

‘Skatterlings of a Stone’: *Finnegans Wake* and the Moment of Philosophical Critique in Megalithic Archaeology

*My head is full of pebbles and rubbish and broken matches and bits of glass
picked up 'most everywhere*

James Joyce, letter to Harriet Shaw Weaver, 24 June 1921

According to Max Ernst, when one brings ‘distant realities together on an apparently antipathetic plane (that which in simple language is called “collage”) an exchange of energy transpires, provoked by this very meeting’ (Ernst 1948: 19). In this conjunctive spirit I interpret aspects of the Neolithic of Atlantic Europe (c5000-c2000 BC) through the lens of a novel, *Finnegans Wake* (Joyce 1939), written by an author described as the foremost modern exponent of the ancient textual mode of Midrash (Levitt 1992: 58), James Joyce. In turn I interpret his novel, dialectically, through this archaeological optic, complying with Theodor W. Adorno’s injunction to ‘treat profane texts like holy scripture’ (Jopp and Martins 2018: 681).¹ However, ostensible immersion in this dialectic of open scriptural interpretation of archaeology and Joyce’s ‘book of Dumlat’ (*FW* 30.10),² his Talmud in reverse, is *in actuality* the occasion to reflect on the ‘theological moment’ in the thought of Adorno and Walter Benjamin, a moment intermittently punctuating *Finnegans Wake*. Appearing to refract a dialectic of ‘revelatory regulation’ (Raviv 2008: 168) whereby the greater the ‘inward concealment’ of concealed truths ‘the greater their outward revelation’ (Moses Cordovero, *Sefer Gerushin*, entry 52, p. 62, quoted in *ibid.*), what Adorno called ‘the coded character of our theology’ in which ‘our concepts are hidden’ (quoted in Naishtat 2019: 47-48) is ‘all the more destructive for being hidden’ (Benjamin 1931, quoted in Kaufmann 2001: 151). These cryptotheological traits are what Agata Bielik-Robson identifies as the ‘Marrano characteristics’ (Bielik-Robson 2014a: 191) of a critical enterprise which is cloaked in the language of philosophy, the ‘Greek wisdom’, but is directed against the untruth of ‘the totality of identical definitions’ (Adorno 1973: 144).³

Returning the gaze

To persist with the metaphor of refraction, and focus ‘scriptural commentary’ intended to activate shifting constellations of Archaeology, Literature, and Philosophical critique,⁴ I construe ‘the lazily eye’ (*FW* 293.11) formed by the ‘ALP diagram’ on page 293 of *Finnegans Wake* as a thought-image, which – to invert an attribute of Guy Debord’s central conceptual device, the Spectacle – ‘concentrates all gazing and all consciousness’ (Debord 1983: Para.3) within this text. In part, a secularisation of ‘the eye of the world, whereby the Absolute sees Its own works’ (Bakhtiar 1976: 11), it is characterised by Debord as the projection of human powers into a transcendent realm, which takes on the form of the Spectacle (Russell 2021:

76), the social organisation of appearances in modern capitalist society. Implicit in such an inversion is the aspiration to reverse the perspective of the very structural totality the Spectacle is intended to define – as one interpretation of Walter Benjamin’s messianism puts it, the ‘radical destruction of the world of images’ consists in their dialectical reversal (Desideri 2016: 186). Although the thought-image at the core of *Finnegans Wake* is not identical with the ‘Eye of God’ or Debord’s Spectacle, it can still constellate thinking around these and other themes and draw attention to the biblical ban on making images of God (Exodus 20: 4-5), ‘the prohibition on the image’ (*bilderverbot*) as it has been employed by Adorno and Max Horkheimer as the ‘awareness that the world is appearance’ and therefore does not represent the ultimate reality (Jopp and Martins 2018: 679). This hidden element of the critique of Benjamin and Adorno, what Horkheimer called a ‘Judaism undercover’ (Bielik-Robson 2019a: xi), gives their ideas a critical and methodological force indispensable for disintegrating the pantheistic unity of a more-than-allegorical spectacular totality, derived from a kabbalistic cosmic drama with its own implicit critique of pleromatic orderings of society, of which Debord’s Spectacle describes but one.⁵ Instead, by contriving a retreat into the geometric figure displayed in Joyce’s text, this monadic form condensing ‘Allspace in a Notshall’ (*FW* 455.29) is cast as the resistant fragment or experiential core that subverts the false totality of spectacular domination.⁶ As such, it implies a sensory compartment – or, at least, the cognitive invocation of a desirable sensory compartment – that goes beyond the duality of spectator/spectacle, anticipatory of some *intervention* – intended or not – into what is immediately presented as natural or pre-given, effecting a messianic denial of phenomenality in the now, complementary to the critique of the spectacle.⁷

Hence, the diagrammatic ‘elementator joyclid’ (*FW* 302.12) in Joyce’s reproduction of the first proposition of Euclid’s *Elements*, on page 293 is configured here as a *miniature model* to stage the operation of Adorno’s and Benjamin’s ‘inverse theology’.⁸ Within the almond-shape enclosed by the two overlapping circles, ‘illegible airy plumeflights’ (*FW* 119.15) inscribe the ‘indwellingness’ (*FW* 488.2) of the characters, Anna Livia Plurabelle (ALP), and her daughter, Issy.⁹ Each articulating dual aspects of the *Shekhinah*, the ‘immanent category of the Divine influence’ in Judaism (Karasick 1999: 114), in which feminine potencies in God ‘attain their fullest expression’ (Scholem 1965: 104), their unstable shekhinic configuration – ‘entwined of one or atoned of two’ (*FW* 488.3) – is prefigured by Molly Bloom in *Ulysses* (Joyce 1922). Symptoms of a force that made social and sexual revolution possible (McGee 2001: 277), these ‘fragments of the feminine sublime’ (Verstraete 1998) become ‘dialectical images’ that ‘embody the dialectical nature of historical desire’ (McGee 2001: 277). As such, I present them as expressive of the ‘spiritual experience’ (*geistige erfahrung*) that Adorno sought within the apparent ‘coherence and continuity of the whole’ (Foster 2007: 73): fragmentary, precarious critical moments resonating with Benjamin’s messianic concept of ‘experience that accompanies one to the far reaches of time, that fills and articulates time’ (Benjamin 2003: 331).¹⁰

The Marrano characteristic, ‘which at the same time betrays and covers its traces’ (Bielik-Robson 2014a: 294), applies particularly to Adorno, more reluctant than Benjamin to confess his religious indebtedness, his later works conveying ‘a distinctive pathos of the Hebraic prophet who preaches to the strayed hosts in the midst of the wilderness’ (ibid.). This parallels a quality of Shem the Penman, Joyce’s alter ego, the ‘semi-semitic serendipitist’ (*FW* 191.2-3) who writes ‘for the laugh of Scheekspair’ (*FW* 191.1-2) – for the love of the ‘shekhinic pair’ – ‘bespaking the wisherwife’ (*FW* 66.15-17), his mother, ALP, ‘the truly divine element in revelation, the immense *aleph*’ (Scholem 1965: 31). The silent breath imbued with the aura of pure language, inexpressible in conventional speech, she is condensed geometrically on page 293, ‘*qua* our arc of the covenant’ (*FW* 507.33). As ‘paradismic perimutter’ she ‘expense herself as sphere as possible... on the bend of the unbridalled’ (*FW* 298.27-30). In itself ‘more than the community could bear’, only ‘the prophet was empowered to communicate the meaning of this inarticulate voice to the community’ (Scholem 1965: 31), a prophetic calling undertaken by Joyce, whose ‘books were not to be taken as mere books, but as acts of prophecy’ (Ellmann 1959: 562, in Purdy 1982: 207).¹¹

Benjamin’s montage historiography of ‘wreckage upon wreckage’ (Benjamin 1968a: 249) elicits too a kind of ‘mosaic philosophy’, its dislocative logic recognisable in Joyce’s ‘grandest gynecollege histories’ (*FW* 389.9) and a prefigurative ‘collage aesthetic’ in the Neolithic. In a book where ‘litterish fragments lurk dormant’ (*FW* 66.25-26), Joyce’s wordplay – echoing the way, in Baroque allegory, ‘language is broken up so as to acquire a changed and intensified meaning in its fragments’ (Benjamin 1998: 208) – releases qualities Adorno perceived in ‘foreign words’, points at which ‘a knowing consciousness and an illuminated truth break into the undifferentiated growth of the aspect of language that is mere nature: the incursion of freedom’ (Adorno 1992: 289, quoted in Weigel 2013: 170). Such freedom disrupts the ‘requirement of clarity’ which imposes ‘a futile demand on language’ asking something ‘language cannot grant in the immediacy of its words and sentences – something it can grant only, and fragmentarily at that, in their configuration’ (Adorno 1994: 106). ‘False clarity is only another name for myth’, defined by ‘dominant conventions’ which ‘the art, literature and philosophy of the present have to satisfy’ (Adorno and Horkheimer 1979: xiv). Acknowledging the idea of *separation* in Jewish theology (Bielik-Robson 2014a: 238), I attend to discontinuous particulars detached from *Finnegans Wake*’s ‘continuarration’ (*FW* 205.14) rather than readings incorporated to the idea of *participation* (Bielik-Robson 2014a: 238), integral to ‘general concepts’ of the kind that consider Joyce’s novel a ‘history of the world as nature’s continuum’ (Cope 1981: 108). Scriptural interpretation, extended to ‘the testament of the rocks’ (*FW* 73.32-33) of archaeology, enacts an ‘exuberant subjection of antique elements’ (Benjamin 1998: 178), a “Marrano” technique of inscribing Jewishness’ (Bielik-Robson 2014a: 315) into ‘skatterlings of a stone’ (*FW* 73.34), in a ‘collideorscape’ (*FW* 143.28) which would, ‘in destruction, still be superior to the harmonies of antiquity’ (Benjamin 1998: 178-179).¹²

To present ALP's concentrated figural form as 'a living centre of reflection', a 'limit-value' whose 'rigorous self-limitation' is the necessary principle which drives 'the suspension of all limitation' (Benjamin 1996b: 156), recapitulates the metaphysical scheme elaborated in different ways by Benjamin, Adorno and Joyce, generating a 'moment of contingency' (ibid.) that bequeaths the 'ruin of all space' (*U* 15.4245),¹³ a residue of 'unreconciled matter' that 'resists any attempt at unanimous interpretation' (Adorno 1973: 144).¹⁴ The kind of thinking imposed by such broken multiplicity, immanent to this exegesis, confronts an ontological interpretation of Neolithic archaeology, which I consider as a form of 'spiritualized coercion' (Adorno 1973: 6). This motivates the exodic impulse of my essay, whereby I stage intermittent attempts to find 'a way to get out from all systematic totalities' (Bielik-Robson 2014a: 295) and 'recognise the difference that has been spirited away' (Adorno 1973: 172), composing a 'Marrano archaeology' in which what *appears* monolithic in its ontological immediacy actually *conceals* multiple contradictions, a 'hypersynchronous, not yet harvested aspect' (Negt 1976: 59) retrievable from a past not yet finished.

From Spectacular to Speculative Vision

As a concept, the Spectacle has an origin – aside from Guy Debord's elaboration of it through engagement with Hegel and Marx (Russell 2021) – in the artistic comportment of involvement in and detachment from the world, expressed in spatial terms, in that:

We think we are living in the world, when in fact we are being positioned in a perspective. No longer the simultaneous perspective of primitive painters, but the perspective of the Renaissance rationalists. It is hardly possible for looks, thoughts and gestures to escape the attraction of the distant vanishing point which orders and deforms them, situating them in its spectacle

(Vaneigem 1983: 68).

The invocation of a 'simultaneous perspective' considered a characteristic of so-called 'primitive art', permeates the artistic posture of the situationists at this time, revealing a debt to Cubist experimentation and the 'primitivising' tendencies of artists like Picasso, Paul Klee, and most obviously the painterly practice of the post-WWII experimental art group, COBRA, of which co-founders of the SI, like Asger Jorn and Constant Nieuwenhuis, were members.¹⁵ Crucial is a difference between, on the one hand, the perspectival detachment of objectivity and, on the other, a dialectical immersion in the matter, summed up in the title of a 'word-painting' by Asger Jorn and Christian Dotremont that references Hamlet's words to Horatio after having talked with his father's ghost: *Il y a plus de choses dans la terre d'un tableau que dans le ciel de la théorie esthétique* ('There are more things in the earth of a picture than in the heaven of aesthetic theory'), 1947-48.¹⁶ The value-laden dichotomy of distance and involvement is encountered also in the writings of

Adorno and Benjamin, while *Finnegans Wake* has been said to offer a participatory rather than a spectatorial link between the subject and the object of cognition (Jay 1988: 67, quoted in Nolan 1995: 152). Recognisable, in part, is the radical distinction that Merleau-Ponty draws between the image of the spectator – detached from the world – and the image of the *seer*: ‘Immersed in the visible by his body the seer does not appropriate what he sees... he opens himself to the world’ (Merleau-Ponty 1964a: 162, quoted in Ingold 2000: 264), lending an esoteric quality to artistic speculation around simultaneity, albeit imbued with the pleromatic metaphysics of a phenomenology which accepts the givenness of the world ‘as it is’.¹⁷ Tim Ingold abbreviates the progress of instrumental rationality on the visual plane when he states that the joy and astonishment of the discovery that ‘I can *see*’ gives way to the mundane indifference of ‘I see *things*’ (Ingold 2000: 265), and he accords painters the task of recovering the sense of vision original to our experience of the world (*ibid.*).

In terms of the archaeology of the Neolithic, discussed in fragmentary form here, the temporal distance afforded by the spectacle translates into a problem in the separation in time between the prehistorian and prehistoric people in that

we enjoy the perspective of seeing their lives encapsulated in a past that is somehow finished. This disengages people in prehistory from participation in changing presents, their own pasts and also futures.

(Goodman 1999: 147).

In this way the temporal separation of observer and object aligns with the ‘objective time’ of chronology in which a static view of the past fixes the actions of people in prehistory in ‘a sequence of events which ignores that they came about amidst any number of other possible outcomes’ (*ibid.*). Consequently, past action is seen to give rise necessarily to the outcomes identified by the prehistorian, in effect removing ‘prehistoric people from a role in decision-making’ (*ibid.*).

The social origins of the ‘artistic’ conception of the spectacle as perspectival domination lie in what Marx described in the first volume of *Capital* as ‘primitive accumulation’ (Marx 1867: 755, quoted in De Angelis 2001: 8) – the enclosure of the commons, the expansion of empire and colonial conquest, slavery, the imposition of the working day, and the investment of capital accumulated from such processes into industrial development and cultural production. The recovery of Euclidean geometry as ‘the guarantor of certainty of spatial conception, organisation and representation’ paved the way for Alberti’s explication of the technique of three-dimensional perspective in 1435 (Cosgrove 1983, quoted in Rose 1993: 90). At the same time other geometrical skills were being developed, also involving the accurate representation of space: ‘map-making to guide the search for goods and markets; and surveying techniques to plot the estates that the bourgeoisie were buying in the countryside’ (Rose 1993: 90). Merchants often commissioned painting

of their newly acquired properties, hence enjoying perspectival as well as material control over their land (ibid.) and the whole genre of landscape painting emerged, paralleling, legitimising and obscuring the social processes that allowed the genre to flourish. Just as peasants were literally evicted as part of the enclosure movement in 17th and 18th century England, they were also evicted aesthetically (Bender 1993: 262). Modern capitalism, which ‘organises the reduction of all social life to a spectacle’, is incapable of presenting any spectacle ‘other than that of our own alienation’, in which its urbanistic dream is its ‘masterpiece’ (Kotányi and Vaneigem 1981: 65). Against such an aesthetic political economy the validation of the ‘primitive’ in art and avant-garde experimentation seems guided not only by a recognition of the falseness of the unity of class society but by an imperative that demands this ruling perspective be disintegrated, educing the shifting constellations of collage and montage. In Benjamin’s Epistemo-Critical Prologue to his *Trauerspiel*, the object of knowledge, ‘determined as it is by the intention inherent in the concept, is not the truth’ (Benjamin 1998: 36). Truth is ‘an intentionless state of being’, to which the proper approach ‘is not therefore one of intention and knowledge, but rather a total immersion and absorption in it’ (ibid.). The ‘structure of truth’ demands, then, an intentionless mode of being quite different to the instrumentality and objectivity of the ‘mode of being in the world of appearances’ (ibid.), the world of the spectacle. Artistic immersion in simultaneity marks, arguably, an attempt to access a state of being, ‘beyond all phenomenality’ (ibid.).

In the light of the history of perspectival domination described above, the Euclidean motif of Joyce’s depiction of ALP seems paradoxical. Yet his allusion to the infinitesimal calculus in the context of ALP’s monadic attributes, ‘the infinisissimal of her facets becoming manier and manier’ (FW 298.31), draws attention to a concealed/revealed *intensive infinity* within the messianic geometry of her representation, distinct from the Cartesian *res extensa*.¹⁸ Consistent with an interest he shared with Gershom Scholem in investigating the ‘mathematical theory of messianism’ (Schwebel 2012: 593), Benjamin reads the infinitesimal calculus as mathematical expression of the secularization of history, explained as the transformation of the meaning of creation, from a *temporal stage* on the way of salvation, to the *immanent totality* of what is (Schwebel 2012: 601-602). According to Benjamin’s interpretation, the novelty of infinitesimal calculus resides in its transformation of infinity from endless *temporal* succession to an infinity of detail within the monad of *spatial* presence (ibid.: 602). Transposing Benjamin’s interpretation to *Finnegans Wake*, ALP’s ‘crystalline simultaneity’ (Benjamin 1998: 38), her intensive configuration of all succession – ‘Concaving now convexly to the semidemihemispheres’ (FW 508.21) – instantiates the simultaneity of *spatial presence*, although grasping the infinite within a spatial image ‘cannot be done without distortion’ (ibid.: 603), for if ‘the infinite is mirrored within the finite, it is a *concave* mirror’ (ibid., emphasis in original). Significant for the motif of the divine contraction rehearsed in this text, Benjamin uses the figure of the concave mirror to not only suggest distortion, but also to suggest the ‘self-enclosed’ domain that is produced when the chronological infinite is grasped within a spatial totality (ibid.,

Benjamin 1998: 91). Such monadic perception is both immanent, in the expression of the *intensive* configuration of perceptual states, and transcendent, in that the infinity of a monad's perceptions *exceeds* what the finite understanding can apperceive (Schwebel 2012: 604). In effect, the concentration of the universe within a monad on the finite plane *conceals* a representation of the whole world, 'and even an image of God, in its *confused* perceptions' (ibid., emphasis in original), yielding a confused infinity of detail, the analysis of which is bottomless, resting on 'the non-identity between the simple perfection of divine rationality, and the contingent character of the world' (ibid.: 609).

Ultimately, the cryptotheological prohibition on images confronts the perfected separation of the spectacle, a social relation mediated by images, in which 'The concepts of the rulers have always been the mirrors by which the image of an "order" came about. – The kaleidoscope must be smashed' (Walter Benjamin, "Zentralpark," I, p. 660, quoted in Buck-Morss 1989: 201).

Discontinuous Emanation

Samuel Beckett averred that *Finnegans Wake* 'is not about something; it is that something itself' (Beckett 1929, 1972), foreshadowing Adorno's insistence that the presentation of his philosophy 'is not an external matter of indifference to it but immanent to its idea' (Adorno 1973: 18). However, Adorno's 'conception of what this presentation is, and therefore what the idea of philosophy is to which it is immanent, remains profoundly obscure' (Martin 2006: 48). It encodes, I suggest, traces of Isaac Luria's 'counterpoise' to pantheist tendencies in the theory of emanation (Lazier 2008: 167). While Luria's concepts of *Tsimtsum* (contraction) and *Shevirath ha-kelim* (shattering) have been refracted through 'Hegel's metaphysics of finitude' (Bielik-Robson 2017a), Gershom Scholem's interpretation of these concepts has decisively influenced the cryptotheology of Benjamin and Adorno. Hence, just as 'a ray of light streamed out from the space of God's retreat to the void left in his wake' (Lazier 2008: 167), so the 'penetrating gaze of allegory' is 'the model of the philosophical gaze' (Adorno 2001, 188 in Foster 2007: 79), for the 'interpretative eye which sees more in a phenomenon than it is... secularises metaphysics' (Adorno 1973: 28). As a *penetrative insight that shatters*, in Benjamin's image of a past 'blasted out of the continuum of history' (Benjamin 1999: 253), its 'logic of disintegration' informs Adorno's programme for 'the dissolution of that which has long been termed philosophy' (Buck-Morss 1977: 69).¹⁹ This convulsive logic erupts in *Ulysses*, when Stephen Dedalus, reciting in Latin the Antiphon for Paschal time – "They are made whole [or saved]" (Brivic 1991: 120) – imaginarily 'flourishes his ashplant, shivering the lamp image, shattering light over the world' (*U* 15.99-100). He translates 'spiritual into physical rebellion' (Ellmann 1972: 145) in Bella Cohen's brothel when, overwhelmed 'by the apparitional trinity' – and oppressive unity – 'of family, Church and country' (Lang 1986: 91), he 'lifts his ashplant high with both hands and smashes the chandelier' (*U* 15.4244). This moment of negativity, like the excess of 'stern judgment' (*Din*) that shatters the cosmic unity in Lurianic kabbalah (Scholem 1965: 112), and *Finnegans Wake*'s ten-times-repeated Thunderword that

‘chimed din’ (FW 58.14), scatters fragments to the immanence. Imprinted in the esoteric disposition of the Baroque tractatus, which renounces ‘the unbroken course of intention’ (Benjamin 2019: 2), it establishes an ‘intermittent rhythm’ of thinking (ibid.: 3), returning again and again in a circuitous way to its original object (Benjamin 1998: 28). Its repercussions inspire Friedrich Schlegel’s theory of fragments, implicit in his formula, ‘*Die Ästhetik = Kabbalah*’ (quoted in Sjöberg 2015: 50), reverberating in Adorno’s effort to retrieve nonconceptual particulars dismissed ‘since Plato’ as transitory and insignificant (Adorno 1973: 8). Here a philosophy in fragment form ‘would give their proper place to the monads... conceptions in the particular of the totality that is inconceivable as such’ (Adorno 1973: 28). Like Benjamin, Adorno treats the totality as a ruin, which releases potentialities ‘suppressed within its original form’ (Martin 2006: 49), for ‘only in traces and ruins’ is there ‘hope of ever coming across genuine and just reality’ (Adorno 1931, quoted in Buck-Morss 1977: 76). Recollection of its ruined monuments – ‘recalled and scrapheaped by the Maker’ (FW 98.17) – reveals ‘fragments of an alternative form of philosophical presentation’ (Martin 2006: 50) where ‘they found the hurtled stones’ (FW 224.6).

Their limitation to the form of fragmentary particulars generates the expressive power of Adorno’s dialectical concepts (Martin 2006: 54), just as the Divine act of contraction is a necessary limitation to give definition to the undefined, an act of the *sephira* of judgment, *Din* (Ariel 2006: 175). With his microscopic iteration of the divine self-limitation, it is *as if* Adorno cleaves to Cordovero’s demand that the individual imitates attributes that are associated with the *Sephiroth* (Koch 2015: 52), Adorno’s micrology mimetic of attributes of Adam Kadmon, ‘the highest form in which divinity begins to manifest itself after the *contraction*’ (Sicker 2005: 83, emphasis in original), from whose eyes the divine light emanates ‘in an “atomized” form in which every *sefirah* was an isolated point’ (ibid.: 84). Adorno’s ‘micrological view cracks the shells of what, measured by the subsuming cover concept, is helplessly isolated and explodes its identity, the delusion that it is but a specimen’ (Adorno 1973: 408).²⁰ The critical moment elicited from reflection on these ‘isolated points’ – shattered in the ensuing emanation of concentrated light – aligns Adorno’s ‘moment of philosophical critique’ with Benjamin’s messianic concept of *Jetztzeit*, ‘time filled by the presence of the now’ (Benjamin 1968a: 252-253), a concept which Adorno compared to Paul Tillich’s ‘*kairos*’ (Löwy 2005: 87), ‘fullness of time in the precise sense... the momentary point of contact between the temporal and conditional and the eternal and unconditional’ (Tillich 1936: 173), the irruption of a ‘living present’ (White 1987: 13, quoted in Cocker 2015: 2) conceivable within ALP’s ‘doubling bicirculars’ (FW 295.31), in ‘the small individual moment the crystal of the total event’ (Benjamin 1999: 461).²¹ Scattered in the wake of this shattering conjunction, Scholem detects ‘a residue of divine manifestation in every being’ which, under the aspect of *Tsimtsum*, ‘acquires a reality of its own which guards it against the danger of dissolution into the non-individual being of the divine “all in all”’ (Scholem 1961: 262, quoted in Lazier 2008: 167). This ‘residue’ manifests in Adorno’s invocation of ‘the irruption of objectivity into subjective

consciousness' (Jay 2005: 356), experienced as the shudder or tremor (*Erschütterung*) (ibid.), 'a shock by which it crystallizes into a monad' (Benjamin 1968a: 254), arising from a cogitative process which 'is active only when it knows how to bring a gaze to limit itself, to constrain its purview in the name of the cause of thinking' (Richter 2019: 36). This *tsimtsum*-like concentrated gaze Adorno distinguishes from the 'distracted gaze' – continuous with the Neoplatonist *pleroma* – which 'loses itself and any critical potentiality in its hopeless search for a totality that it can never take in' (ibid.: 38). For the mind is 'not capable of producing or grasping the totality of the real, but it may be possible to penetrate the detail, to explode in miniature the mass of merely existing reality' (Adorno 1977: 133). Similarly, 'self-exiled in upon his ego' (*FW* 184.6-7), Shem embodies Novalis' 'possibility of self-limitation' as 'the possibility of all synthesis' (Novalis 1797, quoted in Benjamin 1996b: 132), striking an Abulafian figure in manipulating 'minney combinaisies and permutandies' of ALP's 'meusic before her all cunniform letters' (*FW* 198.24-25), 'active elements' that 'will begin to fuse of themselves' (Joyce 1957: 205), suggesting that 'it is the matter, not the organizing drive of thought, that brings us to dialectics' (Adorno 1973: 144).²² The redemptive potential of the dialectical encounter, implied in Benjamin's assertion that to 'perceive the aura of the object we look at means to invest it with the ability to look at us in return' (Benjamin 1999: 184), evokes a Zoharic translation accessible to Joyce: 'Health is never found in the world save when the countenances (Macroprosopus and Microprosopus) mutually behold each other' (MacGregor Mathers 1926: 304). Until then, 'We cannot say aye to aye' (*FW* 114.1-2).

A very sexmosaic of nymphosis

Kabbalah lends esoteric dimensions to the marriage of Molly and Leopold Bloom in *Ulysses*, anticipating *Finnegans Wake*'s 'ill assorted first couple' (*FW* 503.9), their marriage intelligible in the Zoharic formulation, 'only intercourse is capable of ensuring the entrance of the supernal soul into the sefirotic realm' (Idel 2005: 239). As 'Flower of the mountain' (*U* 18.1602) and 'Rose of Castille',²³ Molly corresponds with the Rose, *shoshanah*, feminine symbol of the last *sephira*, the *Shekhinah*, impregnated by 'the Righteous One', the *sephira*, *Yesod*, the symbol of the Phallus, at the opening of *The Zohar* (Idel 2005: 240). That Leopold lacks his key on his return to Molly indicates the estrangement of the groom and bride, symbolic of the exile of the *Shekhinah*: 'From the side of the soul and the side of life comes "a knocking on the locked door of the future," into which both want to endure' (Braiterman 2007: 116). Locked out, he bumps his head as he enters through the window, a circumstance reflecting dissonance in the Blooms' relationship, illuminated by the 'upcast reflection of a lamp and shade', throwing 'an inconstant series of concentric circles of varying gradations of light and shadow' above the Blooms' bed (*U* 17.2300-2301). Describing a schema of the *Sephiroth* as a series of ten concentric circles (*igulim*), alternately revealed (light) and veiled (shadow), the inconstancy of light and shadow may allude to the contraction of the divine light which has brought forth the cosmic crisis, reverberating in 'shekhinic ripples' that 'invaginate'

the divine ‘in worldly immanence’ (Keller 2015: 53).²⁴ Such inconstancy equates with the figure of Rachel, with Leah, one of Jacob’s two wives, each representing different aspects of the *Shekhinah*. Rachel represents the revealed world, her conditions ‘constantly changing along with the changing degrees of virtue in humanity. The principal government depends on her for she is’, like Molly, ‘the “mistress of the house”’ (Antonelli 1995: 75). The mutual inconstancy of Molly and Leopold registers their abiding grief at the loss of their son, Rudy, since when – inverting the Zoharic formulation above – they had not enjoyed ‘complete carnal intercourse’ for over ten years (*U* 17.2278). If Molly is Rachel, Leopold anticipates a theatrical rendez-vous with her veiled counterpart, the eponymous heroine of *Leah* at the Gaiety, although when trying to remember her name, he wonders, ‘Rachel, is it?’ (*U* 5.200). Reflecting Joyce’s ‘unsparing portrayal of a society alienated almost beyond redemption’ (Adorno, quoted in Kershner 2010: 36, emphasis added), Leopold’s assessment of Molly’s adultery as ‘not so calamitous as a cataclysmic annihilation of the planet in consequence of a collision with a dark sun’ (*U* 17.2180-82) admits the flickering possibility of life in the void left in God’s wake. Indeed, a ‘messianic advantage’ may consist in the rupture in the mythic ‘universe of love’ manifest in the Blooms’ erotic hiatus, so that the individual trauma of separation becomes ‘a necessary precondition of any future redemptive practice’ (Bielik-Robson 2014a: 86).

An attribute of *Yesod*, the Righteous One, arose on an excursion to the Carnac megaliths in 1925, when Joyce cautioned, ‘if the ladies of the party were to remark the shape of the stones, nothing was to be said,’ as ‘any discussion of a phallic symbol was taboo in the presence of ladies’ (Ellmann 1982: 567). Notwithstanding, Joyce accorded a ‘sacramental’ role to an unidentified female figure in his abandoning the ‘absolute satisfaction’ of a transcendental conception, to become ‘conscious of the beauty of mortal conditions’ (Ellmann 1982: 146).²⁵ Naming her, ‘Lady of Apple Trees’ (ibid.: 146-147), recalling the ‘Walpurgis Night’ scene of Goethe’s *Faust*, where Faust recounts his dream of a lovely apple tree to the young witch who has herself apples in her garden, Joyce anticipates the Edenic Fall in *Finnegans Wake*’s explosive ‘Splanck! – Upfellbown’ (*FW* 505.27-29). Encoded in the Abulafian PLAY of APL permutations of ALP, such ‘abnihilisation of the etym’ (*FW* 353.23) implicates Max Planck’s hypothesis that ‘*emission and absorption of radiant energy by matter does not take place continuously, but in “finite quanta of energy”*’ (Born 1969: 82, emphasis in original), a formulation echoing the Lurianic schema, save one crucial exception: it is *the Infinite* which interrupts the emanative ‘constant of fluxion’ (*FW* 297.28) radiating to ‘*Shekhinah*, the Holy Apple Orchard’ (Matt 2007: 499). This discontinuity crystallises in ALP’s diamond comprising two equilateral triangles, where a frictive conjunction of revelatory and erotic/mythic modes obtains, the former irreconcilable to myth’s requisite ‘mystical participation in the pagan sacred, which dissolves the subject in the Dionysian Oneness’ (Bielik-Robson 2014a: 125).²⁶ The upward-pointing, illuminated triangle is simultaneously the Greek goddess, Demeter, and supernal mother of the *Shekhinah*, Binah, ALP as ‘Hagiasofia of Astralia’ (*FW* 552.7) who ‘descent from above on us’ (*FW* 552.6-7); the

downward-pointing, dark triangle, the 'bluishing refluction below' (FW 299.17-18), is Persephone and *Shekhinah*, Issy as 'pretty Proserpronette' (FW 267.10-11), exiled in the immanence of *Finnegans Wake* and megalithic archaeology.

The erotic transgression of ALP's spouse, Humphrey Chimpden Earwicker (HCE)/Finnegan, precipitates the Fall recalled recurrently in the novel, which 'would empty dempty him down to the ground' (FW 319.35-36). The 'trilithon sign' (FW 119.17) of his 'sigla HCE' (FW 32.14) highlighting a prominent architectural feature of Stonehenge, his prurient interest in 'liliths undeveiled which had undone him' (FW 75.5-6) evokes megaliths like the Merry Maidens, in Cornwall, 'lilith maidinettes' (FW 241.4) turned to stone for dancing on a Sunday (Menefee 1974: 23).²⁷ Quarried from a stretch of the River Eden, a red sandstone monolith, called Long Meg, stands outside the stone circle, Long Meg and her Daughters in Cumbria. Turned to stone for 'Unlawfull Love' (Menefee 1996: 79), of these 'lilliths oft I feldt' (FW 241.4-5) 69 stones remain (Frodsham 1996: 111). Joyce plays upon a toponymic association of 'fallen women' and megaliths in his characterisation of female objects of desire as aspects of Lilith who, in the *Zohar*, is queen of the demons, who do their best to provoke men to masturbation, and so make themselves bodies from the 'lost seed' (Scholem 1965: 154). It is masturbation upon which *Finnegans Wake* centres language and plot (Cope 1981: 122), being the method the Egyptian Creator god Atum brought the world into being, constituting a thread through the book which always draws one back to the rubbish heap with its 'ononymous letters' (FW 435.31). This 'municipal sin business' (FW 5.14) involves HCE exposing himself to a 'duo of druidesses' (FW 271.4) he is voyeuristically watching, 'apple harlottes' (FW 113.16) who seem to inhabit, as 'those rushy hollow heroines' (FW 67.31), the 'Hetaeric' sphere of 'unregulated lushness' that Benjamin perceived in Kafka's writings (Weigel 1998: 50), invoked in the exclamation, 'Maye faye she's la gaye this snaky woman!' (FW 20.33). This 'zeroic couplet' (FW 282.10) embodies a Zoharic portrayal of female divine/demonic siblings: the *Shekhinah* and Lilith (Berman 2018: 191), or the dual aspect of the *Shekhinah*, 'Rachel Lea Varian' (FW 221.12), Leah representing the concealed world of the eternal, Rachel the contingency of the revealed world (Antonelli 1995: 75).²⁸ HCE's indecency illuminates the relationship between exposure and violation identified within the *Zohar's* conception of the hidden and concealed, 'the deeper layers of Torah as God's own body uncovered in the interpretative act', whereby the very act of improper exposure is itself 'a violation and diminishment of the subject and the relationships involved' (Halbertal 2007: 146), although 'truth is not unveiling which destroys the secret, but revelation which does justice to it' (Benjamin 1980: 211, quoted in Bowie 1997: 218). As Issy – implicated as the 'suomease pair and singlette' (FW 329.2) – declares in a footnote on the same page as the ALP diagram, 'O, Laughing Sally, are we going to be toadhauntered by that old Pantifox Sir Somebody Something, Burt, for the rest of our secret stripture' (FW 293.F2). Simultaneously, *Finnegans Wake's* 'spectroscope' (FW 230.1) exposes the sordid truth of an ostensibly upright citizen, illuminates nonconceptual particulars

concealed within the 'cover concept' of philosophical presentation, and projects the inquisitorial glare perilous to marrano 'hidden faith'.

A conceptual shell that conceals the 'hidden faith' in this presentation is the notion of goddess worship in prehistory, advanced by archaeologists like R.A.S. Macalister, a Dublin-born contemporary of Joyce, who perceived in sections of *Finnegans Wake* circulated before its publication 'the "modern antitype" of the old Druidic tongue' (Gibson 2005: 234-235), while, reciprocally, Joyce used Macalister's work as a source (ibid.: 235). Macalister interpreted circles and spirals in Irish megalithic art as the eyes of the mother goddess (Shee Twohig 1998: 166), also writing of 'the Goddess of Death' in prehistoric art and Irish tradition (Macalister 1926). Here, he interpreted a recurrent carved motif resembling the letter U, 'frequently drawn with multiple lines' as 'the necklace of the goddess' (ibid.: 261), based on an anthropomorphic representation of three nested U motifs above a pair of breasts carved at the entrance of an Allée Couverte (passage grave) in Dampmesnil, Eure, France (ibid.). Macalister also refers to 'a summary representation of the goddess... on one of the statues in the island of Guernsey' (ibid.: 256), probably the Neolithic statue menhir at Câtel (complete with necklace-like U-curve), the 'other' statue presumably being the more intricately carved statue menhir at St. Martin's Church, Guernsey, dated to c.3000-2500 BC, and called *La Gran'mère du Chimquière*, 'The Grandmother of the Cemetery' (De Garis 1975: 244). This statue once stood in the churchyard, with a cup-marked flat slab at her feet (Johnston 1981: 96). Though considered to be of Neolithic origin, she is believed to have been remodelled in the Gallo-Roman Iron Age, her 'lentoid eyes' and other features strongly indicative of 'Celtic work' (ibid.). She seems to wear a tight head-dress or cap, 'perhaps decorated with beads, of which a series of four hangs vertically below the neck' (ibid.), prefigurative of Issy's 'chaplets of ringarosary' (FW 459.1-2). In the 19th century it was considered 'lucky' to leave an offering of fruit or flowers, and as recently as the 1920s 'she was found decorated with an ivy chaplet on May Day morning' (Johnston 1981: 96). In local tradition, when it snows, it is the old lady up in the sky, *La Gran'mère*, shedding her rags (De Garis 1975: 96), a phenomenon recognisable as ALP's 'six hundred and six ragwords' (FW 478.9), 'gramma's grammar' (FW 268.17) which composes 'Countlessness of livestories... netherfallen by this plague, flick as flowflakes, litters from aloft... all tombed to the mound' (FW 17.26-29), 'chambered cairns a cloudletlitter silent' (FW 73.29). Joyce's oblique allusion to 'the twofold movement of the perpetually renewed *tsimtsum* and of the outward flowing emanation' (Scholem 1965: 112) that precipitates the Fall, is encrypted in ALP's paradoxical ever-filling self-limitation (a limited plenum?): 'she had three figures to fill and confined herself to a hundred eleven, wan bywan bywan' (FW 201.27-30). As figure of Benjamin's 'messianic historical fulfilment' (Naishtat 2019: 44), ALP embodies 1/11, All Saints Day, the Christian feast commemorating the hallowed dead. In the kabbalistic alphanumeric system, gematria, 111 is the total of the numerological value of the Hebrew letters which spell ALP (Nadel 1996: 134, Ifrah 1998: 255) – *Aleph*, *Lamed* and *Peh*. Transliterated as 'Olaph lamm et, all that pack? We won't have room in the kirkeyaard' (FW 201.30-31), ALP's 'overflauwing, by the dream of

woman the owneirist' (FW 397.1-2) breaks a *literal passage* out of the finite vessel of Søren Kierkegaard's philosophy, her 'Toussaint's wakeswalks expedition' (FW 455.5-6) consonant with the understanding that 'all language contains its own incommensurable, uniquely constituted infinity' (Benjamin 1996a: 64).

Being-in-the-world as Exile

Kierkegaard, concerned with the character of 'existence', considers that the speculative philosophy of Hegel 'neglects the human individual as a finite, sensuous and mortal being' (Adorno 2019: 124). His attempt to unfold fundamental determinations which characterise existence as existence are, remarks Adorno, categories that closely resemble Martin Heidegger's 'attunements' (*Befindlichkeiten*) of *Dasein*, his term for 'Being', such as the concept of dread or anxiety, which is Heidegger's 'fundamental attunement' (ibid.: 124-125). Kierkegaard's concept of despair also accords with Heidegger's 'being-towards-death' (ibid.: 125). Kierkegaard's 'Faith in Being' (Adorno 1973: 68), determining existence as a relationship between the finite and the infinite, becomes Heidegger's 'bondage to Being' (ibid.), existence as 'a relationship between being and beings' (Adorno 2019: 125). While Adorno acknowledges an 'anti-ideological moment' in the anti-subjectivism of Heidegger's 'critique of the mentality which is preoccupied with the domination of nature' (Adorno 2019: 139), *Dasein*'s paralysing 'death-in-life' (Bielik-Robson 2017b: 23) imposes the need to retrieve 'the living contradiction' (ibid.) enclosed within an archaeological theory attuned 'with the world's hardened condition' (Adorno 1973: 68), according with Nietzsche's words, 'the past is a rock you cannot move' (Thomas 1991: 3).

In *Time, Culture and Identity* (Thomas 1996: 83) the archaeologist, Julian Thomas, challenges the instrumental logic of a Cartesian understanding of space which he characterises as 'geometric space' (ibid.: 83), in terms superficially similar to Adorno's critique of abstract rationality and false totality. Thomas posits the emergence in the fifth millennium BC of 'a new attunement to the material world' (Thomas 1996: 135), elaborating through case studies of the western European Neolithic a phenomenological archaeology drawn from Heidegger's 'archaistic late form' of the 'a priori structure' (Adorno 2007: 145). Heidegger's philosophy complements positivism, presenting 'mere facticity' in a manner 'which creates the semblance that it is more than it is, that it is already "possessed of meaning"' (Adorno 2019: 103). Notwithstanding any 'anti-ideological moments', Thomas does not stray far from the 'fetters of facticity' (Adorno 2019: 103) presented by the empirical object viewed from the stance of the 'specialized scientist' (Benjamin 1996c: 404), asserting that 'archaeological analysis involves a way of knowing which is derived from everyday forms of attunement to the world' (Thomas 1996: 234). This is compatible with the 'timelessness' of 'the conventional concept of objectivity... an exponent of the bourgeois concept of truth' (Benjamin 1996c: 404-405), which seeks a point of view *about* the object, rather than a dialectical mediation that seeks the truth *in* it (404). It is 'this "immanent" or inner "value", arrived at by disregarding the phenomenon' (Korsch 1972: 55), which forms the

starting-point for a ‘dialectical conceptual development’ (ibid.) deployed to break the attunements of *Dasein*. In ‘dissolving’ (FW 608.5) the Cartesian *cogito*, *Dasein*’s transcendent, unmediated continuum – ‘there is no “inside” or “outside” to the person’ (Thomas 1996: 19) – sets the ontological context of the effort ‘to grasp the inseparable parts of a structure of human Being’ (Thomas 1996: 83), which has primacy over the subject, the subject ‘always fundamentally absent from itself, always dispersed and fragmented in webs of signification’ (ibid.: 46). This attunement cannot grasp what Benjamin calls ‘the language of intentionless truth’ within the object, the validity of which is historical, not timeless (Benjamin 1996c: 404), ‘an inter-personal relationship concealed beneath a reified exterior’ (Korsch 1972: 55), apprehended, perhaps, as a kind of ‘spectral objectivity’ (Heinrich 2021: 64). Here truth is not an intent which realises itself in empirical reality but ‘the power which determines the essence of this empirical reality’ (Benjamin 1998: 36). Reached by an intense visual comportment – a concentrated gaze – towards the object, which awakens ‘an immersion of the object in itself’ (ibid.: 405), the observer is taken possession of by something that leaps from it (Benjamin 1996c: 404), a truth containing within it ‘a precise concept of time’, which ‘comes and goes depending on the temporal constellation’ (ibid.: 405), becoming the occasion for ‘the unimpeded openness to telepathic contact’ (Downing 2011: 579). This critical moment, a kairotic interruption of ‘sacred’ ontology, translates to an arboreal analogy: on the tree of the sacred, ‘the *eternal* rustling of the leaves, on the tree of the profane, the *timely* falling of the fruit’ (Benjamin 1928, quoted in Berman, Berman and Sommella 2018: 28, emphasis added).

Therefore, ‘Heidegger seeks in vain to rescue history for phenomenology abstractly through “historicity”’ (Benjamin 1999: 462), where the concept of history itself is replaced ‘by history as a structure which arises from *Dasein*’ (Adorno 2019: 179-180). Thus, ‘wherever history proves to be the strongest power in reality, it is easy to interpret this as the power of being and thereby encourage subordination to the course of history’ (ibid.: 180). Insubordination to such ontologised history, assimilated to the mythical petrified structure of self-sameness (Hammer 2006: 108), emerges in Benjamin’s ‘now of a particular recognisability’, the ‘imprint of the perilous critical moment’ (Benjamin 1999: 463) in which ‘truth is charged to the bursting point with time’ wherein ‘what has been comes together in a flash with the now to form a constellation’ (ibid.).²⁹ While ‘the relation of the present to the past is purely temporal, the relation of what has been to the now is dialectical: not temporal in nature but figural’ (ibid.). Inspired by a Jewish concept of history in which nothing is ever perceived as ‘past’ or ‘irrevocably lost’ (Mertens 2007: 43), Benjamin’s critique ‘eradicates the radical separation of the past and the present’ (ibid.: 44), reified in the conception of the past as ‘a dead and alien culture’ (Thomas 1991: 1). To recover the possibility of past generations to continue to ‘interrogate, disturb and challenge our time and our custody for their times’ (Chambers 1998: 194) means adopting an ethical and involved, rather than a positivist and distanced, paradigm of knowledge (Moses 1992: 127, in Chambers 1998: 184). Conversely, the ‘alien horizon’ (Thomas 1996: 235) of the Neolithic is complete when Thomas seeks

‘to grasp habitual modes of conduct, rather than overcoming them’ (ibid.), acceding to a kind of behaviourism, an annulment of critical force harmonious with Louis Althusser’s rejection of Marx’s concept of alienation, rendering the mode of production as a second nature, where the ‘structures of the social formation’ provide the only account for the possibility of subjectivity (Rose 2009: 40). Even as an ostensible critique of interpretations governed by assumptions of rational economic agency, Thomas’ assertion that ‘the introduction of a Neolithic way of life’ represented less ‘an economic revolution than a revolution of subjectivity’ (Thomas 1993: 92) still enshrines the primacy of Being. Dialectical overcoming of being-in-the-world, where ‘Everyone unthinkingly followed the paths learned once and for all’ to ‘their predictable future’ (Debord 1981a: 31), is forgone for a logic of routinised movement which maintains ‘the coherent reign of poverty’ as if ‘the deficiency of their life was natural’ (ibid.). Thus, ‘Walking to work across a square every day, it ceases to be necessary for someone to ponder each change of direction, and their body simply comes to negotiate the space’ (Thomas 1996: 86), ‘the spatiality of a totality of useful things’ assuming ‘the *character of inconspicuous familiarity*’ (Heidegger 1996: 96, emphasis in original). Therefore, to measure the value of a thought ‘by its distance from the continuity of the familiar’, the more it approximates to the pre-existing standard, ‘the further its antithetical function is diminished’ (Adorno 2005a: 80). In ‘Situationist Theses on Traffic’ (1959), ‘the circulation of human beings trapped in a world of things’ elicits the refusal of the being-in-the-world of capital and the inconspicuous familiarity of its pleromatic logistical chains, where they ‘will try to break those topological chains, paving the way with their experiments for a human journey through authentic life’ (Debord 1981b: 58).³⁰ This is antagonistic to the structure of tradition in the hermeneutics of Gadamer and Heidegger, which provides the means for the construction of the self, an external condition of subjectivity rather than its self-positing ground (Osborne 1995: 129). Here, the self-awareness of the individual is but ‘a flickering in the closed circuits of historical life’ (Gadamer 1979: 245, cited in Osborne 1995: 129), betraying an isomorphism with the geography of disciplinary surveillance within the closed circuits of ‘State and market totalitarianism’ (Vaneigem 2015: 50) of the capitalist economy.

In Julian Thomas’ Heidegger-inflected archaeology, the ‘formation of personal identity’ is ‘contingent upon the existence of social context and cultural tradition’ (Thomas 1996: 54), the individual having no ‘fundamental and essential character which precedes the constitution of the social or cultural collectivity’ (Thomas 1996: 54). The false dichotomy of a model of ‘human identity’ forged from the ontological continuity of ‘a web of relationships’ on the one hand, and ‘a belief in “the individual” as a transcendental subject who is context-free’ (Thomas 1996: 237) on the other, attenuates variability in patterns of individuation invisible to such reasoning. One difference between individuation and submission to mythic fatality crystallises in the contrast between the *tragic* and the *messianic* (Bielik-Robson 2014a: 41), the distinction Nietzsche draws between what he terms the ‘Aryan’ and the ‘Jewish’ way of sinning (ibid.: 42). ‘Aryan sin’, marked by the tragic guilt borne

by all beings 'as the general stigma of their unlawful separation from the whole', is privileged by Nietzsche for its 'bold' acceptance of 'natural necessities' (ibid.). This is contrasted to the notion of *yetzer hara*, 'evil impulse', which, 'always belonging only to an individual, becomes a source of her further individuation', developing 'an inner realm of ethical reflection, critically opposed to the world of external forces' (ibid.), for which arcane calibration the mandorla on page 293 may be considered as a secret index which refers to redemption. Furthermore, the so-called 'humanist dream of being free to be what we will', judged by Thomas as a *retreat* into 'dangerous utopianism' (Thomas 2002: 37), is a seemingly unintentional evocation of Luria's schema of emanation/withdrawal, informing 'the capacity of the "I" to augment or diminish itself to an absolute maximum or minimum' (Schlegel 1846: 35, quoted in Benjamin 1996b: 133). Adorno, concerned about the 'liquidation' of the individual within totalising collectives (Winters 2014: 171), cannot invoke the collective subject of Marx's dialectical reversal of anti-humanism, whereby, in its *complete loss* of humanity the proletariat can 'only redeem itself through the *total redemption of humanity*' (Marx 1994: 38), but he finds within estrangement a historical truth which 'can only be seized at the furthest distance from its origins' (Wasserstrom 2007: 76).³¹ The 'objective historical order in which the exile continued in full force' (Scholem 1971: 121), to which eighteenth-century messianic Jewish radicals were antipathetic (ibid.) becomes the condition where the success of production and the abundance it generates

*is experienced by its producers only as an **abundance of dispossession**. All time, all space, becomes **foreign** to them as their own alienated products accumulate. The spectacle is a map of this new world — a map drawn to the scale of the territory itself. In this way the very powers that have been snatched from us reveal themselves to us in their full force.*

(Debord 1994: 23).

Fundamental ontology, indifferent to the subject-object relation, naturalises the exilic condition, 'the character of personal identity in the later Neolithic' determined by 'an economy of substances' where 'persons were created by artefacts, rather than vice versa' (Thomas 1996: 180). Like 'slipping beauty' (*FW* 477.23), the subject 'lies under a spell from which nothing but the name of subjectivity will free it' (Adorno 1973: 182).

Rainstones ringing

To confine, unthinkingly, Joyce's female characters to the mythic immediacy of prehistoric megaliths assimilates them to an ahistorical 'concept of the goddess', in which the myth 'leads the world of manifestation to its limits where it denies itself and seeks to flee back again into the womb of the true and only reality' (Nietzsche quoted by Benjamin 1998: 102). As in the attempt to chart the extent of his daughter, Lucia's significance in *Finnegans Wake*, 'when we try to apprehend the multifarious ghosts' of these characters 'floating through the text's fabric', the

multiple relations generate complex and unmanageable elements (Fordham 2002: 655), eluding rigid delineations of identity. Adorno's thoughts on the strength and weakness of self-imitation of the modern artwork opens a space between interiority and oppressive externality where 'dialectics is obliged to make a final move' (Adorno 1973: 406). While similarity with itself 'separates the artwork from a false reality, where nothing is really real because everything obeys the law of exchange' (Zuidervaart 1991: 181), nevertheless, the artwork never fully lives up to its own objective ideal, because the obligation to self-identity forbids any symbolising of 'the nonidentical that would not emerge until after the dissolution of the compulsion of identity' (ibid.: 182). Dialectics 'is the self-consciousness of the objective context of delusion', which aims to break out of the context from within, in such a way that 'an opponent's strength is absorbed and turned against him, not just in the dialectical particular, but eventually in the whole' (Adorno 1973: 406). Thus the form of hope of the movement of *shekhinah/spirit* as configured in this essay is that 'it will not come to rest in itself, as if it were total' (ibid.), the total identification of self-enclosed subjectivity evident in the plight of the Hegelian 'beautiful soul', in a state of dissociation, torn – like 'the brideen Alannah... lost in her diamindwaiting' (FW 377.19-20) – between 'her narcissistic self-image of absolute inner freedom and the humiliating condition of limitation coming from the external world' (Bielik-Robson 2011: 194). Her dialectical impasse arises from her inability to recognise her very own *raison d'être* in the disorder that she denounces in the world (ibid.). Thus, the 'ideological overtone of all talk of synthesis' masks an analysis 'that is concealed from itself and has increasingly become taboo', in that 'the fragmentation for which the bourgeois spirit will upbraid its critics is that spirit's own unconscious work' (Adorno 1973: 175-6), 'those who, would it not be for that dielectrick, were upon the point of obsoletion' (FW 322.30-32).

An analogy from the later Neolithic of Wales evinces the dialectical potency of matter, when 'the unity of process and result no longer succeeds' (Adorno 1997: 244), namely, the deliberate, perhaps conceptually-laden, inclusion of functionally less-than-ideal chips of quartz within the fabric of Peterborough Ware pots before firing. Their high coefficient of thermal expansion (Gibson and Woods 1997: 263) could disintegrate any ultimate synthesis, intentional or not, like Joyce's female characters, a heterogeneous 'coincident of interfizzing with grenadines' (FW 60.23-24), embodying fissile potentialities of dialectical contradiction – 'the nonidentical under the aspect of identity' (Adorno 1973: 5) – that '*expolodotonates*' (FW 353.23-24) the ontological unity privileged by phenomenological conceptions which justify, for all time, 'the stony cosmos of indifference' (Bielik-Robson 2014a: 12). Its 'highly conspicuous' temper (Hamilton 2002: 40) was riddled with associations white quartz possibly had: its triboluminescence when struck or rubbed against other quartz pieces (Lewis-Williams 2002: 177) evoking lightning, astral phenomena, even the 'light that illuminates the fragmentary, disintegrating phenomena that have become split off... the sole hope that philosophy can ignite at all' (Adorno 2001: 186, quoted in Foster 2007: 213).³² At Bryn Celli Ddu, Anglesey, the passage was 'crossed by a barrier of water-worn and deliberately broken pebbles of white quartz' (Hemp 1930:

204). In the 'Neolithic stratum' of the chambered cairn at Rudh' an Dunain, Skye, was found 'a lozenge-shaped object of white quartz' (Lindsay Scott 1932: 200). In Co. Clare, Ireland, white quartz pieces were 'Hail Mary stones' (Thompson 2005: 116). As *Finnegans Wake's* 'hegelstomes' (FW 416.33), or Marx's 'crystals of social substance' (Heinrich 2021: 65), they meet Benjamin's 'microscopic gaze' (Buck-Morss 1977: 74) as 'chips of Messianic time' (Benjamin 1968a: 255). Within a Neolithic *ars combinatoria*, the Peterborough Ware fabric opens itself to

a monadological insistence, to a sense of the constellation in which it stands; the possibility of internal immersion requires that externality... such an immanent generality of something individual is objective as sedimented history. The history is in the individual thing and outside it; it is something encompassing in which the individual has its place. Becoming aware of the constellation in which a thing stands is tantamount to deciphering the constellation which, having come to be, it bears within it

(Adorno 2007: 163).

The immersive-constellative dialectics of 'fissile material', like the 'missfired brick' (FW 5.26) blamed for Finnegan's fall, encompass Hayyim Vital's account of the formation of the ten 'vessels', or *sephiroth*, which began with the wish of the supernal emanator, *Ein Sof*, to create the material universe through the withdrawal (*tsimtsum*) of its presence, which had at first 'filled everything' (Matt 1995: 94). The light withdrew 'like water in a pond displaced by a stone' (ibid.), leaving a vacuum. Then 'all the opacity and density of judgment' within the light of *Ein Sof*, was extracted, 'like a drop in the ocean', before descending into the vacuum and transforming into an amorphous mass, surrounded by the light of *Ein Sof* (ibid.). Like a potter fashioning a mass of clay into a vessel, a ray of light returned from above and entered the mass, forming each individual vessel (*sephira*). *Keter*, the purest of the *sephira* was able to bear the light. Lacking *Keter's* capacity the other *sephiroth* broke. Their spiritual essence – the light – ascended back to the mother's womb, while the shattered vessels fell to the world of creation (Matt 1995: 94-95), resounding as 'her birthright pang that would split an adam like the forty pins in her hood' (FW 333.24-25). As in the last of Scholem's 'Ten Unhistorical Aphorisms on Kabbalah', there is 'something of the strong light of the canonical, of that perfection which destroys' (quoted in Beitchman 1998: 162), 'oapropos as ten canons in skelterfugue' (FW 121.27-28), bursting the 'fragile vessel of earthly form by the infinite power of its being' (Friedrich Creuzer, quoted in Benjamin 1998: 164). 'And where in thunder did she plunder?' (FW 209.12).

After 'those initials falls' (FW 286.4), 'saving grace after avalunch, to look most profitable' (FW 240.32), Shem, the 'Negoist Cabler' (FW 488.21), writes the 'Hullo Eve Cenograph' (FW 488.23-24) 'for the seek of Senders' (FW 389.36). Writing 'for Maggi beyond by the ashpit' (FW 211.22), Joyce/Shem draws, from a book he 'evidently knew well' (Gordon 1986: 282), an interpretation of Cinderella as 'personification of the Holy Spirit dwelling unhonoured amid the smouldering

ashes' (Bayley 1912: 194). Tracing an etymology of 'cinder' different to the French *endre* ('ash'), Harold Bayley states, 'the Old Norse of our word *tinder* is *sindri*... a flint for striking fire associated with a tinkling sound' (Bayley 1912: 286). *Finnegans Wake's* 'tinkle of tunder' (FW 227.6) marks a 'flintforfall' (FW 18.35) into finitude as 'a chip off the old Flint' (FW 83.10), chiming with a quality of the *Sephiroth*, 'hidden', Cordovero argues, in the sense that 'the spark of fire is hidden in the rock until it is struck by metal' (Scholem, quoted in Lazier 2008: 166). Stories abound of uncanny women who carried and dropped stones to form monuments, 'rumbledown rubble' (FW 207.6) from 'the maidsapron of our ALP' (FW 297.11), like the *Tombeau de la Groac'h Rouge*, Côtes du Nord, carried by a red fairy in her apron (Menefee 1996: 78), the Grandmother's Apronful in Lancashire and Barclodiad y Gawres (The Giantess's Apronful) in Anglesey. A burial chamber in Kent, Kit's Coty House, was raised by three witches, the capstone added by a fourth (Grinsell 1976: 124, in Menefee 1996: 78). 'Systematic unanimity would crumble' (Adorno 1973: 27) when ALP 'helts her skelts' (FW 227.5), 'a skittering kitty skattering hayels' (FW 243.17-18), who 'broke of the matter among a hundred and eleven others in her usual curtsey' (FW 38.12-13). Like Benjamin's figure of the collector, as 'victuum gleaner' (FW 364.33-34) she retrieves the *Abfall der Geschichte*, 'jetsam litterage' (FW 292.16) of 'lost histereve' (FW 214.1), within 'the *potlatch* of destruction' (Debord 1981c: 155), seeking, as regards HCE, 'to weke him to make up. He'll want all his fury gutmurdherers to redress him' (FW 617.17-19).

HCE's 'cosmic tumble' propels him to the chambered tomb of Le Déhus, Paradis, in Guernsey, microcosm of *Finnegans Wake's* 'Mound of a Word' (FW 175.12). Leonora Carrington's painting, *El Árbol de la Vida*, 'The Tree of Life' (1960), depicts the lights of the *Sephiroth*, usually portrayed as a tree or the Primordial Man, 'eversower of the seeds of light to the cowld owld sowls' (FW 593.20), Adam Kadmon (Scholem 1965: 114).³³ Having descended to the creaturely world, the scene of the soul's exile, the sparks of his feminine complement, the *Shekhinah*, mix with the world of demonic powers or 'shells', the *kelippoth* (Scholem 1965: 115). Carrington's portrayal of the face radiating lines of light from the highest *sephira*, known as *Keter* (Crown), resembles the carved human face – part of a larger carving – on a stone built into the ceiling of Le Déhus. The carving predates the tomb, on a stone re-used in its construction, repeating a pattern found in Brittany with the break-up and dispersal of Le Grand Menhir Brisé, the largest stone known to have been erected in the Neolithic, one fragment forming the capstone of La Table des Marchand, another transported 3 kilometres to roof the chamber of Gavrinis (Shee Twohig 1998: 170-171). 'But, to speak broken heaventalk, is he? Who is he? Whose is he? Why is he?' (FW 261.27-29). The 'heavenly one with his constellatria and his emanations' (FW 157.18-19) is HCE, who 'fell from story to story like a sagasand to lie' (FW 374.36 – 375.1). In 'the deification of his members' (FW 498.21) he is the dismembered Osiris, whose missing 'upright one' (FW 261.23) it is the task of Isis, in the person of ALP, 'his noughty beside him zeroine' (FW 261.23-24), to find (Troy 1976). Red pigment has been applied to the engraving (Crook 2014, Nash and Jelly 2016), 'with discrimination for his maypole and a rub in passing over his hump' (FW

358.34-35). Deposition of limpet shells here in the Neolithic (Ashbee 1982: 6) traces a tidal rhythm – ‘I sink I’d die down over his feet, humbly dumbly, only to washup’ (FW 628.11) – to which ‘we haply return, trumpeted by prawns and ensigned with seakale’ (FW 261.5-7).

A Shingle Vision

Misinterpreting the world of the *kelippoth* (‘shells’) as the seashore recalls a tradition related to me by my grandmother, which she learnt from her Edinburgh-born mother: those who are dying pass away with the receding of the tide. Such a mortal ebb and flow, integrated to a ‘biopolitics’ defined by Michel Foucault, the ‘becoming and perishing’ within the ‘natural cycle of life and death’ that governs the living (Bielik-Robson 2017b: 19),³⁴ converges with Adorno’s characterisation of Henri Bergson’s type of cognition whereby the ‘dialectical salt’ is ‘washed away in an undifferentiated tide of life’ (Adorno 1973: 8). Yet, on the tide’s ebb – naturalistic metaphor for the retreat of pleromatic fullness – is it possible to recover Adorno’s ‘dialectical salt’? Any critical immersion, ‘with the planckton at play about him’ (FW 477.24-25), would itself be implicated in the object of its own critique.

A ceramic vessel, interpreted as a salt pan, found in the chamber of an early Neolithic burial mound at Erdevan, Morbihan, Brittany (Cassen, *et al* 2012), bears incised decoration considered to have cosmological significance. Three sinuous lines on the lower part may represent a serpentine, subterranean world, while the upper section bears a motif identified as ‘the tree of life’ (Boujot, *et al* 1998: 205). Joyce combines alchemical, astrological and kabbalistic elements when he situates a similar vessel within the secretive context of the respective marriages of Sol and Luna and *Tiphereth* – via *Yesod* – and *Shekhinah*: ‘To see in his horrorscup he is mehrkurios than saltz of sulphur. Terror of the noonstruck by day, cryptogram of each nightly bridable’ (FW 261.24-27).³⁵ A commentary on the *Zohar* is illuminating in this regard:

Salt symbolizes Yesod, the site of the covenant of circumcision. Yesod enables the world to endure by sweetening the bitterness of Shekhinah, who is... symbolized by the sea... also called the Salt Sea (Dead Sea), because of Her intimate connection with Yesod (salt)

(Matt 2006: 476).

An ‘archaeology of the deep’ that constitutes a *tehomitic theology* of becoming, inspired by the ‘chaosmos’ of *Finnegans Wake* (Keller 2003: xvii), intercalates the butterfly effect of chaos theory with the wingbeat of the spirit – *ruach* – as primordial brooding water-bird over the face of the waters (ibid.: 5), where they ‘slept their sleep of the swimborne in the one sweet undulant mother’ (FW 41.6-7).³⁶ Comprehensible within this cosmology, and surrogates for the ‘wellknown kikkimidden where the illassorted first couple first met with each other’ (FW 503.8-9), several Neolithic chambered tombs in Western Scotland were built directly

on top of earlier shell middens (Pollard 1996: 204-205), including Glecknabae in Bute (Pollard 2000: 158). The Fairy Knowe, a Bronze Age cairn near Crarae, Argyll, was also built on a shell midden (ibid.: 153). In the Forth estuary, large oyster-dominated middens, dating to the Neolithic, have yielded pottery and bones from domestic cattle (Pollard 1996: 201). Further inland, a recurrent referencing of the seashore, through the deposition of shells and beach pebbles, suggests that the shore zone played a vital role in constructing cosmologies in the Neolithic (Fowler and Cummings 2003: 6).³⁷ The Carrowmore groups of passage-graves in Co. Sligo, for instance, contained many shells of winkle, mussel and oyster, while on Belmore Mountain, Co Fermanagh, the cairn contained scallop shells; in Loughcrew's cairn H, forty miles inland, was found cockle, periwinkle, scallop, limpet and mussel (Ashbee 1982: 6). Limpet shells were placed in considerable quantities in the chambers of La Varde and Le Déhus, Guernsey, and in the mound of La Hougue Bie, Jersey, while oyster shells remained in the ransacked chamber. At Les Porciaux, Alderney, limpet shells overlay human remains (ibid.). In Wales a concentrated deposit of limpet and oyster shells was found in the decorated tomb of Barclodiad y Gawres, Anglesey, as were deposits of cockle, mussel and limpet at Bryn Celli Ddu.³⁸ In the chamber of Lligwy the lower deposit rested upon mussel shells, the upper being covered by limpet (Ashbee 1982: 6). In Phoenix Park, Dublin – scene of the recurrent Fall in *Finnegans Wake* – a megalithic cist was unearthed in 1838, in which two male skeletons had each beside them perforated shells (*Nerita Litoralis*) (Mackenzie 1922: 46). Finally, on Dalkey Island the burial of a disarticulated human skeleton, radiocarbon-dated to 3350-2700 BC, was sealed by a midden composed mostly of limpet shells, the skull filled with periwinkle shells (Leon 2005: 7-8), 'beached, bashed and beaushelled à la Mer pharahead into faturity' (FW 292.18-19). A dolichocephalic (long) skull and Dalkey, render *Finnegans Wake*'s 'dalickey cyphalos' (FW 422.7), 'dirt cheap at a sovereign a skull!' (FW 374.27-28), invoking the eighteenth-century festival that culminated in the crowning of 'His facetious Majesty', the King of Dalkey, 'Sovereign of the Illustrious Order of the Lobster and Periwinkle' (Anon. 1846: 545). Cognate with 'that fatal midden' (FW 110.25), this *caput mortuum* of alchemical *putrefactio*, ruled by Saturn (Roob 1997: 189),³⁹ is where a dialectical turn occurs:

The bleak confusion of Golgotha... is not just a symbol of the desolation of human existence. In it transitoriness is not signified or allegorically represented, so much as, in its own significance, displayed as allegory. As the allegory of resurrection. Ultimately in the death-signs of the baroque the direction of allegorical reflection is reversed; on the second part of its wide arc it returns, to redeem

(Benjamin 1998: 232).

On Broadsands Beach I watched crows, symbols of the alchemical phase, *putrefactio* (Elkins 1999: 135), solve 'the riddle of the most fragmented, the most defunct, the most dispersed' (Benjamin 1998: 232), breaking mollusc shells by ascending to drop them on the rocks below. Strong headwinds impeded them retrieving *immediately*

what they had released, the interval of their ascent and descent forming a wide arc, attesting to the observation, ‘What has been cast aside but not absorbed theoretically will often yield its truth content only later’ (Adorno 1973: 144). Moreover, Adorno describes the rigidity of conceptual classification – its closing itself off to the moment of expression – as ‘molluscan’ (2003a: 121, quoted in Foster 2007: 150). Thinking can break out of this molluscan shell by ‘giving itself over’ to the objects, ‘without a lifebelt’, allowing its categories to open themselves to the contours of what is experienced (Adorno 2003a: 189, cited in Foster 2007: 150). Adorno’s notion of the *Schwindelerregend* (the dizzying, or vertiginous), like the crows’ dialectical turns, induces the dizziness he asserts as an index of truth, in that cognition is pulled up short by experience, its capacity ‘to destabilize our routine forms of classification’ (Foster 2007: 150). The momentary appearance *within* concepts of ‘their dependence on something that cannot be assimilated as a categorizable content’ (ibid.) is illustrated by this passage from *Negative Dialektik*:

*Traditional thinking and the habits of common sense [...] that it left behind after passing away philosophically, demand a frame of reference in which everything will find its place... As opposed to that, cognition that wants to come to fruition will throw itself, à fond perdu, to the objects. The dizziness that this provokes is an **index veri**; the shock of the open, the negativity, as which it necessarily appears within the covered and never changing.*

(Adorno 1966: 43, quoted in Foster 2007: 150).

Likewise, Joyce’s ‘middenhide hoard’ (FW 19.8) of the cast aside still yields its ‘truth content’. Emblematic as the nut in Gikatilla’s treatise, *Ginnat Egoz* (‘Garden of Nuts’), *Finnegans Wake*’s figural kernel on page 293 is the *amygdala* (almond) formed by ‘a daintical pair of accomplants’ (FW 295.26-27), ‘hooping to sheltershock’ (FW 8.30), condensing ‘*Omnitudes in a knutshedell*’ (FW 276.L).⁴⁰ Here *Shekhinah* dwells:

*as King Solomon stated: “I went down to the nut garden.” [Cant. 6.11]. Shekhinah is the kernel within... The outer **qelippah** [shell] connotes the alien domains which clothe Her. But on Shabbat, the Queen divests Herself of this garb and puts on beautiful raiment*

(Ginsburg 1989: 239).⁴¹

To ‘shellalite on the darkumen’ (FW 350.29) illuminates the longed-for union between the Shulamite woman (as *Shekhinah*) and Solomon (as *Tiphereth*) – ‘sommerlad and cinderenda’ (FW 331.26) – that portends a clear sign of redemption (Wolfson 2005: 359).⁴² The theology of *The Song of Songs* and the folklore of the Cinderella narrative – allegories of the soul’s exile (Bayley 1912: 179) – inform Joyce’s characterisation of Issy, the messianic ‘cinder Christinette’ (FW 280.21-22) ‘with amygdaline eyes’ (FW 94.16-17), recalling and inverting the theological misogyny directed against Mary Magdalene and women in general, as in this

sermon from Châteauroux: ‘O how blackened was that ember: namely, the Blessed Magdalen since she had been blackened by the sin of *luxuria*’ (Jansen 2000: 166).⁴³ With the Neolithic charcoal fragment found at Le Trépied dolmen, Catiaroc (Pouteaux 2018), where Guernsey witches reputedly convened their sabbats (De Garis 1975: 235), form a constellation with the Sabbatian leader, Jacob Frank’s identification of the divine indwelling of the *Shekhinah* within the portrait of the Black Madonna of Częstochowa, which heralded the designation of a woman – Eva, his daughter – as Messiah, for the first time in Jewish history (Fagenblat 2015: 33). Cinderella narratives, critical to ‘deciphering the witches’ sabbath’ (Ginzburg 1990: 243-246), convey ‘the liberating magic which the fairy tale has at its disposal’ (Benjamin 1968b: 101). A Scottish version, *Rashin Coatie*, has the eponymous heroine gather up the bones of a red calf, whose assistance had been foretold by the girl’s deceased mother. She is to bury the bones beneath ‘yon grey stone’, from which the calf would grant wishes (Margaret Craig, cited in Lang 1890: 290-291). A deposit beneath an orthostat of Rudh’ an Dunain cairn included bones of a young ruminant – ‘probably a calf’ – and part of the bone of a bird, probably a water fowl (Lindsay Scott 1932: 200). In the shape of the animals which help the child, it shows that nature, though ‘subservient to the myth... much prefers to be aligned with man’, the fairy tale telling of ‘the earliest arrangements that mankind made to shake off the nightmare that myth had placed on its chest’ (Benjamin 1968b: 101). As ‘limpet lady’ (FW 361.9), during her exile in the abyss the *Shekhinah* gathers the ‘sparks’ that fell into the demonic realm of the shells after God’s withdrawal (Halperin 2001, p. 36). A menhir at Le Haguais, Jersey, La Dame Blanche, once stood at the edge of an orchard. Its tip may have been artificially smoothed, or vitrified by lightning (Johnston 1981: 74). When the orchard was dug up in 1934 a stone-lined depression packed with limpets was found 3.6 metres away, beneath the crater of an uprooted apple tree (ibid.), recalling HCE’s ‘Giant crash in Aden’ (FW 324.36) where ‘unlifting upfallen girls’ (FW 363.33) ‘bare whiteness against me’ (FW 364.1-2).

Descent into the world of ‘conceptual shells that were to house the whole’ (Adorno 1973: 3) echoes the apostasy of the ‘false Messiah’, Sabbatai Zevi, his move to find within the planet Saturn/Sabbatai (conceived in the *Zohar* as a demonic feminine power, described elsewhere as Lilith) the divine presence of the *Shekhinah* (Idel 2011: 76). Moshe Hayyim Luzzato’s words reflect a complex attitude to this move, aligning Joyce’s shekhinic pair, the ‘duindleeng lunas’ (FW 549.13) (two indwelling/dwindling moons), and Lilith’s lithic archaeological connotations:

*‘And the wicked maidservant is the burial, and within her the lady is [found] etc.’ It seems from this passage that it is incumbent on the Messiah – who is [found] in the secret of the **Shekhinah** – to clothe himself in the shell, in the secret of Sabbatai, that is the shell of Ishm ‘a’el, in the secret of the diminution of the moon*

(Idel 2011: 76).

To retrieve particulars downgraded as contingent to philosophy's 'abstractionist mechanism' (Adorno 1973: 8) engages with the 'pebble infinibility' (FW 245.12) implied by the placement of non-local cobbles around the entrances of the Boyne valley tombs at Newgrange and Knowth, Co. Meath. These elements 'in the experience of exile' (Scholem 1965: 113) include quartz from the Wicklow Mountains, 50 km to the south, and cobbles from the beach at Rathcor, Co. Louth (Mitchell 1992: 128): ALP's 'necklace of clicking cobbles and pattering pebbles' (FW 207.5-6). In a world where everything 'is somewhere else' after the Divine crisis (Scholem 1965: 112), the flow of the Boyne reflects the Kabbalistic conception of 'effluence' (*shefa*), for which reading a favourite proof-text is Genesis 2:10: 'A river goes forth from Eden to water the garden' (Halperin 2001: 246). For 'Eden', according to the *Zohar*, stands for the higher *sephiroth*; 'the garden', for the lower. The 'river' is the effluence from which the lower *sephiroth* draw their sustenance (ibid.). The Boyne valley tombs therefore become the dislocated context for Marrano kabbalist, and Sabbatian, Abraham Miguel Cardozo's rite of 'the mending of the stones', a *tiqqun* intended to mend a disfigured Deity, for which the central recited passage is Genesis 2:10-14 (ibid.: 248). Cardozo's disciples are to go to a river or brook and perform a series of operations with stones, stones which may stand, variously, for the five divine or the five demonic Persons, the five *parzufim*, or configurations of the Lurianic 'World of Emanation' (ibid.: 248, 31). 'Sometimes they are to put stones in the water. Sometimes they are to remove stones from the water and throw them as far away from the water as possible' (ibid.: 248). At the furthest distance from its origins, each stone – whether in the Boyne valley Neolithic or the Cardozan rite – anticipates in its configuration a collage aesthetic, suggestive of the rectifying *tiqqun* implicated when, by 'its act of *gathering*, the elemental class of human society appoints itself to introduce order among the products of the elemental power of nature' (Marx 1842), together performing 'their combinations in a world that comes after them' (Benjamin 1996d: 447). Relativised through the prism of Einstein's comment on quantum entanglement as 'spooky actions at a distance' (1971: 158), these timely, unconditional 'skatterlings of a stone' (FW 73.34), 'the "rejected stones" of the seemingly non-existent "impossible"' (Bielik-Robson 2020b: 65), are projected beyond the timelessness of 'the conventional concept of objectivity' (Benjamin 1996c: 404-405), breaking through the natural condition of 'the empirical, immediately given phenomenon' (Korsch 1972: 55).⁴⁴

À Une Passante

Rather than 'Lave that bloody stone as it is!' (FW 80.29) in 'Rockquiem eternal' (FW 499.11), the release of singulars, 'pregnant with the objective memory of paradise' (Pensky 1993: 122), from the continuum of 'natural order', asserts the disjunctive, atomising principle of an allegorical approach antagonistic to the coercive 'hierophany of a stone', which

is pre-eminently an ontophany; above all, the stone is, it always remains itself, it does not change – and it strikes man by what it possesses of irreducibility and absoluteness and, in doing so, reveals to him by analogy the irreducibility and absoluteness of being

(Eliade 1959: 155).

Escape from the ‘absolutized immanence’ (Adorno 1973: 106) of this Egypt of Being may be conceivable amidst remnants at the head of Tremadoc Bay, near Porthmadog: Cist Cerrig, three tall stones that remain of a Neolithic portal dolmen (Lynch 1969: 129), a chambered tomb overlooked by a hauntingly cranial eminence, Moel-y-Gest: ‘as if you was seeheeing the gheist that stays forenenst, you blessed simpletop domefool!’ (FW 299.14-16). The anthropomorphic ‘humptyhillhead’ (FW 3.19) of Moel-y-Gest lends itself to a superficial characterisation of *the thinking of the thinker*, ‘that arrogates to itself the self-enclosed unity of the Godhead existing before all creations and emanations’, a ‘fundamentally impermeable being-in-oneself’, which is the ‘fortress into which the self-possessed spirituality retreats before the exacting demand of answering life over against one’ (Buber 2002: 69-70).⁴⁵ As hopelessly undialectical as Martin Buber’s *tsimtsum*-inflected characterisation of thinking is, so apparent ‘fortifications’ on Moel-y-Gest’s summit belie a certain complexity, for they may have more religious than military significance, attested by great numbers of white quartz pebbles in the bank that surrounds the ‘citadel’ (RCAHMW 1964: 117), recalling Joyce’s epigraphic ‘head... full of pebbles’. For the purpose of the discussion that follows, Moel-y-Gest becomes a dislocated surrogate for *The Castle* of Kafka’s eponymous novel, pertinent to Scholem’s and Benjamin’s dialogue on ‘Life as it is lived in the village at the foot of the hill on which the castle is built’ (Benjamin 1994: 453). Their divergent readings of Kafka oscillate between Scholem’s wish ‘to maintain *the antinomian lesson of the Jewish Law* (...) now reduced only to the mystifying “nothing” that cannot mean anything in the world dominated by mere life... but still can retain its resistant and vestigial validity’ (Bielik-Robson 2017c: 267, emphasis in original), and Benjamin’s view that the fading of the Law, its receding into nothing, and its dissolution into the hetaeric universe of bare life means ‘*Nothing remains of revelation*’ (ibid.: 267, emphasis in original) in ‘the strange twilight of life in the village at the foot of the hill’ (ibid.). Scholem protests against Benjamin’s reading, accusing him of going too far with the elimination of theology, but through their ‘two nothings’ one may perceive Joyce’s diagrammatic ‘nought in nought’ (FW 616.2) on page 293, configuring their quarrel over ‘*the dialectics of nothingness*’ (Bielik-Robson 2017c: 266, emphasis in original), explored in the archaeology below.

The distinctive arrangement of the three upright stones of Cist Cerrig identifies them as the front of a portal dolmen (Lynch 1969: 129). It is presumed that the chamber faced uphill, as it is a consistent feature of tombs of this class in North Wales. In the approach downhill, the chamber is framed against the wide expanse

of the sea including the peninsula at Criccieth, which forms the visual context for the stone monument, as the sea does for many other Neolithic tombs in the Lleyn peninsula and the Isle of Man (Fowler and Cummings 2003: 5). Many sites also have visual references to mountains, as well as being located in the close vicinity of stone outcrops (ibid.: 3). Cist Cerrig has both these attributes, for twenty-three metres away, a rock outcrop juts from the ground, a row of engraved cupules running vertically from ground level up its sloping face. They may mark a path where ‘wee deader walkner’⁴⁶ (FW 170.18) from the tomb to an aquatic otherworld, a land-water relationship noted of footsole carvings at Bronze Age funerary monuments in Scandinavia (Bradley 2000: 144).⁴⁷ John Rhys retains ‘a fairly good recollection’ of an ‘eloquent tale’ about the courtship of a sailor from Moel-y-Gest and a mermaid which, frustratingly, he does not record (Rhys 1901: 81); in the *Wake*’s ‘grampurpose, the manyfathom brinegroom with the fortyinch bride’ (FW 362.8-9). Almost certainly classifiable as a ‘Swan Maiden’ narrative, typified by the bride who decides to leave her human husband and resume her form as swan or mermaid (Leavy 1994), the tale of Melusine, a character regarded as simultaneously ‘a legitimizing political symbol and a subversive romance figure’ (Elmes 2017: 94), shares many elements of these tales.⁴⁸ Uttering a ‘doleful cry’ (Woodcock 2018: 40-41), Melusine flees after her husband discovers her bathing in her form as serpent from the waist down; her footprint reputedly visible on a windowsill in the castle of Mervent (Urban, et al 2017: 1). In her cry is recognisable what Scholem called ‘the lament of natural things’, likened to ‘the scream of a birth’ (Lazier 2008: 156), directed against ‘the hopeless cyclicalness of nature’ (Bielik-Robson 2014a: 101). Perhaps the Cist Cerrig cupules trace the departure – ‘Out of a hillside into a hillside. Fairshee fading’ (FW 486.33) – of such a ‘Brinabride’ (FW 399.3) from ‘the noneknown worrier; from Tumberumba mountain’ (FW 596.10-11), ‘mourning the flight of his wild guineese’ (FW 71.4), as ‘all the guenneses had met their exodus’ (FW 4.24), enacting the ‘homedromed and enlivened performance of problem passion play of the millentury, running strong since creation, *A Royal Divorce*’ (FW 32.31-33).⁴⁹ The ‘terrifying abyss’ that Kandinsky perceived, after the disappearance of the object in modern art (Naegele 1998), is a spatial transformation which must, in the words of Carl Einstein, ‘call into question the view itself’ (“Aphorismes Méthodiques,” *Documents* (1929), 32, quoted in Naegele 1998). In his commentary on what he regarded as the very ‘secret’ of Hegel’s philosophy (Blumenfeld 2014: 113), the last chapter of Hegel’s *Phenomenology*, Marx observes ‘that the object as such presents itself to consciousness as something vanishing’ (Marx 1977: 130). In the shadow of Moel-y-Gest, from the silent ‘lamentation of the landscape’ emerges ‘a messianic radiance... out of the myth’ (Scholem 1918, quoted in Bielik-Robson 2014a: 99), the ‘paradox lust’ (FW 263.L4) whereby – following Scholem’s interpretation of Kafka – the sense of loss of the aura of revelation is ‘what constitutes revelation’s aura in the first place’ (Kaufmann 2001: 163).

A natural whorl pattern within an orthostat of Cist Cerrig, surrounded by an almond-shaped ‘aureole’ or ‘shell’, not unlike the vesica piscis of the ALP diagram, constellates the geological timescale of its formation and the contradiction that

breaks 'the compulsion to achieve identity' by means of 'the energy stored up in that compulsion and congealed in its objectifications' (Adorno 1973: 157).⁵⁰ The petrified unrest within this 'conceptual shell', conjuring up Benjamin's 'intentionless truth', suggests a form of hope that 'will not come to rest in itself, as if it were total' (Adorno 1973: 406), in its distortion the only form that the reconciliation denied to humanity could show itself (Gordon 2016: 196). The 'remembrance of suffering that has sedimented itself in the concepts waits for the moment of their disintegration' (Adorno 1970a: 47, quoted in Foster 2007: 105), that moment 'is the idea of philosophical critique' (ibid.). Considering Adorno's sedimentation of remembrance through Jacques Derrida's reflections on 'The thought of the trace', a thought 'about cinders and the advent of an event, a date, a memory' (Derrida 1992: 211), suggests a fragile evanescence to the critical moment. While Adorno realises the impossibility of grasping the whole, the particular is elusive too, as Derrida, imposed upon by an insistent phrase which had come to him, 'cinders there are' (*il y a là cendre*), cannot master or appropriate it 'once and for all' (Derrida 1991: 21), having to yield to the evidence that 'the phrase dispensed with all authorization; she had lived without me' (ibid.). Having to explain himself to it, 'respond to it – or for it', Derrida's writing almost assumes the character of Shem's, 'for the seek of Senders' (FW 389.36). In the space vacated by God, Scholem located the Sabbatian heretics' 'materialist misinterpretation' of Lurianic Kabbalah (Biale 2015: 62), a conceptual space where 'the legitimacy of misinterpretation' (Khayati 2002: 174) continues to be reasserted. Extracting 'the notion of the messianic from its religious shell' Derrida presents 'an atheist legacy of the messianic promise' (Khatib 2013), a primeval 'messianicity' evoking Benjamin's fascination with 'the Bachofenian primal world of hetaeric fluidity' (Bielik-Robson 2017c: 272). Attractive in 'its *distorted similarity* to the messianic age; the disfigured image of a "happy, lawless life" that cannot be saved *as such*', nonetheless can be 'saved dialectically as the bearer of the distorted redemptive spark that it contains' (ibid.: 273), for 'without the key that belongs to it, the Scripture is not Scripture, but life' (Benjamin 1994: 453).

Conclusion

This reconfiguration of 'unruly and contingent elements that manifest themselves fragmentarily' (Plass 2007: 173) strives 'to break the spell of second nature' (Buck-Morss 1977: 89), contemplating archaeological contexts 'as they would present themselves from the standpoint of redemption' (Adorno 2005a: 247), the 'bride's eye stammpunct' (FW 309.4) of ALP and Issy. In the messianic aura of their latent potentialities, emancipated from chronological restrictions, I do not present the past 'the way it really was' (Ranke, cited in Benjamin 1968a: 247), for 'the question of the reality or unreality of redemption itself hardly matters' (Adorno 2005a: 247). Yet, for the sake of the possibility of redemption, the Marrano theology, refracted through philosophical critique, must remain obscure, 'a darkness shining' (U 2.159), the trace 'that erases itself totally, radically, while presenting itself' (Derrida 1987: 177).⁵¹ Whatever has once been thought, however, 'must be thought elsewhere, by

others: this confidence accompanies even the most solitary and powerless thought' (Adorno 2005b: 293).⁵² Therefore, critical reflection on contradictions immanent to 'megalithic captivity' threatens *any* 'absolute claim exercised by what merely is' (Adorno 1982: 148): 'We may come, touch and go, from atoms and ifs but we're presurely destined to be odd's without ends' (FW 455.16-18).

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- 1 Adorno, writes Sebastian Truskolaski, ‘frequently intimates codes, puzzles and riddles that rely on inversions of different kinds, a tactic that recalls Leonardo Da Vinci’s practice of encrypting sensitive texts by inverting their script using a mirror’ (Truskolaski 2021: 37), a tactic adopted too in *Finnegans Wake*.
- 2 Quotations from *Finnegans Wake* are indicated by the initials *FW*, followed by page and line number.
- 3 Agata Bielik-Robson has elaborated on the ‘Marrano metaphor’ in a more affirmative manner than its first conscious use by Hannah Arendt who, in her essay, “The Jew as Pariah: A Hidden Tradition,” compared the great European thinkers and writers of Jewish origin to the Marranos, Jews in Medieval Spain and Portugal forced to convert to Christianity but who were suspected of secretly retaining their Judaism (Bielik-Robson 2019a: xi). Instead, Bielik-Robson has sought to explore the fruitful area of mixture and cross-over which allowed modern thinkers, writers and artists of Jewish origin to enter the realm of universal communication – without, at the same time, making them relinquish their Jewishness which they subsequently developed as a ‘hidden tradition’ (ibid.). The present essay was originally drafted to explore some ramifications of this ‘hidden tradition’ in novel contexts, its precursor being presented as a paper – ‘Skatterlings of a Stone’: Logics of Disintegration and the Retrieval of Critical Consciousness in Megalithic Archaeology – at *The Marrano Phenomenon Conference: Jewish ‘Hidden Tradition’ and Modernity*, September 17-18, 2019, in Warsaw.
- 4 A midrashic technique ‘known as *notarikon*’ (Mertens 2007: 58) Joyce extends to the initials, ALP and HCE, which, used as the first letter of a multiplicity of other words, announce these protagonists’ hidden presence in *Finnegans Wake*. The technique is applied in relation to these characters in this essay too.
- 5 The reversal of the expansive panoptic perspective of the Spectacle to a contraction inward condensed in the ALP diagram, is homologous to the dialectic of divine emanation and contraction/withdrawal in the Lurianic Kabbalah.
- 6 The ‘fragmentary form’ of *The Society of the Spectacle* ‘lacks systematic regularity’ (Russell 2021: 16), such that ‘a dialectical sequencing of exposition [*Darstellung*] as we might find in Hegel or Marx’ is absent (ibid.), a ‘parataxical approach to writing’ consonant with the fragmentary form of Adorno’s *Minima Moralia* (ibid.: 209, 14). Likewise, this ‘dialectical thinking of a totality’ (ibid.: 16) is operative in a way similar to that identified in Jacob Taubes’ reading of Walter Benjamin’s ‘Theses on the Philosophy of History’, whereby, each one of the theses ‘is a complete unified whole [*Einheit*] in which the entirety of the *Theses* can be found... with moments of differentiation’ (Taubes 2016: 203). This corresponds with the Situationist International’s retort to Claude Lefort’s criticism of *The Society of the Spectacle*: “The fact that “this idea is reflected in all the others” is precisely what we consider the characteristic of a *dialectical book*’ (Knabb 2006: 340, quoted in Russell 2021: 17, emphasis in original). By a parallel reasoning, the ALP diagram functions as a ‘dialectical image’.
- 7 A sobering counterpoint to the joys of a micrological immersion in the smallest detail in search of the subversive fragment, mediated by digital technology, is the difficulty of distinguishing this from the round-the-clock continuity of the culture of global capitalism that relies on voluntary, technologised micro-self-management, described as ‘a new negative unity of passivity and alterity’ by Jonathan Crary in *24/7: Late Capitalism and the Ends of Sleep* (Crary 2013, quoted in Ludtke 2015). The excess of personal commitment such a world requires leads Crary to declare that we should strive to hold sleep ‘as a radical interruption, as a refusal of the unsparing weight of our global present, of sleep which, at the most mundane level of everyday experience, can always rehearse the outlines of what more consequential renewals and beginnings may be’ (Crary 2013, quoted in Ludtke 2015).
- 8 ‘Models’ according to Adorno, ‘are the product of constellations; they are the forms generated through thinking in constellations’ (Martin 2006: 51). Most critically, they ‘are not examples; they do not simply elucidate general reflections’ (Adorno 1973: xx). Indeed, the ALP diagram gives visual form to Franz Rosenzweig’s assertion that ‘The mystery of the elements cannot be brought out into the open except by and at the curvature of the orbit. Only this curvature

leads out of the the merely hypothetical... into the categorical of visible reality' (Rosenzweig 1970: 83).

- 9 The indecipherable writing of 'illegible airy plume flights' evokes the opening fragment of the *Sefer ha Zohar, The Book of Splendour*, where, 'In the Beginning – when the will of the King began to take effect, he engraved signs [haqaq] into the heavenly sphere that surrounded him' (Scholem 1963: 3, quoted in Bielik-Robson 2021: 33). As a 'sacred forgery' written in the 13th century by Moses de Leon, who concealed his authorship by attributing the treatise to Simeon ben Yochai (Bielik-Robson 2021: 33), it is a prototype of the 'pseudostylic shamiana... piously forged' (FW 181.36-182.1-3) text of *Finnegans Wake*, 'the strangewrote anaglyphics of those shemletters' (FW 419.18-19) 'which the mother and Mr Unmentionable (O breed not his name!) has reduced to writing' (FW 420.3-5). Even in Shaun's condemnation of his 'nameless' brother, Shem, 'the pixillated doodler' (FW 421.33) of 'sinscript' (FW 421.18), the Unmentionable implies a sacred secret as well as Shaun's contempt 'For his root language' (FW 424.17), leading him to angrily utter the thunderword, for the tenth and last time in the novel: 'The hundredlettered name again, last word of perfect language' (FW 424.23-24), redolent of 'that perfection which destroys' (Beitchman 1998: 162) invoked in the tenth and last of Scholem's Ten Unhistorical Aphorisms on Kabbalah.
- 10 The complexity of ALP and Issy's relationship with other characters in *Finnegans Wake* echoes that identified by Jeffrey J. Kripal in the familial complexity of the *Shekhinah* as presented in Elliot Wolfson's interpretation of the hermeneutical experience of the kabbalistic exegete in the approach to the analogical 'king's daughter' of the sacred text (Wolfson 1994, Kripal 2001: 278). This parabolic figure of the *Shekhinah* is 'technically both a mother (as wife of God) and a lover of the kabbalist, and the maiden, as the king's (God's) daughter, is also the kabbalist's sister' (Kripal 2001: 278).
- 11 The choice of Shem as the name of Joyce's scribal alter-ego converges, whether Joyce intended such a convergence or not, with a contemporary current of Biblical exegesis. In Hebrew, *shem* is not only a common noun (meaning 'name'), it is also a proper noun, the name of a particular individual, Shem, one of the sons of Noah (Rosenstock 2017: 66). *Shem*, as both name and person, is critical to Oskar Goldberg's first publication, *Die fünf Bücher Moses (The Five Books of Moses)* (1908), his account of the numerical structure of the Pentateuch, based on the traditional method of numerological hermeneutics called *gematria* (ibid.: 42), the search for hidden relations among the words of the Hebrew Bible based on their numerical value, drawn from the sum of the values of the letters of the word (ibid.: 60). Goldberg demonstrates the recurrence of the number 26 in the genealogy of Shem, 26 being also the cumulative value of the letters of the Name of God, rendered as the four consonants YHWH (ibid.). For Goldberg such a pattern, beyond being evidence of an esoteric tradition possessed by Temple scribes and priests, actually encodes a form of 'automatic writing' (ibid.: 63). In a notebook in his archive, Goldberg wrote, 'The number system displays intentional structures [*Absichten*] without itself being intentional. There is a structure-building force. The Pentateuch wrote itself' (Rosenstock 2017: 43). This accords with the automatism of a magical, runic language evoked in a passage in *Finnegans Wake*, in which 'the world, mind, is, was and will be writing its own wrunes for ever' (FW 19.35-36). Whether Joyce was aware of Goldberg I cannot answer for now. As addressed elsewhere, Joyce's permutative 'combinatorics' of 'the Name' has strong affinities with the midrashic techniques of Biblical exegesis.
- 12 Oskar Goldberg's location of a *principle of discontinuity* in 'Hebrew metaphysics' is pertinent here. Although he does not derive this principle from Lurianic Kabbalah's 'logic of disintegration', as I suggest for Benjamin and Adorno in this essay, there are striking similarities in the implications each draws out in their respective treatment of discontinuity. As Goldberg elaborates in *Die Wirklichkeit der Hebräer* (1925), this principle of discontinuity stands 'in opposition to every sort of fatalism and waiting for a redemption that is merely the termination of a certain sequence' (quoted in Rosenstock 2017: 152). Rather – in terms redolent of the Messianic interruption of the triumphal march of progress invoked by Benjamin in 'On the Concept of History' – 'the authentic principle of discontinuity signifies the interruptibility

[*Durchbrechbarkeit*] of everything that happens with lockstep necessity' (ibid.). From his opposition of Hebrew metaphysics to every other form of metaphysics Goldberg articulates two kinds of future: 'one that is "given" and fixed, the category of future found in "world continuums" that are part of the finite reality' – a givenness which he explains underlies the predictive art of astrology – and a future 'that is not fixed but is rather produced' (ibid.). The latter, 'open' conception of futurity has echoes of Ernst Bloch's thinking of the 'Not-Yet'.

- 13 Quotations from *Ulysses* are indicated by the initial *U*, followed by chapter and line number.
- 14 Disunanimity is a feature of Joyce's lexical guerrilla war against English (Thompson 2012: 27), the language of colonial and imperial authority, as he breaks the continuity of the lateral movement across grammar with a forward or inner movement into words themselves, such that, for instance, the portmanteau word 'jams grammar, and signifies by associating, and then the free play of associations lingers like dust after dynamite as one tries to return to a lateral movement across meaning' (ibid.: 27-28).
- 15 Cubist interpretation of the Fourth Dimension and Non-Euclidean geometry and the occult and Theosophical inspiration informing it, is not an influence on the situationists to be discounted. Alexandre Mercereau writes that 'Our artists ardently desire to achieve an integral truth as opposed to an apparent reality' (Fry n.d.: 134, quoted in Gibbons 1981: 141), the Cubists refusing the imitative realism of depicting things 'as they are', citing 'the mysticism of the Primitives' who instead of 'painting the objects as they saw them... painted them as they thought them' (Fry n.d.: 129-130, quoted in ibid.). The 'coming Utopia of universal cosmic consciousness', a tenet of Theosophical belief with which Piet Mondriaan showed his familiarity (Gibbons 1981: 141), was a matter for discussion in the Situationist International in 1960, when André Frankin speculated how 'the appearance of a cosmic consciousness in the classless society; the abolition of all functional signs in human relations; and the birth of new sentiments and of other unpredictable upheavals' would 'accelerate the processes that lead to the stage of this dialectical civilisation of leisure and of work *for all humanity together*' (Frankin 1960, emphasis in original).
- 16 See Tompsett 1994 for a discussion of perspective and topology in Jorn's thought.
- 17 Joyce alludes many times to the failure of his own eyesight, the human frailty in finitude which cannot match the divine perfection, as mediated by his alter-ego, Shem, namesake of Noah's most important son and ancestor of Abraham, and a priest and prophet. According to Ibn Arabi the 'Universal Prototype', embodied in the Prophet, 'stands in the same relation to God as the pupil which is the instrument of vision to the eye' (Bakhtiar 1976: 11). T.S. Eliot's appraisal of Joyce's *Work in Progress* as 'an auditory imagination abnormally sharpened at the expense of the visual' (Eliot 1936: 37, quoted in Weir 1972: 172) seems predicated on an ideal of 'photographic realism', which ensures 'that loss of conventional Renaissance perspective implies dissolution of vision' (Weir 1972: 172). Nevertheless, despite his ophthalmological problems with his 'piteous onewinker' (*FW* 174.19), as Lorraine Weir observes, Shem is a 'shome' (*FW* 336.9), a variant on the Hebrew *shomer*, 'watcher', and 'a succinct expression of his desire that the world "show me", reveal itself to him' (Weir 1972: 174), a revelation with both sacred and profane, voyeuristic associations. The intermingling of these different modalities of revelation and concealment is evident in Joyce's allusion to the veiled Isis of Saïs: 'Quick, look at her cute and saise her quirk' (*FW* 208.1), as he describes her 'fishnetzveil for the sun not to spoil the wrinklings of her hydeaspects' (*FW* 208.10-11) and 'her nude cuba stockings' (*FW* 208.12).
- 18 In this regard, Joyce's geometry corresponds with the esoteric drawings of the Christian Kabbalist, Paul Yvon, particularly his *Mathematical Propositions* of 1638. A 'feminist turn' is noted in the Hebrew inscription beneath one etching, *immenu El*, which translates as 'God is our Mother' (Wilke 2017: 200). This is followed by the genital imagery of a globe within which opens a vaginal vesica piscis, 'the merciful womb of the intelligible world' (ibid.: 201), resembling that formed on page 293 of *Finnegans Wake* which, in its hypnagogic 'dreamerish' (*FW* 608.19) language, 'pubably... resymbles a pelvic or some kvind' (*FW* 608.23).

- 19 Nevertheless, Adorno had misgivings about what he called Benjamin's 'Medusa-like gaze', the 'deathly shimmer' that turns its object to stone, congealing it to a kind of ontology, which would necessitate a 'critical reliquification' (Helmling 2009: 105-106).
- 20 The *unique* that Adorno appears to invoke in his attending to the nonidentity of the 'smallest intramundane traits' with their 'cover concept' (Adorno 1973: 408), calls to mind Oskar Goldberg's metaphysics – perhaps even something of what Adorno calls the 'solidarity between such thinking and metaphysics at the time of its fall' (ibid.). Goldberg identifies Adam Kadmon as the 'transcendental organism', comprising 'the multiplicity of uniquenesses' – not interchangeable or identical – deriving from the Uniqueness (*Einzigkeit*) that is, in Goldberg's transcription, IHWH Echad, the One (Echad) God of his *Die Wirklichkeit der Hebräer*, published in 1925 (Rosenstock 2017: 79, 121). It is an interesting coincidence that Echad is echoed in the permutations of HCE as ECH in *Finnegans Wake*, identified by Gibson as the Irish God and High King of Ireland, ECH/Eochaid (Gibson 2005: 40).
- 21 A *living* present that implicates – and shatters, at least conceptually – the *dead* time of capitalist production/consumption and the 'death-dominated and death-orientated thought' of Heidegger (Bielik-Robson 2019b: 40). The concept of *kairos*, considered as a 'shrinking of chronological time' comparable to the Divine gesture of contraction in *tsimtsum* (Sawczyński 2018: 83), appears in the political theology of Giorgio Agamben (ibid.), a project compromised, however, by its deep philosophical debt to Heidegger and Carl Schmitt. In a book which came to my attention as I was finishing this essay, Humberto Beck identifies an 'instantaneist chronotope' rising to prominence in inter-war Germany, the *moment of rupture* as a figure of thought, summed up in the metaphorical 'blink of an eye' (*augenblick*) (Beck 2019). Tracing antecedents for the idea of temporal instantaneity – elaborated by Walter Benjamin and Ernst Bloch, but also by conservative revolutionary, Ernst Jünger – in the historical self-fashioning of the French Revolution as *radical rupture*, in Goethe's literary treatment of the motif of the *intense moment*, and in the early German Romantics' aesthetic category of *suddenness* (Beck 2019: 21), there are unmistakable convergences with themes covered here.
- 22 In *Ulysses*, Leopold Bloom – 'the false Messiah! Abulafia!' (*U* 15.1907) – explains to Stephen the arithmetical values of the Hebrew letters (*U* 17.739).
- 23 Answering his riddle – 'What railway opera is like a tramline in Gibraltar? The Rows of Castele' (*U* 15.1724) – Bloom anticipates Joyce's equation of Dublin tramway stops in *Finnegans Wake* with the 'stations' of the Sephiroth, which extend to Howth Head, both head of HCE and *Keter*, the 'Crown'.
- 24 In the *Zohar* the ancient Hebrew lampstand, the Menorah – blooming with almond blossom – reflects the structure of the lower seven sefirot from Binah, the great mother, to Malkhut, the last of the sefirot (Wolski 2010: 230). This configures Molly Bloom and her daughter, Milly, as embodiments of Binah and Malkhut respectively, anticipating ALP and Issy's relationship.
- 25 The seductions of natural beauty refused by Scholem as 'pantheist deceit' (Lazier 2008: 157) are also decried by Adorno: 'Even the blossoming tree lies the moment its bloom is seen without the shadow of terror; even the innocent "How lovely!" becomes an excuse for an existence outrageously unlovely' (Adorno 2005a: 25).
- 26 The suggestion that the diamond at the centre of the ALP diagram embodies the principles of crystallogical measurement as formalised by Miller's Indices (Paré 2013) is relevant here. Translated to three dimensions the lozenge takes the form of an octahedron, the form assumed by the minerals diamond and gold when fully developed. The angles of the axes and the ratio of the lengths of the parameters are the 'elements' of a crystal. Applied to the octahedron the indices of each of the eight faces is 111 (ibid.), corresponding with the gematric value of ALP in the *Wake's* 'polyhedron of scripture' (*FW* 107.8). Considered alongside Oskar Goldberg's conviction that he had found proof that the entire Pentateuch was a 'number structure' that had 'crystallised' the divine *shem* in the Hebrew language (Rosenstock 2017: 66), the crystalline dimensions of ALP are intensified. For Goldberg, *shem* is the one word whose consonantal root, the two consonants, *shin* and *mem*, uniquely reflects the connection between

the Hebrew language and the transcendental reality (Rosenstock 2017: 64). The verb *shamam*, having the same root letters as *shem* (with the *mem* doubled), and its meaning, according to Goldberg, ‘shows the basic connotation of the root: “to harden, to crystallize”’ (ibid.: 65). As a ‘crystal formation’ *shem* therefore ‘refers to a *transcendental world system*’ (ibid.: emphasis in original). Indeed the doubling of *mem* – the individual letter, other than *aleph*, most intimately connected in *Finnegans Wake* to ‘the mum’, ALP – is echoed in the doubling circles which enclose ALP’s intensive infinity in ‘the book of Doublends Jined’ (FW 20.15-16). In this way, it may condense Benjamin’s monadic ‘crystal of the total event’ (Benjamin 1999: 461) which escapes the objective, sequential ‘falling into step’ of chronology: ‘eskiping the clockback, crystal in carbon, sweetheartedly’ (FW 579.5-6). At this point, I draw attention to Spurgeon Thompson’s wish to escape ‘inhibiting, rigid patterns’ in contemporary interpretations of *Finnegans Wake* characteristic of the ascendancy of ‘genetic criticism’ (Thompson 2012: 17). In his averral, ‘I want to turn the clock back... to a time when we didn’t know what we were doing’ (ibid.), is implicit the proper approach to the ‘intentionless state of being’ of truth (Benjamin 1998: 36).

- 27 The story of the veiled image of Isis at Saïs, ‘the unveiling of which was fatal for whomsoever thought thereby to learn the truth’ (Benjamin 1998: 36), demonstrates, for Benjamin, the content of the phrase, ‘Truth is the death of intention’ (ibid.). The very nature of truth quenches ‘even the purest fire of the spirit of inquiry’ because truth ‘is not an intent which realizes itself in empirical reality; it is the power which determines the essence of this empirical reality’ (ibid.).
- 28 In Adorno’s inverse theology philosophy ‘which presents reality as such today only veils reality and eternalizes its present condition’ (Adorno 1977: 120).
- 29 Benjamin’s elaboration of ‘a non-Hegelian speculative experience’ (Caygill 1998: 3), separate from Hegel’s ‘developmental history of spirit’ and the ‘continuous process of mediation’ (ibid.: 2), may ultimately be judged ‘a cautionary failure’ that ‘left in its wake the ruins of a number of uncompleted/uncompletable projects’ (ibid.: 3). Yet, falling short of a dubious and illusory ‘philosophical success’, such ruins echo the situationist evaluation of ‘[t]he assault of the first workers movement against the whole organisation of the old world’ (Anon. 1962), in which ‘[t]he apparent successes of this movement are actually its fundamental failures (reformism or the establishment of a state bureaucracy), while its failures (the Paris Commune or the 1934 Asturian revolt) are its most promising successes so far, for us and for the future’ (ibid.). Their promise, as in the messianic promise of Benjamin’s uncompleted fragments, is predicated upon ‘the moment of the all-or-nothing qualitative leap’ (ibid.).
- 30 The messianic connotations of breaking the mythic, pleromatic flow of commodity production and consumption would not have been lost on Attila Kotányi, a participant in the circle around the Budapest Dialogical School of Lajos Szabó, in which the ideas of Martin Buber and Franz Rosenzweig were discussed. Kotányi transmitted the dialogical principle and the political theory of subjectivity of the Budapest Dialogical School to the Situationists in Paris (Kotányi 2020, Elhajoui 2020), evident in Debord’s thesis that the spectacle ‘is the opposite of dialogue’ (Debord 1983: Para.18). With his shaky grasp of French (he had fled Hungary in 1956), Kotányi’s ‘approximations – he often used one word in place of another – gave birth to a poetry that gave weight to his remarks. His chaotic way of articulating words and coupling them together petrified some people’ (Vaneigem 2015: 49), an assessment that lends Joycean, even Abulafian, connotations to Kotányi’s play with language. The ‘Marrano metaphor’ seems to apply to his thinking, for he ‘had studied Kabbala in depth’ (Trier 2019: 230), a metaphor extendable to the Situationist International, within which he was for a time a time a leading theorist. Indeed, his expulsion from that organisation in 1963 was predicated on his desire for ‘the Kabbala to become central to the SI’s vision of the revolutionary project, which of course Debord and all other SI members rejected’ (ibid.). Nevertheless, Raoul Vaneigem acknowledged the impact of Kotányi’s critique of ‘myth and mythology’ on his own thinking (Vaneigem 2015: 53). By 1995, Kotányi told Vaneigem that his only interest ‘was deepening the notion of the Sabbath’ (ibid.: 54), defined as the radical suspension of all activity, a notion

- consistent with the situationist critique of work and the messianic impulse of a renascent Sabbatianism. Indeed, for Oskar Goldberg the Sabbath is the ‘act of interruption’ [*Unterbrechungsakt*], ‘the Nothing from which God brought forth the world’ (Goldberg 1935: 190, quoted in Rosenstock 2017: 193), in other words, ‘a principle of discontinuity that disrupts every possible closure of the system of nature and opens up the possibility of the new’ (Rosenstock 2017: 193). Vaneigem implies that Kotányi embodied such a principle in playing ‘the role of trigger, even if the sparks went in all different directions’ (Vaneigem 2015: 53).
- 31 After all, *individual* suffering, postulates Adorno, is the Archimedean point of every critical theory (Bielik-Robson 2014b: 133).
- 32 *Finnegans Wake*’s figure of concentration, inducing exuberant multiplication of the nonidentical, and a likely inspiration for Danish artist, Asger Jorn’s topological exploration of the ‘transformative morphology of the unique’ (Shield 1998: 110-122), differs from the similarly *Tsimtsum*-inflected ‘philosophy of absolute concentration’, advanced at the same time by Siegfried Marck and critiqued in 1938 by Max Horkheimer for its exclusion and elimination of all “eccentricities” (Angermann 2021: 264).
- 33 Carrington’s fleeting, nevertheless deeply problematic, identification as Max Ernst’s ‘Bride of the Wind’ until their forced separation and her subsequent descent into mental illness, described in her memoir, *Down Below*, lends a ‘shekhinic’ quality to this period of her life.
- 34 For the historian of myth, Oskar Goldberg – at the periphery of whose circle Walter Benjamin hovered – ‘the cycles of birth and death are also the trajectory of the civilisation that has culminated in the machine world which he saw as a menace to life itself’ (Björk 2019: 341).
- 35 The dish of Plumtree’s Potted Meat in *Ulysses* draws attention – via the lewd metaphor of ‘potting the meat’ in its name (Gifford and Seidman 1988: 87) – to the break in Divine emanation realised in Leopold and Molly’s sexual disjuncture. A home without it is ‘Incomplete’, but ‘With it an abode of bliss’ (*U* 5.144-47), presenting a profane prefiguration of the epiphanic vision of ‘The heaventree of stars hung with humid nightblue fruit’ (*U* 17.1039) (see Leland 2014).
- 36 Evocative of ‘a return to the living religious matrix’ suggested by what Benjamin called the ‘liquidation of theology’ (Bielik-Robson 2020a: 244), this submerged context is still capable of ‘making gods’ (Bergson 1977: 317, cited in *ibid.*).
- 37 The deposition of the dead within the liminal coastal zone is a tradition which has been maintained to the present day in northern Scotland, where the majority of cemeteries are placed as close as possible to the sea (Pollard 1999, quoted in Pollard 2000: 154).
- 38 The cosmogenic dimensions of an ‘enormous, all-sensing oyster’ is central to Jennifer Croft’s description of the task of being the translator of Olga Tokarczuk’s novel, *The Books of Jacob* (Tokarczuk 2021, Croft 2022). Feeling ‘the smallest vibration of particles of light’ the oyster ‘contracts inside itself and there remains after it a little space, where right away out of absolutely nothing there appears a world’ (Croft 2022). It is no coincidence, as Croft emphasises, that the Polish word for “oyster” (*ogromna*) is feminine, so every adjective that applies to it in the original describes a feminine being in Tokarczuk’s reworking of Scholem’s interpretation of the Lurianic Divine contraction (Croft 2022). In *Finnegans Wake* the bivalvular form of the mollusc opens/closes in the ALP diagram, ALP being the ‘paradismic perimutter’ (*FW* 298.27) in the coincidence of the self-limiting/expanding perimeter/perlmutter (German: ‘mother-of-pearl’).
- 39 Adorno writes, ‘ideas are left behind as the *caput mortuum* of the life that has been abandoned by spirit’ (1970a: 92, quoted in Foster 2007: 106).
- 40 The Greek/Latin name for the almond tree, *amygdale*, ‘derives from the Hebrew *em gedolah*, great mother’ (Wolski 2010: 230).
- 41 Marx’s ‘midrashic’ commentary on Hegel (Fischman 1991: 86) articulates a similar metaphor concerning Hegel’s dialectic, which must be inverted ‘to discover the rational kernel in the mystical shell’ (Marx, quoted in Wood 2004: 215).
- 42 This ‘marriageable’ couple is signified by Joyce in the portable (‘carriageable’) earthly dwelling place of Yahweh, the Tabernacle, constructed by Moses to accompany the Israelites on their

journey through the wilderness: 'Tabernacul in tipherairy, sons, travellers in company and their carriageable tochtters' (FW 584.31-32). This coincides with what Oskar Goldberg regarded as the moment of humanity's past metaphysical glory, 'when Israel encamped in the desert around the tabernacle, the dwelling place of YHWH' (Rosenstock 2019: 225).

- 43 In parts of Italy, Cinderella was known as L'Isabellucia (Bayley 1912: 284), offering another linguistic path to identify Lucia Joyce with Issy.
- 44 This invites comparison with Oskar Goldberg's formulation of the 'interruption act' [*Unterbrechungsakt*] that 'preserves Uniqueness in its transcendence' as a 'multiplicity of uniquenesses' (Rosenstock 2017: 83).
- 45 The influence of Hasidism on Martin Buber may be at play in his translation of the Divine retreat into the individual psychology of the thinker, suggested by Joey Rosenfeld's description of how the Baal Shem Tov read and translated 'the intricate details' of the kabbalah of Isaac Luria 'into the psychological register, transferring the locus of the Arizal's system from the hidden depths of the Godhead to the hidden depths of the individual soul, thereby democratizing the once guarded secrets of concealed wisdom' (quoted in Karr 2006-2021: 2).
- 46 Joyce invokes Ibsen's play, *When We Dead Awaken*, about the conflict between a sculptor, Rubek, and his female model, Irene, which shows 'the price paid *by women* for man's nostalgia for the whole' (Verstraete 1998: 14, emphasis in original).
- 47 A finely-chiselled, rectangular block of white quartz I found lying on the ground at the foot of the dry stone wall abutting this outcrop may originally have been placed along the top course of this wall – 'the whitestone ever hurtleturtled out of heaven' (FW 5.17-18) – conforming to a traditional practice intended 'to ward off evil spirits' (Anon.: 2019).
- 48 Considered only as typological data within folktale classification systems, they would appear, as in 'the use of examples which Plato introduced and philosophy repeated ever since: as matters of indifference in themselves' (Adorno 1973: xx).
- 49 The association of fleeing women – compelled to fly by the betrayal, cruelty or severe judgment of a spouse or parent – with particular mountains and rock formations is a recurrent one. A striking story is that called *Aine cnoc Aine* (Aine of Knockainey) from west Donegal, Ireland. A man living near Teilionn had an only daughter called Aine. On a wet and foggy day her father told her to go to the hill and gather up the cattle and bring them home. Unable to find them before nightfall, she returned home. 'Where are the cattle?' her father asked. When she said that she had not found them, he ordered her roughly to go out and not return until she had found them. She went out again, but soon afterwards the man felt sorry for what he had done. He hurried out to call her back, only to see her walking into the rock called Creig na Caillighe ('The Rock of the Old Woman') (Logan 1981:55-56). It is possible here to perceive a mythic model for Joyce's characterisation of ALP, the Old Woman as 'Gran Geamatron' (FW 257.4-5), and her disappearing daughter, Issy.
- 50 To focus on the striking resemblance of this pattern to the painting, *Cinderella* (c.1901-23), by Margaret Macdonald Mackintosh (1864-1933) – even the focus on patterns of mimesis that run through this essay like the words in a stick of seaside rock – risks succumbing to this very compulsion to achieve identity.
- 51 In his copy of Gershom Scholem's *Von der Mystischen Gestalt der Gottheit*, Paul Celan underlined the sentence reading 'The righteous one stands in Nothingness' and explicitly linked it to his own poem, *Mandorla* (Lipszyc 2017: 319), in which 'What dwells in the almond is Nothing' (quoted in *ibid.*: 316).
- 52 Adorno's solitary and powerless thought may be said, nevertheless, to articulate something of the potential detected by Benjamin in the fragmentation of language: 'Even in their isolation the words reveal themselves as fateful. Indeed, one is tempted to say that the very fact that they still have a meaning in their isolation lends a threatening quality to this remnant of meaning they have kept' (Benjamin 1998: 208).