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Trapped in Time: Examining the Academy's Temporal Confines in the Works of James Joyce and Sally Rooney

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Dark Academia

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"History, Stephen said, is a nightmare from which I am trying to awake" (Ulysses 28).

"But there it is: literature moves him. One of his professors calls it 'the pleasure of being touched by great art'" (Rooney 71).

Introduction

As I sit down to write this paper, I am plagued by the fear of merely repeating the wisdom of scholars who have come before me. Especially as someone who is, like many others, infatuated with the work of James Joyce, I cannot help but feel that I am an epigonic figure in the terms of Joyce scholarship. The feeling fills me with doubt of my own abilities, and I plan to use this paper as a tool to figure out why this is. In answering this question, I turn to Sally Rooney, a prominent Irish author in our contemporary society, who in a sense is also an epigonic figure as she is writing one hundred years after Joyce himself. By placing these two authors in conversation, I begin to question how they each process and represent the anxieties of original production. How do these representations compare to each other considering Joyce is writing from a Revolutionary-era Dublin, while Rooney writes of a post-Celtic Tiger recessionary Ireland? Both authors indicate the universal intrusion of time, academic time more specifically,

as an origin for these anxieties. However, one would think that education would be free of temporal constraints, and so how does the academy play a role in the instillment of capitalist time?

Strict temporal routines have become a primary facet of capitalist control. In his book *The Clocks Are Telling Lies: Science, Society, and the Construction of Time*, Scott Alan Johnston makes it clear that "it is not physics that determines time, but politics" (3). Although a universal time was created with a sense of convenience in mind, its position as a social construct has fed into the upkeep of capitalism. Because of this, anxieties surrounding time jumped to the forefront of the early 19th century cultural imaginary. A preoccupation with the structures and functions of time soon became a prevailing fixation for literary modernists. Joyce, in particular, grapples with these societal developments by deconstructing the experience and perception of time. I will first turn to "Araby," a story in Joyce's *Dubliners* (1914), as it aptly exemplifies Joyce's position on human and artistic mechanization through temporal structures. He recognizes time as a means of supporting the capitalist agenda to mechanize human workers in the name of efficiency. Furthermore, art is degraded to a mere commodity, and the consumption of it is restricted by monetary value and limited temporal windows.

Using "Araby" as my background for understanding Joyce's stance on capitalist time and production, I will examine his *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916) which will be the primary focus of this paper. This künstlerroman follows the artistic and mental development of Stephen Dedalus, a budding artist, from a small child to a young adult. Because one associates education with freedom of thought, it may come as a surprise that the academy is an origin for our indoctrination into universal time. Oili-Helena Ylijoki writes of this phenomenon in her paper "A temporal approach to higher education research;" "Internalization of the norms of clock

time belongs to the hidden curriculum of education, as at lower levels schoolchildren learn to adapt to externally formulated timetables with regular and fixed slots for arrival, lessons, breaks, eating and other school-day activities" (144). Stephen experiences exactly that. From a young age, the academic calendar is ingrained within his psyche, and so he continues to be haunted by these temporal restrictions. He aspires to create original work, and yet he cannot seem to because of his constant preoccupations with the past.

By turning to the anxieties of the early 20th century, one can see how these concerns have remained pertinent to our contemporary society. Rooney meditates on the implications of creating art in late-stage capitalism in her novel *Normal People*. Her plot focuses primarily on the intense and complicated relationship between two Irish young adults, Marianne Sheridan and Connell Waldron. The dynamic between these two is defined by constantly shifting power imbalances. Using her Marxist ideals, Rooney examines the roles of intellectuals operating under capitalism as Marianne and Connell establish themselves within society. Originally, Joyce reveals the ways in which artists registered the rising imposition of public time within schools which subsequently contributed to the mechanization of art and an emphasis on original production. Then, Rooney helps us to see that these anxieties are still present in what Ian Kidd has labeled our "culture of speed" (339). In his paper "Corrupted Temporalities, 'Cultures of Speed,' and the Possibility of Collegiality," Kidd argues that our society has become one that is "driven by the values of efficiency, and productivity" (Kidd 339). Like the literary modernists, we are afraid that humans have been mechanized with the sole motivation of efficient production which leaves no time for creative thought and innovation. In response to these concerns, we have placed a great amount of pressure on a need for originality, but Rooney proposes that instead of

resisting the past, we should let it in to our artistic processes. By doing so, we will return to a love for art which will be the driving force in our contemporary success.

"Araby" as a Framework for Mechanization and Temporality

To understand the mechanization of humans, one must first examine the functions of capitalism which are best exemplified by the rise of the assembly line. This mode of production was developed to improve efficiency which Siegfried Giedion studies scrupulously in his book *Mechanization Takes Command: A Contribution to Anonymous History*. Giedion pays close attention to Frederick Taylor, a mechanical engineer, who is best known for his development of "scientific management" or "Taylorism." Of scientific management, Giedion writes, "Everything superfluous must go, for the sake of efficiency … The human body is studied to discover how far it can be transformed into a mechanism" (98). Taylor studied factories to improve their efficiency which led to his conflation of the worker's body and the machine. If an action took up too much time, the process would be changed, until it was completed in the most efficient manner. A critic of this system would turn to Karl Marx who denounced this practice for its desire to make humans "an appendage to the machine" (*Communist Manifesto* 60). Within these modes of production, there is a loss of humanity because capital is championed over the individual. The proletariat is then eternally linked to their ability to produce because their livelihood is dependent upon their contributions to capitalism (Marx 59). The bourgeoisie have created a class structure that is reliant on human mechanics, and so they have trapped the workers within this system. This entrenched association between the worker and their function then becomes integral to the definition of their character; the human is forever labeled by their mode of production.

In “Araby,” Joyce contemplates on the mechanization of humans under capitalism which leads him to the commodification of art. The short story follows a young narrator’s infatuation with the sister of a friend, and this unrequited love culminates in his attempt to buy her a gift at the Araby bazaar. Early in the plot, the narrator recounts going to the market with his aunt, and he experiences “flaring streets, jostled by drunken men and bargaining women, amid the curses of laborers, the shrill litanies of shop-boys who stood on guard by the barrels of pigs’ cheeks, the nasal chanting of street-singers” (Joyce 22-23). Joyce is establishing a cacophonous environment by highlighting the slew of sound with the word choices of “flaring,” “shrill,” and “chanting.” This in conjunction with the movement of “jostled” and the occupational labels of “laborers,” “shop-boys,” and “street-singers” paints the metropolis as a place of speed that is fueled by the labor of its workers. All these addressed individuals feel the sense of pressure to contribute to the system, and so they work at a fast and crazed pace to capitalize. Similarly, as the narrator starts his journey to the bazaar, he perceives “The sights of the streets thronged with buyers and glaring with gas recalled to me the purpose of my journey” (Joyce 26). The diction of “thronged” to describe the amount of buyers present and the reference to gas, once again, evokes a busy and industrialized image of the metropolis. In both moments, Joyce acknowledges that art and artistic thought can be created from this environment. Among the overwhelming sounds of the street in the initial quotation, one can find the “chanting of street-singers,” an artistic creation. However, it is also an artistic product that is driven by capitalist intentions; the street-singers, a title that diminishes their humanity, are chanting with the purpose of being paid for their art. The latter quotation accomplishes a comparable objective, as the bustling city reminds our narrator that he is set to purchase art from the bazaar. After observing a mass of “buyers,” the narrator recognizes his hope to consume art, and to do so, he must also be a buyer within this society. Not only have

humans been reduced to mere cogs of capitalism, but as a result, their art and intention to consume art has become commodified.

To analyze the temporal background of "Araby," one must first recognize the novel intrusion of a united, global time as a fundamental concern for the early nineteenth century while also being a topic of contention for the Irish. Before the mid-1800s, all countries and cities were operating under their own construction of time, but "The invention of the railway and the telegraph almost singlehandedly created a newly interconnected world, where suddenly the time differences between cities mattered" (Johnston 4). Separate countries and communities of people were operating solely based on their own understandings of the world, but as global connection became possible, we began to function as a comprehensive human collective. This unified existence relies on a shared temporal structure because it determines how we travel to one another and communicate. And so, after much deliberation and negotiation, the Observatory of Greenwich became "the standard meridian for longitude" and time (Johnston 92). Joyce comments on this unifying transition in "Laestrygonians," the eighth episode of *Ulysses*, through Leopold Bloom's observations of the Ballast-Office time ball; "Now that I come to think of it that ball falls at Greenwich time. It's the clock is worked by an electric wire from Dunsink" (*Ulysses* 137). In this moment, Bloom is attempting to tell time with the time ball because he cannot see the clock that is on the other side of building. He is confused and is in fact wrong about the difference between the time ball and the clock. Deborah Warner dissects this seemingly insignificant detail in her paper "The Ballast-Office Time Ball and the Subjectivity of Time and Space," and she explains, "Since its installation in 1865, the Ballast Office time ball had dropped every day at 1:00 P.M., mean solar time as determined at the Dunsink Observatory, which was located on a hill about four miles northwest of the center of Dublin" (861). Warner is

providing much needed context that allows the reader to see that the time ball operated on Dunsink or Dublin time as opposed to Greenwich Mean Time (GMT). The Ballast-Office clock, on the other hand, seems to have been telling Greenwich time which was about twenty-five minutes ahead (Warner 862). Because of this discrepancy, it makes perfect sense why Bloom would be unaware if the time ball was "correct" or not. The lag of Dunsink time also points to the establishment of Irish lateness, as Irish time literally and figuratively fell behind that of the British empire.

Joyce begins to explore the temporal confines of capitalism through this concept of Irish lateness. Nearly all the plot pursues the narrator's determination to reach the bazaar before it closes, and it is through this facet of the narrative that Joyce grounds his argument of temporality. The narrator is already running late because his uncle, who is responsible for giving the narrator money, is behind on his return home from the bar. Then, the narrator's lateness is inflated when the bazaar train is delayed as well. Joyce writes, "I took my seat in a third-class carriage of a deserted train. After an intolerable delay the train moved out of the station slowly" (26). A schedule was designed specifically for the bazaar, and the emptiness of the train indicates the narrator's in adherence to that temporal structure. His fracture from timeliness is than amplified by the train's delay – an outcome of functioning under Irish time. As identified by Warner, the notion of Irish lateness was being established at this point, and the narrator is evidence of that. He is late because his uncle is drinking, a common Irish stereotype created by the British, and because the Dublin train is not functioning as it should. It seems that our narrator will be unable to contribute to capitalism through purchase because Ireland's failed temporal system is hindering his ability to do so.

As the story reaches its conclusion, the narrator does in fact arrive to the bazaar too late, and Joyce utilizes his untimeliness as a means of indicating Judeo-Christian time as the origin for capitalist time. When the narrator begins to explore the empty bazaar, he "recognized a silence like that which pervades a church after a service" ("Araby" 26). The narrator is using this simile to identify himself as an epigon of the bazaar, but he is also creating a direct correlation between the purchasing of commodities and a religious ceremony. Joyce is recognizing the newfound sanctity of capitalist production and the roots of the modern temporal system in Judeo-Christian Time. Johannes Fabian contextualizes this process in his book *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes Its Object*; "Decisive steps toward modernity … must be sought, not in the invention of a linear conception, but in a succession of attempts to secularize Judeo-Christian Time by generalizing and universalizing it" (Fabian 2). Fabian is referencing a collective push for the incorporation of Judeo-Christian Time into everyday life to inspire modernity. This is precisely what occurred as these religious interpretations of time champion a sense of sequency, and as Joyce shows us, this concept of temporal linearity was incorporated directly into capitalism.

Additionally, Joyce examines the temporal restrictions placed upon the consumption of art, a consequence of the commodification of creation. As the narrator explores deeper into the bazaar, he finds that there is only one stall that is still occupied by shopkeepers. However, they are counting their money instead of selling, and so when the narrator approaches "[the shopkeeper's] voice was not encouraging; she seemed to have spoken to me out of a sense of duty" ("Araby" 27). This woman seems to have no desire to contribute to the machine of capitalism, and yet she does so anyway because she owes it a "duty." She functions in this way separate from any individual choice, but because as a shopkeeper, she is required to contribute

capital to the system. However, it is her lack of encouragement that dissuades the narrator from purchasing anything, and so the shopkeeper fails in her role. Furthermore, her failure is indicative of the larger temporal systems that are at play in this moment; she is unencouraging because the stall is closed. She only sells her products during the allocated hours, meaning the narrator can only consume art within a specific temporal window. The dysfunctionality of Irish time keeps him from this window, and so the story ends artlessly for the narrator. Joyce, on the other hand, successfully creates art through the narrator's failings. It seems that this temporal system is capable of thwarting newness, while also pressuring it into existence. Since art has been commandeered by capitalism, the creation and enjoyment of it has been commodified and restricted by temporal constraints which then bleed into the academic institution.

A Portrait, Capitalism, and Academic Time

Stephen's story commences with the fragmentation of art that he was introduced to as a small child, and this beginning depicts an angst-free Stephen which we will never see again. The narration commences in the thoughts of a young Stephen with the famous line, "Once upon a time and a very good time it was there was a moocow coming down along the road and this moocow that was coming down along the road met a nicens little boy named baby tuckoo" (*A Portrait* 3). The repetition, the lack of punctuation, and the childish phrasing of "moocow," indicates Stephen's youth to the reader. His father is telling him this story, so he uses babytalk to ensure his small son can understand him. Similarly, "baby tuckoo" is Stephen's childhood nickname, and so this direct incorporation into the fairytale is his first introduction into the world of art. Later in life, Stephen will become stressed by his father's attempts at storytelling, but at this point he is too young to care. He is temporally distant from his futures anxieties of lineage. Stephen's mind then jumps to "*O, the wild rose blossoms / On the little green place.* He sang that

song. That was his song" (*A Portrait* 3). These lyrics belong to H.S. Thompson's Lilly Dale, yet young Stephen claims full possession over it. He believes that because he sings it, he owns it which is demonstrated by Joyce's use of the possessive "his." His confidence in this custody stands as a stark comparison to his future psyche. As we will see later, Stephen embodies the role of the epigon, since he is riddled with anxiety over his inability to create originally. Yet, he is not born with these anxieties, and instead is indoctrinated into them through his time in academic institutions.

As he ages, Stephen grows aware of the ways in which the sequential reality of time has seeped into his academic life. He sits in geography class at Clongowes feeling overwhelmed by the amount of content he needs to memorize, and "he opened the lid of his desk and changed the number pasted up inside from seventy-seven to seventy-six. But the Christmas vacation was very far away: but one time it would come because the earth moved round always" (*A Portrait* 12). Stephen is counting down the days till Christmas vacation, which he wants to come quickly, but he understands that it will always arrive eventually because of the earth's rotation. By having this countdown that uses specific numerical values, Stephen is directly interacting with the sequency of time. He is beginning to make sense of it as well by taking the rotation of the earth into consideration. In this way, Joyce is laying out the scientific reasoning that supports the arrangement of our temporal system, but he is also pointing to a theme of cyclicality by having Stephen focus on the roundness of the earth's path. This understanding is then pushed further on the next page when Stephen's thoughts read, "First came the vacation and then the next term and then vacation again and then again another term and then again the vacation. It was like a train going in and out of tunnels" (*A Portrait* 14). Joyce is advancing this argument of linear cyclicality by bringing it directly into Stephen's academic calendar. The repetition of the words

"and," "then," and "next" create a timeline that designates the exact temporal locations of each of these events in a sequential pattern. However, the repetition of "vacation," "term," and "again" complicate this, as it suggests that the same events are repeating continuously. Stephen's comparison of his calendar to a train is a return to a thought he has earlier in the novel, but his connection between the two cognitions furthers Joyce's proposed linear cyclicality. A train is trapped to the track which travels linearly in the same way that Stephen is confined to the predetermined academic calendar. However, like Stephen, the train will continuously restart on this exact same path. Joyce understands that scientifically and literally time is sequential, but the way society, and academia specifically, are organized causes us to experience time concurrently.

Stephen's confinement to the academic calendar is demonstrative of capitalism's ability to instill a strict unified time through children and schools. Johnston addresses the implications of a unified temporal system while also registering the methods of its dissemination. In his fifth chapter "Teaching Time, Using Time" he writes, "A particularly western, Greenwich-centered time-sense was inculcated through curriculum and through the very structure of the day. Schools were the instruments by which the norms of public timekeeping were cultivated, shaped, and challenged" (Johnston 158). Johnston is clearly identifying the western academic system as a leading transmitter of Greenwich time. This is a lucrative practice, as it immerses children within these rigid timetables. So, when these students are ready to enter the work force, they are prepared to operate and produce in a Tayloristic fashion. Stephen's observations of the academic calendar at Clongowes pertain to the structure of the school year and the breaks that divide it, but later in life, when he has become a teacher himself, Stephen witnesses the formulaic nature of everyday time in academia. While Stephen is trying to maintain the attention of his students with a riddle, "A stick struck the door and a voice in the corridor called: Hockey!" (*Ulysses* 22). The

auditory intrusion of the stick and voice have interrupted the learning process because they are maintaining the rigid temporal structure of this academic institution. This is particularly evident through Joyce's diction of "struck" because it evokes images of a clock striking a certain hour. By organizing the school day in this manner, the academic institution establishes strict temporal windows which restricts one's access to education outside of those time slots. Also, one can assume that the voice in the hallway is another student, and so it seems that the students themselves are at the forefront of enforcing these schedules. They have all become so accustomed to following these enforced agendas which will enable a seamless transition into the workforce.

Within these confines of academic time, Joyce utilizes religious time to register the way we experience private, simultaneous time, and understands this as a framework that connects all humans to their lineage and each other. While on an annual school religious retreat, Stephen endures a Catholic sermon that irreparably alters his conscious. The retreat leader describes that on God's Judgement Day, "Time is, time was but time shall be no more" (*A Portrait* 121). This erasure of time allows God to completely take over the body of man while also giving him the ability to see every sin committed in one's life. The use of "is" and "was" is indicative of the sequential nature of time, and by demolishing this, Joyce is allowing his readers to see beyond this perception of time and into the innerworkings of time itself. The retreat leader continues on to say that on Judgement Day "The soul of every human being that has ever existed, the souls of all those who shall yet be born, all the sons and daughters of Adam, all are assembled" (A *Portrait* 121-122). By having this follow the erasure of time, Joyce is suggesting that the impositions of linear time prevent humans from living as one in a single place. This is displayed through his inclusion of souls that have already existed and ones that are yet to be born.

Abstractly, Joyce is proposing that the human soul transcends time and is merely held back by the confines of timelines. In a more literal sense, his attention to "Adam" serves as a reminder that all humans are connected by our origins of Adam and Eve. Joyce then carries this idea into his writing of *Ulysses*. As a young adult, Stephen stands on Sandymount Strand, and he observes two midwives carrying a bag which he imagines contains a dead infant. In response to this, he thinks, "A misbirth with a trailing navelcord, hushed in ruddy wool. The cords of all link back … Hello! Kinch here. Put me on to Edenville" (*Ulysses* 32). Here, Joyce is directly connecting the timeline Stephen occupies to the one of Adam and Eve through an imaginary phone call to "Edenville," a stand in for the Garden of Eden. The emphasis on the "navelcord" and the phrase "cords of all link back" makes the argument that a person's biological connection to their mother is what connects all humans to Eve, the universal mother. This then asserts that all humans are functioning together, as one, regardless of temporal location.

Although these constructions of time may be abstract, Joyce makes it clear that these figurative connections resonate in the lived anxieties of artists. This idea enters the narrative when Stephen visits his father's medical school and

> On the desk before him he read the word *Foetus* cut several times in the dark stained wood. The sudden legend startled his blood: he seemed to feel the absent students of the college about him and to shrink from their company. A vision of their life, which his father's words had been powerless to evoke, sprang up before him out of the word cut in the desk (*A Portrait* 95).

Stephen interprets the carving of "foetus," as the great artistic act of these past students because of the word's ability to evoke their presence. The specific word choice of "foetus" elicits an association to childbirth which fuels Stephen's anxieties of lineage. At this point in the plot, his

father has been telling him stories about his own time in school, but his words have not been powerful enough to make any lasting impact on Stephen. He wishes to create in the same way the past students had, but he fears this is impossible because he is biologically connected to his father and not those students. Because of his lineage, Stephen believes that his destiny is determined by the failings of his relatives. Stephen feels meek and incapable compared to the students of the past, and he fears he will be unable to set himself apart from the timeline that has been predetermined for him.

As Stephen processes these anxieties of his inability to be figures from the past, Joyce reminds us that within this system, academia is merely reproducing the same student with each incoming class. The retreat leader highlights the importance of said function. The narration reads, "And still as the years roll by … the memory of the great saint is honoured by the boys of his college who make every year their annual retreat" (117). Joyce is emphasizing the linear and progressive nature of time, as the priest remarks on time "rolling by." However, he also mediates on the insignificance of each of these groups of boys that change with each coming year. Stephen is no different from these "boys" that have come before him, and the ones that come after will be no different either. In the same way that all humans are connected to Adam and Eve metaphorically, Stephen is connected to all the past students. Within the academic institution, no one can be considered special, Stephen included. Placing this on to the timeline, one can see how time moves forward but also backwards which makes it impossible for Stephen to escape the legacy of those who have come before.

Stephen starts his artistic career with optimism, but these unrelenting temporal connections suggest that he will never achieve originality. When Stephen decides that he wants to be an artist, he announces in his thoughts, "Yes! Yes! Yes! He would create proudly out of the

freedom and power of his soul, as the great artificer whose name he bore, a living thing, new and soaring and beautiful, impalpable, imperishable" (184). In this moment, Stephen realizes that he wants to be an artist of original work; however, this realization is oxymoronic. Stephen believes that the freshness and beauty of his future work will be powerful enough that it will both be figuratively alive and able to fly. However, he frames this desire of original creation, in the shadow of someone who has already come before him. When Stephen references "the great artificer," he is alluding to Daedalus, the great architect in Ancient Greek mythology. Stephen refers to Daedalus as the "name he bore," but this is also the name given to him by his father. Once again, Stephen is unable to break his bonds to his paternal lineage, yet in this moment he is blissfully unaware. Similarly, Joyce repeats "Yes!" which is a signifier of Stephen's epiphany, but it also symbolizes the repetitive nature of Stephen's work. It seems as if he is going to merely recreate the art that has come before him.

As Stephen ages and becomes preoccupied with his future, the narration reveals that he will never escape the control of the church and academy. Due to the fear incited within Stephen, he becomes a devout Catholic for a short period of his life, but his future as a reverend leaves him predicting that "It was a grave and ordered and passionless life that awaited him" (*Portrait* 174). Joyce's description here of religious devotion serves as an antithesis to artistry; it lacks everything needed to create true art. The diction of "grave" and "passionless" suggests that there is no emotion to be had in religious faith, and one can argue that art cannot be created without emotion. Then, the choice of "ordered" brings the conversation back to the strict temporal structure that Stephen is raised in academically, and he understands that to work in the church means to continue following this time regiment. It is important to remember that, as Fabian demonstrated, Stephen's strict academic calendar originated in Judeo-Christian Time. Stephen

soon thereafter has an artistic epiphany. The narration proclaims, “He was destined to learn his own wisdom apart from others or to learn the wisdom of others himself if wandering among the snares of the world” (*Portrait* 175). Stephen concludes that he must only learn from himself and separate himself entirely from the institution. The proximity of this statement to the previous quote makes it clear that Stephen is only able to escape the confines of time and the church if he devotes himself to art. Concurrently, the nature of Stephen’s epiphany argues that the only way Stephen can create art is if he directly goes against the church through a focus on the “snare” or sin. That being said, Joyce begins the sentence with “he was destined” which is indicative of a higher power. Stephen is determined to leave the church, and yet it does not seem like he will ever fully be able to leave it behind. Like the eternal influence of the Catholic church, the temporal structure of the academy has become sacred, and Stephen will forever be haunted by its constant intrusions.

Sally Rooney within the “Culture of Speed”

Turning to Sally Rooney, one can see how the anxieties surrounding regimented academic time are still very much alive in our contemporary society. Joyce illustrates the origins of these anxieties through his continual references to daily academic schedules. He provides an additional example in *A Portrait* when Stephen, as a university student, takes his morning walk and becomes lost in his thoughts. His mind slowly begins to drift back to the classroom which induces awareness of his temporal location; “What day of the week was it? He stopped at a newsagent’s to read the headline of a placard. Thursday. Ten to eleven, English; eleven to twelve, French; twelve to one, physics” (192). As he has done previously, Joyce calls attention to the regimented structure of learning. This regimentation requires certain fields of study to be limited to defined temporal windows; Stephen can only study English, French, or physics during the

allotted time slots. Rooney then takes this temporal preoccupation a step further by organizing the plot of *Normal People* in line with the academic calendar. Each new section begins with a disclaimer of where it falls temporally in relation to the previous chapter. Within these sections, Rooney transcends linear temporality, and like Joyce's characters, hers experience various timelines at once. Although these two authors are writing from different time periods, the focus on the rigidity of time remains pertinent to both of their societal contexts. Joyce writes of a revolutionary Ireland that saw the rise of capitalism and industrialization, while Rooney writes amid late-stage capitalism during the throes of Ireland's post-Celtic Tiger recession. In her paper "Sally Rooney's *Normal People*: the millennial novel of formation in recessionary Ireland," María Amor Barros-Del Río states, "Within a short period of time, Irish people enjoyed one of the richest economies in the world, suffered an economic collapse and the drastic restrictions that followed" (176). By placing her novel within this tumult, Rooney captures the unease that emerges from widespread financial instability. The Irish, at this time, were intensely focused on establishing and sustaining a living, and this concern vastly impacted the ways in which they behaved under capitalism and, in turn, temporally. As evidenced earlier through Taylorism, there is an immense pressure placed upon human workers to contribute capital to the system, but it is impossible to produce if there are no jobs available. Rooney utilizes Marianne's resistance to the system to reveal the temporal oppression that capitalism weaponizes within the academic institution. Whereas Connell's character provides a peak into the anxieties that surround the job market post-graduation and critique of the deduction of writing to a mere method of profit.

In an echo of Joyce's commentary on the rigidity of academic schedules, Rooney critiques surveillance and temporal control within the educational institution. Marianne is initially characterized as rebellious; she does not fit in amongst her peers, and she deliberately

tries not to. She renounces the expectations of her school, and when the narration enters her perspective, the text reads,

> It seemed so obviously insane to her then that she should have to dress up in a costume every morning and be herded around a huge building all day, and that she wasn't even allowed to move her eyes where she wanted, even her eye movements fell under the jurisdiction of school rules (12-13).

Marianne is determined to dissect these protocols, and in doing so, she accurately portrays the academy as having capitalist objectives. Rooney's diction of "costume" and "herded" reference a loss of individuality within the education system. By enforcing uniforms, or "costumes", schools are generating an identical student body. Then, the indistinguishable students are required to follow a strict schedule. The specificity of "herded" compares the students to animals, further wiping them of any sense of temporal agency. Marianne is then demeaned additionally because she is punished for looking out a window. In this moment, she loses control over her own body which is resemblant of the ways in which laborers are mechanized. By undermining their sense of humanity through regimentation, the academy is preparing its students to function within a capitalist system, and it is this regimentation that they are haunted by.

As the novel continues, Marianne remains persistent in her suspicion of the functions of our society. During a summer break, Marianne is unable to spend time with her friend Joanna because of their opposing schedules. And so, to stay in touch, they talk over the phone. During one of these phone conversations, the two discuss Joanna's job, and Marianne asks, "if she finds it strange, to be paid for her hours at work – to exchange, in other words, blocks of her extremely limited time on this earth for the human invention known as money" (Rooney 112). While Marianne was in high school, she focused on the ways in which her days were controlled by a

regimented schedule, but as she is aging, she sees how her time has become monetized. One must sell their time to the work force to make a profit. Rooney's identification of money as a "human invention" points to the deliberate construction of societal expectations while also questioning time as another "human invention." I would argue it is, but Marianne goes on to say, "Time consists of physics, money is just a social construct" (Rooney 112). Marianne is right by saying that science lies behind our understanding of time, but what she fails to recognize is that our perception of time is in fact socially constructed. The universal establishment of time founded the commodification of temporality, and so our days are controlled by rigid schedules that determine when we contribute capital.

Connell's anxieties surrounding the job market post-graduation characterize the university as a preparatory institution for capitalist production. When Connell is discussing Trinity College with his family, his financial situation intrudes on his thought process. In this moment, he thinks, "it's not like English is a real degree you can get a job out of, it's just a joke, and then he thinks he probably should have applied for Law after all" (50). Connell's doubt is reflective of a prominent anxiety held within academia which is a concern of struggling financially after leaving the institution. Many are under the assumption that an English degree will not be helpful in the job market, and this is why Connell labels it as not a "real degree" and a "joke." Law, on the other hand, could have provided Connell with more financial stability, and so he favors it in this moment. The comparison created between these two areas of study reveals that success under capitalism is a driving force in the decisions of students regarding their field of study. One cannot always merely study what they enjoy and produce what they want because they need to take capital into consideration. Although Rooney does not mention time specifically in this moment, it is important to consider the quick window that is allotted for students to decide

what they want to study in school. Within a short period of time, students are required to make a decision that can determine their future financial success. The close connection between the university and job prospects reveal that we are not learning for the sake of knowledge but being prepared for the work force.

Regardless of Connell's anxieties about whether he made the right decision to study English or not, he begins to create, and it is in these moments that Rooney investigates how time impacts the artistic process. Connell is rewarded a scholarship at Trinity which allows him to travel and experience art, and it is on this trip where we see him start truly creating. This art can be found in the emails he sends to Marianne. His course of writing them morph into an artistic process, as "He's started drafting them on his phone in idle moments, while waiting for his clothes in a launderette, or lying in the hostel at night when he can't sleep for the heat" (Rooney 162). The key detail of this moment is Rooney's focus on the idea of "idle moments." Through this term of phrase, she is addressing the concept that art has become a practice that is only for liminal spaces. The regimentation of our day by the academy and the work force inhibits our ability to fill the day with art, and so we can only create when we are not preoccupied with producing. However, Connell transcends times when he writes; "Time softens out while he types, feeling slow and dilated while actually passing very rapidly, and more than once he's looked up to find that hours have gone by" (Rooney 162). Rooney understands art to be an escape from the restrictions of temporality, an echo of Stephen's constant disconnect to public time, but she makes it clear that the only way to complete art is outside of the system. Because capitalist temporality is so rigid, the artist can only create between designated times of production, but once they are able to create, they can transcend the timeline.

The process of writing emails inspires Connell to create, but he succumbs to the opinions of the future. He begins to keep track of story ideas in a little grey journal, but "He finds himself crossing things out in his journal as if he imagines some future person poring over it in detail, as if he wants the future person to know which ideas he has thought better of" (Rooney 162). In this moment, Rooney is tackling "the future," which is a facet of temporality that Joyce seems to concentrate less on. He worries about the intrusions of the past, while Rooney and Connell worry how art will be perceived in the future. She understands the future though in the same way that Joyce understands the past because she is recognizing that time happens simultaneously. It is clear through both these authors that temporal anxieties play a key role in the artistic process, and so artists will be forever influenced by the people who come before and after them.

Rooney's depiction of the contemporary publishing industry shows how the book as an art form has been commodified and corrupted by capitalism. During Connell's years at Trinity, he attends a book reading event that bores him tremendously and causes him to realize the death of publishing. Of his initial reaction to the reading, Rooney writes, "Everything about the event was staid and formulaic, sapped of energy" (Rooney 225). This is supposedly an artistic event, and yet it seems completely devoid of anything that could support a creative environment. It is boring and structured in a way that sounds scientific, generating a lethargic space, the antithesis to creativity. This is because the publishing industry champions profit over artistry. Connell observes, "all books were ultimately marketed as status symbols, and all writers participated to some degree in this marketing. Presumably this was how the industry made money" (Rooney 228). By labeling books as "status symbols," Rooney is illustrating the contemporary practice of utilizing literature as a means of social capital as opposed to appreciating it as an art form – a behavior that Connell consistently recognizes in his classmates. Instead of writing with the

intention of spreading information, authors are producing in the hopes of capitalizing. This corrupts the fundamental understanding of the novel as an art form, and like the art being sold at the Araby bazaar, books have become mass-produced, vacant of true artistry.

In support of the commodification of literature, Connell's experience publishing his own work reveals how time plays a key role in the monetization of the written word. When asked to submit his short story for publication, Connell immediately feels self-conscious of his abilities as a writer. Because his disbelief in himself grows, "In time he began to believe it had only been published in the first place because Sadie was lacking material for an upcoming deadline" (253). This moment captures Connell's self-degradation perfectly, but more importantly it brings time into the equation. Rooney's reference of the "upcoming deadline" places a temporal expectation on artistic production. Similar to how Joyce places artistic consumption within a strict timeframe in "Araby," Rooney argues that deadlines restrict the act of creation to a specific and short temporal window. Although Connell's story is worthy of publication, his internal monologue is indicative of the possibility that poor work can be published just to meet a deadline. Instead of championing the artistic process, emphasis is placed on the mere existence of a product. It is in this way that art is governed by the calendar and the expectation of deadlines.

Woven within her critique of capitalism, Rooney uses references to Joyce to propose that there is hope for the contemporary creation of true artistry. After Connell mitigates an argument between Marianne and her boyfriend Jamie, Rooney writes, "Marianne is wiping her nose on the back of her hand. The cherries hang around them gleaming like so many spectral planets. The air is light with scent, green like chlorophyll. They sell chlorophyll chewing gum in Europe, thought Connell" (185). The prose here is quite reminiscent of Joyce for a multitude of reasons. First, Rooney's attention to the gross yet human behavior of Marianne wiping her nose evokes Joyce's

preoccupation with the biological. She follows this description with a comparison of "cherries" and "spectral planets" which is similar to Joyce's line in "Ithaca;" "The heaventree of stars hung with nightblue fruit" (*Ulysses* 573). Rooney's choice of allusion is thought provoking here because Joyce formatted "Ithaca" as if it was a catechism, and so Rooney is imitating an author who is already mimicking a classic form of writing. Her relation to Joyce continues as she concludes the passage with free indirect discourse, a narrative style popularized by Joyce that allows third person narration to dip into the thoughts of characters. Rooney's creative decisions are significant here because she provides an example of the utilization of the past. Instead of focusing on the anxieties of original production, she manipulates these pressures and creates with respect and allusion to the past which actually does allow her to create something original. The same can be said of Joyce who draws from catechism writing to create originally. Through her use of Joyce, Rooney reveals that the secret of creating under capitalism is to not resist the past.

Conclusion

Rooney serves as the perfect example for what Jason Farago proposes in his *New York Times* article "Why Culture Has Come to a Standstill." Farago examines our collective anxiety pertaining to the lack of culture that we worry is not being created in the contemporary. To understand our sense of cultural stagnation, Farago tuns to the components of literary modernism that fueled the movement's uniqueness. He concludes that the modernists championed novelty which is quite evident through Stephen's constant attempts to escape the past. Like Stephen, we feel as if we cannot create anything new in this contemporary age. However, Farago does not think newness is necessary to create original art; "There is no inherent reason – no reason; this point needs to be clear – that a recession of novelty has to mean a recession of cultural worth" (par. 26). Rooney's allusions to Joyce make Farago's argument evidently clear. She calls on a

seminal figure in literary modernism to enhance her own work, and by doing so she created a renowned piece of literature.

Both Rooney and Joyce, identify the academy as the origin for our adherence to temporal structure which in turn leads to an obsession with originality. The two authors work together to reveal the innerworkings of capitalism, and they reveal that time plays a key role in controlling the work force. After the establishment of a universal temporal system, time began to control most aspects of everyday life, especially education. The academy serves as a dominating force in the dissemination of time since it indoctrinates students into a rigid structure, haunting them forever, in preparation of their futures of capitalist production. However, the instillment of this strictness restricts one's ability to create art since we simply do not have space within the day. Regardless, we still feel as if we need to produce original work because capitalism requires constant production, but we are overwhelmed by the people who have been there first. Humans have become mechanized to produce, and so we are losing sight of appreciating artistic creation for what it is. We do not need to be focused on whether our artwork is novel or not but on whether we enjoyed making it.

A month ago, I started this paper fearful that I was going to write something unoriginal which would in turn deem my work unsatisfactory. I was devoted to writing about Joyce and time, but the scholarship surrounding him is incredibly daunting simply because there is just so much of it. As a result, I felt discouraged and doubted my ability to create anything noteworthy. But as I sat with these feelings, I became fascinated with my obsession of originality as opposed to having pride in a piece of writing that focused on a subject I am passionate about. It was in this moment of my writing process where I began to find a sense of comfort in Rooney and Joyce because they were able to accurately portray my anxieties surrounding originality. Then, as my

mis-matched, word-vomited paragraphs began to come together, I realized that I was having fun, and so I channeled all of my energy into ensuring I was enjoying myself. From this, I do believe I created originally, but I never could have done that without the scholars that came before me. As I continue my journey through academia, I will keep Rooney's advice close and maintain my connections to the past. I am no longer terrified that I am contributing to a stagnant contemporary culture because I now know that we are going to be just fine.

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