death certificates or records (DJE 2013; 795). However, it has not been properly established whether certificates never existed or they were simply lost (DJE 2013; 795).

¹³ As Long (2013) described, after a lifetime in the institution her mother was not “qualified” for any other life.

¹⁴ There were a number of other Acts not discussed here which also regulated the entry routes to the Laundries. One was the Criminal Justice Act 1960, written together with the Archbishop of Dublin (O’Sullivan and O’Donnell 2012a; 14).

until the age of 16 (Children Act 1908). However, an additional clause stated the need for limited supervision beyond this age: initially until 18 or 19 and, after 1941, until 21¹⁵ (DJE 2013; XVII). Despite these precise regulations of time, it is clear from the women's stories that they were never informed. Therefore an internment that should be of limited duration could continue for a whole lifetime.

Not only did the Irish Free State resuscitate the despised workhouses by strategically *forgetting* to eliminate any necessary legislative room for their existence; but also the State *forgot* to inform the internees of the explicit temporal boundaries of existing laws. As a consequence, the women of the Magdalen Asylums became "temporally deferred" (Bhabha 1994; 73). They were left for "some other time" in a situation in which their agency was reduced to localised gestures of monotonous repetition; a situation which would "prove very difficult to leave" (Smith, O'Rourke and McGettrick 2012; 9).

3.2.4 Ever After

The official memory of the Asylums only resurfaced in 1993, upon the exhumation of eighty nameless bodies belonging to former internees of the Dublin High Park Convent Laundry (Culliton 1996; Little 2013). Until that point, the women had been caught up in "non-synchronous time" (Bhabha 1994; 11 and 21). The past, then, is not such a different place after all: quite the opposite. It can be argued that Freud's *Unheimlich*, this phenomenon which "ought to have remained...secret and hidden but has come to light," finds a prime example in the Irish Magdalen Asylums (Freud 1919). As we have seen, it was a particularly active politics of forgetting that created this slavery *over time* and *in time*. This: "constant recurrence of the same situations, things and events" (Freud 1919; 10).

The women of the Magdalen Asylums can be described as victims of a *Pax Estática* (Lefebvre 1974; 387). While independent Ireland managed to keep the ceasefire agreement and build democracy, this came at the price of social peace: a peace related to *appropriation* and *dwelling*. As Walker points out, whenever democracy is described as a linear progression from tyranny to freedom, something gets lost along the way (1993; 144-145). As soon as a "once upon a time" is inevitably and immediately followed by "and they all lived happily ever after" conflicting temporalities are ignored, buried and forgotten (Walker 1993; 144). Consequently, when urban "evil" was quarantined in order to create a capital worthy of Free Ireland, everyday life became circumscribed (MacInerny 1925; 59-60 and Kincaid 2006; 69). Through Father MacInerny's "statesmanlike" approach, new nationalist lines of segregation were drawn upon the old colonial ones (1925; 60). Instead of separating Irish and Anglo-Normans, Protestants and Catholics, great efforts were put into dividing respectable Catholic women from "girl delinquents," "fallen women" or "feeble minded" unmarried

¹⁵ The report highlights that approximately 60 percent of all women entered the asylums between 14 and 21 years of age (DJE 2013; 173).

mothers in need of “protection from the law” (Devane 1924; 55). What had been a *divided colonial city* turned into a *disjoined unity*, a capital suffering internal fragmentation while being externally unified, essentially upholding a “logic of stability” that is itself destructive (Lefebvre 1974; 387-388). Hence, while the Asylum internees were in a situation that difficult to leave; so too were the citizens at large, living their lives in Father MacInerny’s “statesmanlike” time (Lefebvre 1974; 387-388 and 1925; 60). As opposed to living through a repetitive temporality of forgettance, these citizens were engaged in active “self regulation” (Lefebvre 1974; 23). They became, not dwellers coming into their own through temporal journeying, but homogenous “they-selves” always moving with the masses (Heidegger 1942; 21 and Heidegger 1927; 130). Consequently, while the regulated “tick-tock of the clock” never reached Margaret Bullen, this temporality permeated post-independence Dublin at large.

This is how post-independence politics produced a bifurcated temporality of the everyday. In the next section, we will move on from time to space. Beginning with a parliamentary discussion in wake of the Second World War, the relationship between emergency legislation, urban politics and spatial policing of the Dublin inner city will be dissected and explored. We shall see how the “politics of split space” made *here* into *there*.

3.3 Here and There

“In murder you have something solid, something substantial. At least you have the corpse to start with.”

Deputy Patrick Cogan debating The Offences against the State Bill in 1939

Useful things have their *place*, or else they “lie around”

Heidegger in *Being and Time* (1927)

On the 5th of April in 1976, Edward Noel Kelly was arrested under Section 30 of the Offences against the State Act 1939 (Walsh 1999; 307). Three days later Kelly had admitted to membership of an “unlawful organisation” and, in a written statement, confessed his involvement in a mail train robbery (Walsh 1999; 306-307). Based exclusively on this confession he was sentenced to 12 years in the high-security Portlaoise prison (Walsh 1999; 307). Kelly was later to withdraw his confession. Extensive medical evidence pointed to the fact that he had been severely beaten in custody (Walsh 1999; 307).

Noel Kelly was to serve four years in prison for a crime he did not commit¹⁶ (Walsh 1999; 308). Although Kelly’s case is well-known, he is not the only victim of the 1939 Act. This section explores the relationship between emergency legislation, urban politics and Dublin space in order to understand how *here* can be made into *there*; how thousands of people, like Kelly, could end up being *taken for someone else*.

3.3.1 Politics of Split Space

Debating the Offences against the State Bill in 1939, the Fianna Fáil Taoiseach¹⁷ Éamon De Valera stated that the fundamental purpose of the proposed legislation “is to protect the freedom that has been won, to see that this community will *act as a whole*” (Dáil Éireann 1939. my emphasis). But what does it mean to act as a whole?

In literal terms, the Taoiseach is referring to Article 28.3.3 of the 1937 Constitution which stipulates that “in time of war or armed rebellion,” whether in Ireland or geographically outside, laws “for the purpose of securing public safety and preservation of the State” cannot be the object of constitutional challenge (Walsh 1989; 1101). Ironically, then, the 1937 Constitution is constructed around

¹⁶ Kelly received a Presidential Pardon in 1992 (Ferriter 2012; 335).

¹⁷ Irish Head of Government

its own exemption, the “curtailment of rights [...] which it simultaneously brings to life” (O’Mahony 2002; 77). In symbolical terms, the Taoiseach evokes the division of the Irish community during the Civil War; a split in “the whole” that De Valera had personally witnessed with the executions of his former comrades-in-rebellion in 1922 (Murphy 2010; 120). Of course, the two aspects are intimately connected. In the Taoiseach’s view, those threatening the “independent, sovereign, democratic State” were the losing side of the Civil War: The anti-Treaty Irish Republican Army (IRA) (Dáil Éireann 1939). Hence, the divisions visible in the 1937 Constitution are, on the one hand, connected to a factual *spatial split* between Northern and Southern Ireland and, on the other hand, an *internal division* in terms of pro- and anti-Treaty forces. In relation to this, “acting as a whole” means the elimination of the internal threat from the IRA while simultaneously upholding the division between North and South. This is the elaborate politics of split space.

In 1939, a state of emergency was declared due to heightened IRA activity¹⁸ (Walsh 1989; 1101). The emergency was not lifted until 1976 when, as it happens, it was immediately renewed due the ongoing “Troubles”¹⁹ (Walsh 1989; 1101 and Mulcahy 2002; 284). Despite this extraordinary state of affairs, it is the permanent legislation passed in relation to these declarations which has proved to be the most detrimental in terms of civil rights (Walsh 1989; 1101 and Mulcahy 2002; 284). The Offences against the State Act, 1939, while in essence separate from the state of emergency, sprang from the same inverted logic in relation to the Irish Constitution. Thus, the 1939 Act can be used to suspend “normal constitutional rights” while simultaneously being a part of permanent and ordinary criminal legislation (O’Mahony 2002; 75). When in use, Section 30 of the 1939 Act allows for a forty-eight hour²⁰ detainment based only on “honest suspicion” (Walsh 1989; 1111). What is more, this suspicion can be unrelated to any particular criminal act. Membership of the IRA, an “ongoing state of being,” would be grounds for arrest (Walsh 1999; 310). Clearly, this new legislation enhanced the powers of the Garda Síochána to “stop, question, arrest, detail, search and seize” suspects (Walsh 1989; 1101). Still, as Deputy Patrick Cogan underlined in 1939, The Offences against the State Act required nothing “substantial” to bind a suspect to a crime (Dáil Éireann 1939). Indeed, as we shall see, he was right in his premonition that “peaceful law-abiding citizens” might be affected by this Act (Dáil Éireann 1939).

¹⁸ It should be noted here that this activity primarily took place outside of the Republic in Northern Ireland, although some forces operated from the Border Areas in the South (Walsh 1989; 1101).

¹⁹ Mulcahy points out that this state of emergency only ended in February 1995 after the paramilitary ceasefires (2002; 284).

²⁰ The exact time of maximum detention has changed over the years; when Kelly was arrested the Act allowed for a seven day detention (Hederman Report 1999; 69).

3.3.2 Urban Terror

In 1977, following the bloodiest years of the conflict in Northern Ireland, a District Justice announces that he is afraid to walk through the centre of Dublin (Kerrigan 1977). The same year, state television RTÉ²¹ broadcasts a documentary on “Dublin’s so-called no-go areas” (Kerrigan 1977). North of the Liffey, the “urban jungle” of crime has started to encroach on the central O’Connell Street (Kerrigan 1977). Current-affairs magazine *Magill* later refers to this period as an era of “crime hysteria” (Kerrigan and Shaw 1985). Throughout the 1970s, The Republic of Ireland, and the capital in particular, was portrayed as “drowning in crime” (Kerrigan 1984). What is more, the violent condition of the capital was often connected to the Northern Ireland conflict (Mulcahy 2002; 281-282). The official “Report on Crime” for 1975 states that “violent criminal activity” from the border areas has “undoubtedly influenced crime” all over the Republic of Ireland: Crime was spreading south (Garvey 1976; ii). Nevertheless, while Dublin crime rates indeed rose significantly throughout the 1960s, 70s and 80s, there is little evidence of any great “spill over” from the Northern conflict²² (Mulcahy 2002; 283). On the contrary, the bulk of paramilitary activity in the Republic, primarily political murders and armed robberies, took place along the border (Mulcahy 2002; 282). Nevertheless, the fact remains: A District Justice is afraid to walk through the City Centre.

This is 1939 politics of joint space, put in action. Like Father MacInerney’s fear of “urban haunts” half a century previously, the “crime hysteria” came to serve as a basis for a new city politics (1925; 60 and Kerrigan 1977). The divisions of the Civil War, the rising levels of urban crime and the ongoing rebellion in Northern Ireland all came together to form an official understanding of reality. Dublin correspondent Niall Montgomery illustrates this unfortunate coupling in his statement on inner-city housing development: “For centuries the Irish have hated the city. They’re always trying to burn it. Now they actually live in it and think they own it” (Montgomery 1962; 101). Yet, they will always “want to blow up the Four Courts again”²³ (Montgomery 1962; 101). Apart from, as Montgomery suggests, constructing away this permanent threat by architectural means²⁴, the new politics of joint space became used to police the “clogging dirt” of the urban Irish machinery (Crinson 2006; 647). Through a juxtaposition of space, a double-space act where “there” is made “here,” the Troubles were made part of urban space in the Republic. What was more, when a general urban disorder was defined in terms of paramilitary activity, emergency

²¹ “Raidió Teilifís Éireann” or Radio and Television of Ireland

²² Mulcahy points out that apart from the 1974 loyalist bombings in Dublin the spill over from the North on the city was negligible; only a “small proportion” of armed robberies might have been directly related to paramilitaries and these primarily took place in border areas (2002; 283). The comparatively high crime rates in Dublin were overwhelmingly linked to property crime (Mulcahy 2002; 282).

²³ The Four Courts was destroyed, both during the War of Independence and the Irish Civil War.

²⁴ Montgomery ironically argues that the response of the architects would be: “for that site you want an aluminium changidarhage with paraboloid hyperboles, and a podium” (1962; 101).

measures and legislation created for extraordinary circumstances entered city space (Kerrigan 1984 and Walsh 2013). In all, then, Independent Deputy Patrick Cogan was proven right. The Offences against the State Act 1939 would get a chance to cause much “uneasiness, annoyance and bitterness” among urban citizens (Dáil Éireann 1939). In all, more than 27,000 people were arrested between 1972 and 1989 using the Act (O’Leary and McGarry 1996; 47). Between the years of 1981 and 1986, the rate of persons charged was as low as eleven percent and never exceeded twenty percent²⁵ (Walsh 1999). Consequently, the great majority turned out to be “peaceful law-abiding citizens” (Dáil Éireann 1939).

3.3.3 An Honest Suspect

The Offences against the State Act 1939 allows arrests on the “subjective, honest suspicion” on the part of a Garda Síochána Officer (Walsh 1989; 1111). But who is considered an “honest” suspect?

We can start with the body of the accused. The old practice of *habeas corpus*,²⁶ which guarantees that no person should be deprived of their freedom save in accordance with the law, creates an intimate link between legislation and the human body (Legal Information Institute 2013). In its essence, the concept dictates the relationship between legislation-as-sign and legislation-as-practice. So, when Deputy Cogan argued that, in a murder trial, at least “you have the corpse to start with,” he appealed to this connection between the symbolic “body of evidence” and the legitimate “body of the accused” (Dáil Éireann 1939). Half a century later, Noel Kelly’s defence lawyer illustrates how The Offences against the State Act, 1939 has perverted this ancient writ. In desperation, he asks: “must we wait for a corpse before reasonable doubt emerges?” (Ferriter 2012; 335). Of course, the corpse referred to is Kelly’s own. Hence, following this emergency legislation, it appears as if the body of the accused and the body of evidence have become one and the same. Evidence is a “state of being” on part of the accused (Walsh 1999; 310). An honest suspicion, then, is singularly based on the appearance of the subject: his or her bodily presence.

But the body is also a body in space. Lefebvre points out, signs are “the doubles of things:” they are replicas which, despite being immaterial, can “possess” reality up to a “certain point” (Lefebvre 1974; 135). With a locus in space, this “certain point” also becomes the very foundation of power and authority (Lefebvre 1974; 135). As such, space has the potential to become a manifestation of a “terrible point” (Lefebvre 1974; 135). A “milieu of prohibition” (Lefebvre 1974; 134). Of course, this discussion is particularly true of the law. In our case, The 1939 Act connects legislative signs with certain boundaries in space, national territorial and urban, as well as the boundaries of individual

²⁵ Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, rarely more than one arrest per year led to prosecution (Mulcahy 2002; 284).

²⁶ Latin: “you may have the body”

bodies. As we have seen, what the emergency legislation is particularly concerned with is the rigid coupling between the two. In Heideggerian terms, citizens must “have their *place*” (Heidegger 1927; 95. emphasis in original). As Kerrigan (1977) mentions, the reporting of “Dublin’s so-called no-go areas” only started when the problem reached O’Connell Street. There had always been an “acceptable level of vandalism” in certain, carefully delineated, parts of Dublin: In those neighbourhoods referred to as the “slum” (Kerrigan 1977). Yet, when citizens started to cross these spatial boundaries they became *honest suspects*. Because there could be no such thing as: “coming out of the ghettos to rip apart the fragile fabric of civilised society” (Kerrigan 1977). Individuals can not be allowed to “lie around” (Heidegger 1927; 95).

So, this is how urban citizens became the *doppelgangers* of northern paramilitaries. First “disassembled,” then “reconstructed” in accordance with the legislation, a whole clientele of individuals were made into legitimate threats (Lefebvre 1974; 134). Working class neighbourhoods, traditionally more inclined to vote for the Sinn Féin²⁷, became singled out by the Gardaí (Kerrigan 1977). Throughout the 1970s, the northside Gloucester Place and nearby Seán Mac Dermott Street were appropriated by “squad cars” and Garda Officers “[w]atching, chasing, lifting” (Kerrigan 1977). Moving nearer to the City Centre, crossing the invisible line, these individuals were policed back into their “own” territory. Finally, since moving in “suspicious” circles was ground for offence, unemployed members of the Sinn Féin often became guilty-by-association (Kerrigan 1984 and Walsh 2013). Picked up *en masse* on “dole day,” young members of the party were “arrested, held and released” after the legal forty-eight hour period passed (Kerrigan 1984). This is the politics of split space, put into practice.

3.3.4 Double Vision

In the 2002 Hederman Report,²⁸ Walsh argues that The 1939 Act²⁹ “needs to be justified by very convincing arguments” (DJE 2002; 256). When routinely applied by the Gardaí to non-violent citizens who disagree with the current state of affairs, the legislation undermines the democratic state it is meant to protect (Walsh 1999; 256-257). No wonder, then, that the Irish citizens have little sense of “personal ownership” of the legislation (O’Mahony 2002; 78). Indeed, as O’Mahony states: “The most eloquent declaration of rights and the noblest of ethical principles, even when embodied in a Constitution, mean little, if in practice the police harass the innocent and guilty alike” (2002; 78). Hence, although initially created to manage a division in space and the polity the Irish Constitution has, through its

²⁷ As opposed to the terrorist IRA, Sinn Féin is a legitimate political party.

²⁸ The Hederman report was produced by The Committee to Review the Offences against the State Acts from 1939 to 1998, appointed by the Irish Government.

²⁹ Speaking here of Section 30.

inherent vagueness and potential to be side lined, served to perpetuate this same division. As a consequence, what might have been a legitimate emergency after the state of Independence and in the wake of the Second World War has become a permanent characteristic of Irish politics.

As Walker suggests, the securing of the state through emergency legislation becomes a technique for “patrolling” of internal boundaries (1993; 151). By acting “as a whole,” following Taoiseach De Valera’s advice, divisions are created within and between people, neighbourhoods and regions (Dáil Éireann 1939). Paramilitary conflict *outside* becomes “urban terror” *inside*. Simultaneously, everyday life in the city turns into *violence*; this particular kind of violence which disassembles and rebuilds individuals according to abstractions (Lefebvre 1974; 302). While the no-entry label to “Dublin’s so-called no-go areas” concerns the middle-classes, individuals “indigenous” to the North Inner City are not readily allowed outside its borders (Kerrigan 1984). Acts of deviance are punished. Gardaí officer stand ready, “[w]atching, chasing, lifting,” as soon as the problem “spills over” (Kerrigan 1977). Once again, we are reminded of Bhabha’s statement: “Where you can sit, or not, who you can love, or not, how you can live, or not” (Bhabha 1994; 21). In the end, this is what politics comes down to. State politics, urban regulations and everyday life blend together in the politics of split space.

Finally, if the proper human condition journeying on a river through the foreign, a meeting in the “locality of the other;” then, these urban policing practices has transformed the flowing waters of the urban *oeuvre* into a rotting lake (Heidegger 1942; 49).

4 Concluding Words

Wherever you go, I shall be there always,
Up to the very last one of your days,
When I shall go to sit on your stone

Alfred Musset in *The December Night* §344, 1833.

So, what is the time and space of the everyday? My reading of Dublin after independence, this “once upon a time” of national, urban and everyday politics, has underlined the consequences of introducing new political universals. For the women of the Magdalen Asylums, independence could hardly be described as freedom. Instead, the internees were given a life *outside* of time; marked neither by everyday dwelling nor state progression. Similarly, the population of the north inner-city saw their lived space being policed in the name of peace. Instead of being part of the De Valerian national “unity,” these citizens turned out to be the exclusion of this rule; because statist order is maintained by a regulation of temporal and spatial banalities, of people *lying around*. As a former Magdalen internee summed up her agonising experience: “You had to leave Ireland to escape them” (DJE 2013; 951-952).

When Lee (1989) describes Ireland as a successful post-independence state he never considered everyday life of these citizens. Like so many others, he kept his eye on the big picture. Nevertheless, as we have seen, Westphalian boundaries and forced state progression compromise dwelling. Thus, the everyday forms a spatiotemporality striving to be in line with “the they,” while always running the risk of being deemed a threat. But as Lefebvre suggests, it is possible to see the “*extraordinary in its very ordinariness*” (1968; 113. emphasis in original). A recalibration of the epistemological lens is a first step in this direction: We should understand political “unity” as having its foundation in the banal. Alas, this forms the basis for democratic thought. Still, it is easily forgotten.

A remaining and pressing question is how the situation in Dublin could be maintained. This “how” addresses the question of legitimacy. Because politics is not only about state power and exclusions, it is also about how the equilibrium can be achieved. While the women of the Magdalen Laundries were *forgotten*; there were also those who *forgot*. The Magdalen internees were all the family members and neighbours of someone (O’Sullivan and O’Connolly 2012b; 269). Furthermore, in terms of urban everyday spatiality, the 1939 Act is still in use. Despite overwhelming criticism in the 2002 Hederman Report, very little research has been dedicated to this urgent topic. The situation in Dublin inner city is still ongoing.

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