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DIACRITIC ASPIRATIONS AND SERVILE LETTERS: ALPHABETS AND NATIONAL IDENTITIES IN JOYCE'S EUROPE

TEKLA MECSNÓBER

Abstract: Taking Joyce's Ithacan references to "diacritic aspirations" and "servile letters" (*U* 17.747-8) as its starting point, this essay explores the ways in which Joyce's uses of diacritics and references to various script styles (Gaelic, Hebrew, "gothic") seem to be informed by the uses that national and international alphabets were put to in various European countries in the first four decades of the twentieth century. Joyce's personal exposure to the biscriptal Irish and multiscriptal Austro-Hungarian environment in the pre-war era is compared to his exploration of national diacritics in his late 1921 comic additions to the "Cyclops" episode of *Ulysses*, while his 1925 addition, and subsequent neglect, of "international" diacritics to the Wakean mamafesta is interpreted in the context of contemporary linguistic works and political processes. The essay concludes that Joyce's use of diacritics and his reference to "diacritic aspirations" and "servile letters" can be meaningfully linked to the insight that diacritics are capable of encoding nationalist as well as internationalist aspirations, and that letters of distinctive scripts are capable of serving not only strictly communicative, but also symbolic political purposes – as they most certainly did in Joyce's Europe.

In a liberated nocturnal moment of intercultural sharing, the catechetical narrator of "Ithaca", possibly also speaking for Leopold Bloom and Stephen Dedalus, produces a catalogue of "points of contact" that exist between the "ancient Hebrew" and "ancient Irish" languages and "between the peoples who spoke them" (*U* 17.745-6, 724-5). This learned list begins with references to Stephen's and

Bloom's previous "oral" and "glyphic" comparisons of the two languages, and records "the presence of guttural sounds, diacritic aspirations, epenthetic and servile letters in both languages" (U 17.747-8). In this study I wish to explore how the last two orthographic points can be seen to make much more general sense than their truly Ithacan style of respectable but seemingly narrow technicality would suggest.

1 Aspirations and letters: the politics of writing

At first sight, the narrator's reference to "diacritic aspirations" seems rather straightforward, suggesting that in written Hebrew as well as in written Irish Gaelic, diacritics – that is, "signs or marks used to distinguish different sounds or values of the same letter or character" – indicate the linguistic phenomenon called *aspiration*, whereby a sound is pronounced "with a breathing" or has "h or its supposed equivalent" added to it.¹ This definition, however, only begins to make descriptive sense in the case of these two languages if we remember that nineteenth- and early twentieth-century grammars also used the term *aspiration* for the "spirant" (fricative) pronunciations of stops (plosives), for instance, for the pronunciation of [p] as [f]. Under this interpretation, the diacritics that come closest to the Ithacan description are the ancient short horizontal overbar (◌̄) called *rafe* (or *raphe*) in Hebrew, and the overdot (◌̇) known as *ponc séimhithe* in Irish Gaelic.² While Irish texts printed in standard Roman characters generally marked (and mark) "aspiration" (or rather spirantization,

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1. See "diacritic", adj. and n. and "aspire" v., *OED* Second Edition (1989), online version September 2012; entries first published in 1895 and 1885, respectively.

2. For the Hebrew *rafe*, see Wilhelm Gesenius, *Gesenius's Hebrew Grammar* (the 1813 text revised and enlarged by Emil Kautzsch (1909), trans. A.E. Cowley, second ed., (Oxford: Clarendon, 1910, repr. 1956), §13-14, online: http://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Gesenius%27_Hebrew_Grammar. For an overview of the notation of consonant mutations in Irish, see Peter T. Daniels and William Bright, *The World's Writing Systems* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), pp. 656–60.

and more generally, lenition) by inserting an *h* after the affected consonant letter, the use of the Irish “diacritic aspiration” had, by the late nineteenth century, become firmly associated with the use of a distinctive Gaelic letter type. Also called the “Irish character”, this local version of the Latin alphabet, based on early medieval monastic manuscript styles that developed on the British Isles from their uncial and half uncial predecessors in North Africa and Europe, came by Joyce’s time to be seen as a strong visual marker of the Irish character of anything printed with it.³

The Joycean reference to “servile” letters (“not belonging to the root of the word in which [they] occur [...]; serving to express a derivative or flexional element”)⁴ is similarly significant. The distinction between “root” and “servile” letters, traditional in Hebrew, appears to have been introduced into Irish grammatical discourse in the eighteenth century with explicit reference to the Hebrew counterparts, to describe consonants affected by what we now would call “nasalisation” or “eclipsis” in Gaelic grammar – while at the same time no doubt appropriating some of the aura of antiquity and respectability surrounding the ancient biblical language.⁵ As this last gesture towards Hebrew suggests, seemingly technical linguistic descriptions often have their ideological agendas.⁶

Such symbolic interpretations of linguistic details are, of course, not far from Joyce’s point. While Leopold Bloom and Stephen Dedalus engage in a comparison of the sounding (“phonic”) as well as written (“glyphic”) manifestations of Gaelic and Hebrew, the narrator

3. For the development of insular script styles, see Daniels and Bright, *The World’s Writing Systems*, pp. 317–18. For Irish printing types, see Dermot McGuinne, *Irish Type Design: A History of Printing Types in the Irish Character* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 1992). For an exploration of views of the printed “Irish character” as embodying the Irish character, see Seamus Deane, *Strange Country: Modernity and Nationhood in Irish Writing Since 1790* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997). For images of the Gaelic script, see the entry “Gaelic type” on Wikipedia.

4. Epenthetic letters are “inserted in the middle of words” or “not itself sounded, but serving to lengthen the preceding vowel, as *e* in *tune*”. See “epenthetic” and “servile” adj. 7b and 7c, *OED* Second Edition (1989), online version September 2012.

5. See Andrew Dohlevy’s bilingual English-Irish *The Catechism or Christian Doctrine by Way of Question and Answer* (Paris, 1742), 508ff for borrowing the term “servile letters” from Hebrew orthography for the description of Irish. (Access through Google Books.)

6. For an exposition of the pivotal role of philology in European cultural nationalisms, see Joep Leerssen, “Nationalism and the Cultivation of Culture”, *Nations and Nationalism*, Vol. 12 (2006), pp. 559–78.

assures us that their knowledge of these languages is neither active nor extensive, but “[t]heoretical” and “confined” (*U* 17.743). It is also not necessarily very reliable: if we can believe Brendan O Hehir, the Ithacan rendition of Stephen’s recitation of the ballad “Shule Aroon” or *Siúl a rín* is faulty at several points, including some that are specifically singled out later as significant parallels with Hebrew. Thus, all diacritics are omitted (although the ones needed here would be the simple acute accents known as *síneadh fada*), there is an unnecessary (almost “epenthetic”) letter in “siocair” (correctly: *socair*), while practically all the silent (not to say “servile”) *i* letters indicating the palatalization of the neighbouring consonant are either placed incorrectly (“*suil*” for *siúl*), or altogether forgotten (as in “*cuin*” for *ciúin*) (*U* 17.727).⁷ Similarly unreliable is Bloom’s knowledge of Hebrew writing: after Stephen “wrote the Irish characters for gee, eh, dee, em, simple and modified” (the latter being marked by the length marker *fada* or by “diacritic aspirations”), Bloom’s list of roughly corresponding Hebrew characters fails to include “mem.”

Tellingly, neither man attempts to write down more than a few disconnected characters, and certainly neither undertakes to produce a meaningful text. The fact that the display and comparison of ancient written characters, which is to give rise to the ensuing learned linguistic, historical and political discourse, takes place on “the penultimate blank page of a book of inferior literary style, entitled *Sweets of Sin*” (*U* 17.733-4) also implies an ironical attitude on Joyce’s part. Soon afterwards, Stephen Dedalus’s writing “his signature in Irish and Roman characters” highlights the highly constructed and complex nature of his cultural identity: Stephen’s Irish signature is presumably a transliteration, with Irish characters, of the English version of the Latin transcription of the Greek names

7. Compare Brandan O Hehir, *A Gaelic Lexicon for Finnegans Wake and Glossary for Joyce’s Other Works* (Berkeley and Los Angeles; University of California Press, 1967), p. 352, online: <http://digital.library.wisc.edu/1711.dl/JoyceColl.OHehirGaelicLex>. O Hehir notes that *siúl* would in Joyce’s time have been spelled mostly as *siubhal*, but Joyce’s spelling seems to have been based, like the later spelling *siúl*, on pronunciation (xi). However, Joyce clearly did not remember the rules concerning the indication of palatalized consonants in Irish.

Στέφανος and Δαίδαλος⁸ – and thus a visual counterpart of Buck Mulligan’s early remark on the “mockery” of the “absurd name, an ancient Greek” of the Irish “bard” (*U* 1.34, 1.72). Stephen’s writing of his signature in Irish characters, like Bloom’s mnemotechnically somewhat defective singing of the “Hatikvah” (*U* 17.763-4) and both characters’ previous display of Gaelic and Hebrew, is not meant for practical communication: it is almost purely a symbolic expression of aspects of their cultural identity.

The notion that such cultural identities are often associated with national, or even nationalist political aspirations, is finely encoded in the list of “points of contact” mentioned at the beginning. This list of similarities between the Hebrew and Irish languages and “the peoples who spoke them” (a definition that could clearly not easily cover Stephen Dedalus and Leopold Bloom) begins innocently enough with “diacritic aspirations” and “servile letters,” but concludes with “the restoration in Chanah David of Zion and the possibility of Irish political autonomy or devolution” (*U* 17.759-60). Moreover, if, according to the narrator, the “Hatikvah” (which was by 1904 an anthem of the Zionist movement) was chanted by Bloom “partially in anticipation of that multiple, ethnically irreducible consummation” (*U* 17.761-2), then Stephen’s subsequent writing of his signature in Gaelic letters at Bloom’s request may also be seen as a similar, politically anticipatory gesture.

The orthographic and typographic peculiarities of the written form of language, its “visual identity”, are here in “Ithaca” clearly linked to national identities:⁹ the Irish and Hebrew scripts evoke Irish and Hebrew nationhood, and can thus be appropriated by nationalist discourses. This is an insight that Joyce could have gathered from his exposure to various “national” alphabets in Dublin, Pola, Trieste and Zurich, and appears to have informed those complex and often puzzling passages of *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake* that I wish to discuss later in this essay.

8. Brendan O Hehir reconstructs Stephen Dedalus’s signature as “Steafán Ó Deadaluis”, meaning “Stephen, desc[endant] of Deadalus,” noting that the “n[ame] does not actually occur in I[rish]”. See O Hehir, *Gaelic Lexicon*, p. 352.

9. For an extremely valuable extended overview of the role of scripts in a variety of European national identities, see Tomasz Kamusella, *The Politics of Language and Nationalism in Modern Central Europe* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008).

2 “cellelleneteutoslavzendlatinound-script”: inscribing nationhood, 1900-1919

Growing up in the Dublin of the late 19th century, Joyce could not fail noticing the presence and role of the Gaelic script around him. He studied Irish in classes organised by the Gaelic League for at least two years (albeit sporadically),¹⁰ and John Stanislaus Joyce claimed probably with some reason at the 1901 census of Ireland that his eldest surviving son was a speaker of both English and Irish.¹¹ A friend of Gaelic League activist George Clancy, Joyce would also have seen how the Gaelic League in particular promoted the use of the “Irish character” through its badges (cf. *SH* 56), textbooks (“O’Growney’s primers”, *SH* 56), and periodical publications, with the *Gaelic Journal* (*Irisleabhar na Gaedhilge*) and *An Claidheamh Soluis* displaying conspicuous ornamental Gaelic lettering and design in their mastheads.¹² By promoting the Gaelic type, the League thus effectively contributed to the distancing of the Roman type from the Irish language and reinforced the image it acquired in the previous few centuries of being associated with the English language and, for many, English political-religious supremacy.¹³

As a result of this broader association of letter styles, the use of distinctive “Gaelic” letters was by Joyce’s time not limited to the Irish language. A case in point is the “visual identity” of the music competition *Feis Ceoil*, where Joyce won a bronze medal for singing in May 1904. The programme booklet for this competition sported lettering and ornamentation reminiscent of the *Book of Kells* and later

10. Tomasz Kamusella, *The Politics of Language and Nationalism*, p. vii. Cf. also Frank Budgen’s account of Joyce’s experiences in Patrick (Pádraig) Pearse’s Irish classes in *James Joyce and the making of ‘Ulysses’, and other writings* (Oxford University Press, 1972), p. 183.

11. For an image of the census form, signed by the writer’s father, see http://www.census.nationalarchives.ie/pages/1901/Dublin/Clontarf_West/Royal_Terrace/1271356/, 1 August 2012.

12. The *Gaelic Journal* was first issued by the Gaelic Union in 1882 with a modest scholarly masthead dominated by the English words “Gaelic Journal” in Roman capitals; the new version, dominated by the Gaelic name of the journal in distinctive and ornamental Gaelic lettering, was used from 1894, after the journal had been taken over by the newly-established Gaelic League.

13. There had in fact been a debate in the 1880s and 1890s within the Gaelic Union and the Gaelic League on whether the Gaelic or the “roman” script should be promoted, but in practice, the Gaelic script prevailed. For details, see Brian Ó Conchubhair, “The Gaelic Font Controversy: The Gaelic League’s (Post-Colonial) Crux”, *Irish University Review*, vol. 33, no. 1. (Spring–Summer, 2003): 46–63.

Gaelic manuscripts, and crucially used these historically inspired letter forms for the English text as well.¹⁴ Significantly, “Gaelic” lettering had an primarily symbolic purpose here: as a vehicle for a language other than Irish, it marks an Irish cultural identity which – like that of Stephen – does not necessarily rely on the use of the Irish language.

There were also more overtly political uses of the “Irish character” in Joyce’s time. As a regular reader of Arthur Griffith’s weeklies the *United Irishman* (1899-1906) and *Sinn Féin* (1906-1914), Joyce witnessed how, after the banning of the *United Irishman* in 1906, Griffith chose the nationalist slogan *Sinn Féin* as the title of his new and longest-lived paper and prominently displayed it in the masthead – in the Gaelic type. (This stood in a symbolic contrast to, for instance, the use of “Old English” blackletter in the masthead of the *Freeman’s Journal*). The choice clearly marked Griffith’s awareness of the visual impact of the distinctive lettering for the nationalist cause, while the rest of the newspaper, excepting the Gaelic language samples of the “How to learn Irish” column, was written in English and printed in the “roman” type.¹⁵

Joyce’s early encounters with the English, Irish, Italian and French languages in Dublin and Paris could only partially prepare him for the variety of scripts that he encountered in Pola and Trieste, whose well-known and highly inspiring mix of languages was accompanied by the less often noted diversity of their particular scripts and alphabets. In addition to Italian papers and books in classic “roman” types, using very few diacritics, Joyce would have seen, for instance, German-language newspapers and other texts that used the traditional German

14. That the use of the Gaelic script was not necessarily very deeply rooted is suggested by the fact that the title page of the 1904 *Feis Ceoil* programme, although fundamentally identical with the 1903 one, “corrects” some of the problematic letters of the earlier design, in an apparent effort to reconcile authenticity with recognizability. For a reproduction of the covers of 1903 and 1904 *Feis Ceoil* programmes, see *A Joycean Scrapbook* (comp. Katherine McSharry, Dublin: National Library of Ireland, 2004), p. 52.

15. By 1910, Griffith’s paper also carried a *Déanta i nÉirinn* (Made in Ireland) logo with Gaelic lettering and a Celtic knotwork design, and regularly displayed cartoons using Irish lettering. For a reproduction of the 21 May 1910 issue of *Sinn Féin*, see the Wikipedia entry “Sinn Féin (newspaper)”, 2 February 2012. The practice of promoting the use of Irish in newspapers appears to go back to Eugene O’Growney’s influential and popular weekly “Simple Lessons in Irish” series in the *Weekly Freeman* in the 1890s.

blackletter style known as “gothic” (or in German Fraktur or “broken script”), accompanied by an orthography richly endowed with vowel diacritics (umlaut: ä, ö, ü) and consonant letter combinations and ligatures (sch, ß). He saw Croatian and Slovenian papers in roman characters with frequent consonantal diacritics (ć, č, đ, š, ž and č, š, ž), Hungarian texts studded with vowel accents (á, é, í, ó, ö, ő, ü, ű) and consonantal letter combinations (cs, dz, dzs, gy, ly, ny, sz, ty, zs), and probably also Serbian papers using the Serbian version of the modern “civil” Cyrillic alphabet. He observed Serbian churches with their traditional Church Cyrillic inscriptions and Greek churches with their Greek ones, and synagogues with their Hebrew ones. He may even have seen texts in the Arabic script, which in the early twentieth century was still used to write languages with at least some speakers in Trieste and its neighbourhood, such as Turkish, Albanian and Bosnian. He would soon encounter his future brother-in-law, the Czech František Schaurek, from whom he appears to have extracted information about both the pronunciation and the spelling of the Czech language, including its striking wealth of graphemes with diacritics (á, é, ě, í, ó, ů, ú, ý, ě, d/Ď, ň, ř, t/Ť, š, ž).¹⁶

Even in the unlikely case that Joyce did not notice all these national alphabets and scripts, he would have been made aware of them, as well as some further ones, when using most Austro-Hungarian banknotes as he received his salary or paid his rent and debts. These banknotes – accommodating spaces for the graphic and typographic self-representation of the issuing state¹⁷ – declared their multinational imperial character by indicating the denomination not only in the two major official languages of the empire, German and Hungarian, but also in the eight most important other languages, Czech, Polish, “Ruthenian” (Ukrainian), Italian, Slovene, Croatian, Serbian, and Romanian, using their national adaptations of the Latin

16. For Joyce’s proficiency in Czech, see Willard Potts, ed., *Portraits of the Artist in Exile: Recollections of James Joyce by Europeans* (San Diego etc.: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1979), pp. 134–35.

17. Nationalist exploitations of the name and imagery – although not usually the lettering – of modern coins and banknotes have received some attention in the last two decades. For an overview, see Jan Penrose, “Designing the nation: Banknotes, banal nationalism and alternative conceptions of the state”, *Political Geography* 30 (2011): 429–40.

and Cyrillic alphabets.¹⁸ As Joyce was aware, this was a linguistic gesture that was not made on banknotes used in Ireland until well after the birth of the Irish Free State, when the Currency Commission issued the first banknotes carrying both English and Irish texts – although neither in Gaelic characters – in 1928.¹⁹

As Joyce read local German-language newspapers printed in Fraktur, like the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* (JJII 441), Joyce's stay in Zurich between 1915 and 1919 must have solidified his familiarity with this script, but the Swiss city that gave temporary home to refugees with very different backgrounds must also have added to his experience of the multilingual and multi-scriptal nature of Europe.

Indeed, from an early twenty-first-century perspective, so thoroughly dominated by English-based information technology, it is easy to forget how varied the scriptal map of Europe was in the early 20th century, when Joyce knew it, and how changes, many of them during Joyce's lifetime, have turned it into the present Roman-dominated environment.²⁰ Indeed, although the Arabic script is not quite the same as the “Zend” (Avestan) one, Joyce's experiences in Dublin, Austro-Hungary and Zurich gave him familiarity with the characteristic sounds and scripts of most of the “seven sister tongues” that he seems to refer to in the Wakean compound word

18. Thus, the 10 crown note issued in 1900 and designed partly by Gustav Klimt would carry German *Zehn Kronen* in *Fraktur*, the Hungarian TIZ KORONÁT, the Czech DESET KORUN, the Polish DZIESIĘĆ KORON, the Italian DIECI KORONE, the Slovene DESET KRON, the Croatian DESET KRUNA, and the Romanian ZECE KOROANE in the appropriate version of the Latin alphabet, and the Ruthenian ДЕСЯТЬ КОРОН and the Serbian ДЕСЕТ КРУНА in the appropriate version of the Cyrillic alphabet. Naturally, further denominations would contain further diacritics in the numerals. For images of Austro-Hungarian banknotes issued in the late 1800s and early 1900s, see, for instance, the “Geldschein” site at www.geldschein.at.

19. For information on and images of Irish banknotes and coins, see <http://www.irishpapermoney.com> and <http://www.centralbank.ie>.

20. For a (not necessarily unbiased) 1901 map of the scripts used in Europe at the time, see L. Henkel, “Verbreitung der Schriftarten in Europa um 1900”, http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Scripts_in_Europe_%281901%29.jpg, 23 September 2012. The useful concept of a “scriptal environment” was introduced by Frances Trix in 1997 to refer to “language(s) and language attitudes in social space” (“Alphabet conflict in the Balkans: Albanian and the Congress of Monastir”, *International Journal of the Sociology of Language* 128 (1997), pp. 1-23; quote from p.16).

“cellelleneteutoslavzendlatinound-script” (*FW* 219.17): Cel(tic), (H)ellen(ic), Teuto(nic) (German), Slav, Zend, Latin and Sanskrit.²¹

Moreover, Joyce’s experience of the various languages of Austro-Hungary would also have made him realise that it is not necessarily the choice of script that defines the “national” nature of an orthography – as more often than not scripts tend to be borrowed from other cultures – but how it is adapted to the particular language by defining specific letter combinations or diacritical modifications. If language preservationists in countries like Poland are today concerned about the IT-induced decline in the use of diacritics as visual markers of a distinctive linguistic identity, Joyce, given his Austro-Hungarian experiences, would probably have recognised the point.²²

3 *Ulysses*: diacritic identities

In fact, it is precisely this awareness of the role of diacritics in appropriating scripts and marking nationality that seems to inform some of the more abstruse passages in the “Cyclops” episode of *Ulysses*. As Joyce could, for instance, hardly expect his readers to understand the various Hungarian expressions of the episode, he seems to use – and occasionally overuse – distinctive Hungarian graphemes to announce and comically exaggerate a Hungarian theme. Thus, the acute accent on *kedvés* (*U* 12.1841) is unnecessary, and the *ssz* of *Visszontlátásra* (*U* 12.1841) and the *czs* of *Rakóczy* (*U* 12.1828) should be the simpler *sz* and *cz*, respectively, while in the name of “Countess Marha Virága Kisászony Putrápesthi” (*U* 12.560–61) neither the Hungarian originals *kisasszony* (“miss”) and *Budapest* (or earlier *Buda-Pesth*) require the acute accents that are used, nor do, of course, the English puns *kiss ass* or *putrid pest*.²³

What Joyce seems to be engaging here in is akin to the phenomenon of “foreign branding” and “false umlaut”, that is, the use of foreign-looking orthography to suggest a nationality and through

21. McHugh, *Annotations to Finnegans Wake*, p. 219.

22. Cf. Monika Scislowska, “Poland campaigns to preserve its complex spelling”, *The Big Story*, Associated Press, posted 21 February 2013, <http://bigstory.ap.org/article/poland-campaigns-preserve-its-complex-spelling>. Examples of faulty diacritic designs at Filip Blažek’s “Diacritics Project” (<http://diacritics.typo.cz>) site also make it obvious that in the use of diacritics national standards are as specific as sensitivities are fine.

23. Joyce’s original insertion on the first page proof does not have an accent on *Putrapesthi*, but he did not cross it out on subsequent proofs.; see *JJA* 25:54, 25:81.

this, qualities that are commonly associated with that nationality.²⁴ Joyce did of course make use of similar false diacritics earlier in the episode when Paddy Dignam, now “on the path of prālāyā or return” (*U* 12.346), gives his theosophic report on the other world, where “more favoured beings now in the spirit” could enjoy “every modern home comfort such as tālāfānā, ālāvātār, hātākāldā, wātākāsāt” (*U* 12:353-4).²⁵ Here, the (mostly false) diacritics have a crucial role in creating a parody of the theosophists’ habit of interspersing their texts with Sanskrit words and thereby investing them with the aura of ancient oriental wisdom.

The list of the Friends of the Emerald Island has another member in whose name Joyce meant to use gratuitous but significant diacritics: “Goosepond P̄hklšř Kratchinabritchisitch” (*U* 12.565-6). Although the name appeared without the distinctive carons in all editions of *Ulysses* until the Gabler text of 1984 restored them, the importance that Joyce attached to these diacritics is clear from the fact that he even advised the French printer of the first edition, Maurice Darantiere, to try using inverted circumflex accents to get close to the desired effect.²⁶ Joyce’s insistence on the diacritics is understandable

24. For the use of the false umlaut by heavy metal bands like *Motörhead* or *Infernäl Mäjesty* (often in association with blackletter types), see Jürgen Spitzmüller, “Floating ideologies: Metamorphoses of graphic ‘Germanness’”, in *Orthography as Social Action: Scripts, Spelling, Identity and Power*, ed. Alexandra Jaffe, Jannis Androutopoulos, Mark Sebba and Sally Johnson (Berlin and Boston: De Gruyter Mouton, 2012), pp. 255-88.

25. Joyce patiently added the macrons on all proofs in October and November 1921 (cf. *JJA* 25:65, 81, 97), but at least one copy of the 1922 first edition (no. 785, reproduced in facsimile in the Oxford World Classics series in 1993) does not seem to have them (no. 289). Other copies (no. 925 at the Zurich James Joyce Foundation and no. 257, published in facsimile by the First Edition Library, Shelton, Connecticut) have macrons placed at uneven heights, which appears to indicate that the printer had technical difficulties with them. In contrast to the 1934 first American edition by Random House, most European editions of the novel in the 1920s and 1930s display the macrons in this passage (including the 1922 edition by the Egoist Press, the 1926 second Shakespeare and Co. edition, the 1927 German translation, the 1929 French translation, the 1932 Odyssey Press edition and the 1936 Bodley Head edition).

26. *JJA* 25:81. Joyce’s first version of the name had the carons on the second *r* and the *k* (*JJA* 25:81), but the fact that he later corrected the latter to letters that do exist in Slavic languages suggests that he had specific alphabets in mind. Incidentally, Darantiere’s decision not to use the expected accent grave on the first “e” of his last name reflected his pride in his Italian roots – itself a relevant story about the national implications of diacritics, but one that I do not have the space here to consider fully.

if we accept that he seems to have meant to mark this character as a Czech-Slovak-Croatian-Serbian-Slovenian composite from the Austro-Hungarian Empire: consonants with a caron (like the *š*) are typical of West and South Slavic languages (such as Czech, Slovak, Croatian, Serbian and Slovenian), the *ř* is unique to Czech, *gospod* and its cognates are forms of address in Slovenian as well as other Slavic languages, the variously spelled *-itch* is a common Slavic name ending, and the name “Kratchinabritchisitch” strongly recalls Joyce’s World War I limerick about the Austro-Hungarian emperor being troubled by the itching in his breeches caused by the various constituent nations of the dual empire.²⁷

The emphasis on the numerous and alien-looking diacritics and letter combinations in a chapter focusing on nationalism could serve several purposes. Most of the diacritic Hungarian seems to be there to give a touch of foreign branding to Bloom’s character, which is politically quite appropriate, since, as rumour goes, “it was he [Bloom] drew up all the plans according to the Hungarian system” for Griffith’s *Sinn Féin* movement (*U* 12.1635-6).²⁸ As was the case with Bloom’s Hebrew characters, the Hungarian phrases of “Cyclops” may also suggest a Hungarian strand in Bloom’s personal identity. However, as none of the Hungarian phrases with their digraphs and diacritics is actually produced by Bloom, and both scenes in which

See Jean-Michel Rabaté, “‘Thank Maurice’: A Note about Maurice Darantieri”, *Joyce Studies Annual* 2, (1991): 245-51.

27. “There’s a monarch who knows no repose / For he’s dressed in a dual trunk hose / And ever there itches / Some part of his breeches; / How he stands it the Lord only knows” (*JIII* 396).

28. The fictional Bloom is here credited with inspiring a historically attested policy. One of the foundational ideas behind Arthur Griffith’s *Sinn Féin* (“We ourselves”) movement, begun just after Bloom’s Ulyssean adventures, was the emulation of the 1850s “Hungarian policy” of passive resistance and self-reliance, with the aim of finally regulating the relationship between Britain and Ireland following the pattern of the dual monarchy structure that was established between Austria and Hungary in 1867. Griffith first published these views in *The United Irishman* in a series of articles that ran between January and July 1904 and were later republished in a pamphlet form as *The Resurrection of Hungary: A Parallel for Ireland* in November 1904 (reprinted in 1904, 1905 and, heavily revised, in 1918). For Joyce’s reliance on Griffith’s Hungarian parallel, see, for instance, chapter 3 in Andras Ungar’s *Joyce’s Ulysses as National Epic: Epic Mimesis and the Political History of the Irish Nation State* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2002) or my “James Joyce, Arthur Griffith, Trieste and the Hungarian National Character”, *James Joyce Quarterly* 38 (Spring-Summer 2001): 341-59.

they occur are highly visionary, this Hungarian identity does not seem to have much actual content. From this perspective, Joyce's use of distinctive Hungarian letters has similar implications to Bloom's possession of the "Gothic characters" in his copy of *Soll und Haben* by Gustav Freytag: it is a remnant of a distant Central-Eastern European past, which, as the "cigarette coupon bookmark at p. 24" (*U* 17.1383-4) suggests, does not reach very deep.

The Slavic diacritics, on the other hand, by advertising the existence of the national orthographies from which they are taken, may also be seen to underline the *de facto* cultural nationhood of the corresponding nations. In the context of the Friends of the Emerald Island, they also encode a claim to stand on an equal footing with other nations, just as the Slavic delegates of the group stand beside their independent and – historically – often imperial Italian, French, Russian, Austrian, Hungarian, American, Greek, Turkish, Spanish, Japanese, Chinese, Danish, Dutch, German Swiss and German counterparts.²⁹ This is significant because neither the Czech, nor the Slovak, nor the Slovene, nor the Croat, nor the Polish nation had an independent state either on the day the novel is set (16 June 1904) or on the day when the execution of Robert Emmet took place (20 September 1803), an event which gave rise to the kind of inflated narratives parodied here. Therefore, as was the case with the "diacritics aspirations" of Irish and Hebrew in "Ithaca", these Slav diacritics seem to suggest national(istic) aspirations.

29. Joyce's full list in the 1922 first edition reads like this: "The delegation, present in full force, consisted of Commendatore Bacibaci Beninobenone (the semiparalysed *doyen* of the party who had to be assisted to his seat by the aid of a powerful steam crane), Monsieur Pierrepaul Petitépant, the Grandjoker Vladinmire Pokethankertscheff, the Archjoker Leopold Rudolph von Schwanzenbad-Hodenthaler, Countess Marha Virága Kisászony Putrápesthi, Hiram Y. Bomboost, Count Athanatos Karamelopulos, Ali Baba Backsheesh Rahat Lokum Effendi, Señor Hidalgo Caballero Don Peadillo y Palabras y Paternoster de la Malora de la Malaria, Hokopoko Harakiri, Hi Hung Chang, Olaf Kobberkeddelsen, Mynheer Trik van Trumps, Pan Poleaxe Paddyrisky, Goosepond Prhklstr Kratchinabritchisitch, Herr Hurhausdirektorpresident Hans Chuechli-Steuerli, Nationalgymnasiummuseums-anatoriumandsuspensoriumsordinaryprivatdocentgeneralhistoryspecialprofessordoctor Kriegfried Ueberallgemein" (See the facsimile of copy no. 785 in the 1993 Oxford World's Classics edition by Jeri Johnson, pp. 294-5; cf. *U* 12:555-69). Greece gained independence from the Ottoman Empire gradually in the course of the nineteenth century.

Not irrelevantly, Joyce added all the Hungarian phrases mentioned above, as well as the Hungarian, Czech-Slovak-Croatian-Serbian-Slovenian and Polish F. O. T. E. I. delegate (the last one being “Pan Poleaxe Paddyrisky” (*U* 12.565)) to the text only when correcting and expanding the page proofs in October 1921 in Paris, and inserted the references to Irish and Hebrew “diacritic aspirations, epenthetic and servile letters” on the page proofs as late as 25 January 1922 – eight days before the first two printed copies of the novel were made available to Joyce and Sylvia Beach.³⁰ By this time, many of the political “aspirations” decipherable from Joyce’s “Cyclops” and “Ithaca” episodes had begun to bear fruit. Poles, Czechs, Slovaks, Croats and Serbs had their new independent states (Poland, Czecho-Slovakia and the Serb-Croat-Slovene State), codified in the recent treaties of Versailles (signed June 1919, effective January 1920) and of St Germain (signed September 1919, effective July 1920), which granted full rights to these languages. Representatives of Ireland had just signed the Anglo-Irish Treaty (6 December 1921), which recognized the new Irish Free State and made Irish its “National language.”³¹ On the ruins of the Ottoman Empire, the “establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people,” warranted in the Treaty of Sèvres (August 1920), was well on its way to become a reality during the British Mandate for Palestine (1922-48), with not only Arabic and English, but also Hebrew recognized as one of the official languages.³²

30. *JJA* 27:160.

31. Cf. Article 4. of the *Constitution of The Irish Free State (Saorstát Eireann) Act*, 1922, <http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/1922/en/act/pub/0001/print.html>, 1 October 2012.

32. See article 95 of the Treaty of Sevres: “The Mandatory will be responsible for putting into effect the declaration originally made on November 2, 1917, by the British Government, and adopted by the other Allied Powers, in favour of the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country.” The preamble of the “Mandate for Palestine and Memorandum by the British Government relating to its application to Trans-Jordan, approved by the Council of the League of Nations on September 16th, 1922” repeat the provisions of the 1920 treaty almost verbatim. Both texts are available online through the *World War I Document Archive* at Brigham Young University (http://www.lib.byu.edu/index.php/Post_-_1918_Documents, last accessed 6 May 2014). On the official languages, see Article 22 of the September 1922 “Mandate for Palestine”: “English, Arabic and Hebrew shall be the official languages

Diacritics appear to have remained in Joyce's thoughts for a few more years at least. In a long letter to Valéry Larbaud dated 8 July 1924, Joyce makes a new point. He thanks Larbaud for agreeing to having his French translation of parts of "Penelope" printed not only without the punctuation marks (as in the English original), but also without the accents that are prescribed by French orthography. Referring to these accents elsewhere as Penelope's "*épines*" ("thorns", *LIII* 99) and here (punningly) as "hairpins" (*LI* 218, *JIII* 562),³³ Joyce seems to suggest that they can be seen as external, potentially cumbersome and even threatening – especially to the mass of all-affirming flesh that the "perfectly sane amoral fertilizable untrustworthy engaging shrewd limited prudent indifferent *Weib*" is supposed to be (*SL* 285). The correct use of diacritics, like that of punctuation, being also a sign of a degree of erudition, one is not surprised at the link Joyce seems to make between female education and threatening quasi-masculine prickliness. In Molly Bloom's case, this is rather comic, as she uses her (accent-like) hairpin as she searches for the word *metempsychosis* in her book (*U* 5.335). University-educated Molly Ivors, on the other hand, whose sole ornament is a (prickly) "large brooch" with "an Irish device and motto" (with, in all probability, diacritics),³⁴ gives a distinctly unpleasant time to Gabriel Conroy in "The Dead" as she perseveres in her "cross-examination" and in looking at him "quizzically" (*D* 187, 189, 190).

In the same period, Joyce seems to have experienced a renewed interest in the Gaelic script as well. Between October 1923 and January 1925, as he was beginning to work on what eventually became *Finnegans Wake*, he wrote several letters to Harriet Shaw Weaver in which he used Gaelic letters to give explications of Irish words (*SL* 297, 302, 305). In the letter to Larbaud quoted above, Joyce also gave a not-too-optimistic account of the average proficiency of "citizens or subjects of Irish Free State" in the Irish language ("I think

of Palestine. Any statement or inscription in Arabic on stamps or money in Palestine shall be repeated in Hebrew and any statement or inscription in Hebrew shall be repeated in Arabic."

33. Cf. also Adrienne Monnier, *The Very Rich Hours of Adrienne Monnier*, trans. Richard McDougall, intr. Brenda Wineapple (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1996), pp. 131-32.

34. The emblem of the Gaelic League contained both "aspiration" points and length-marking acute accents.

that by now he can probably read (when sober enough) ten street names”) and illustrated the exotic nature of Irish by producing “the few strange letters of the Irish alphabet” and giving alternative spellings, in Roman and Gaelic characters, of the Irish word for “night” (*LI* 217).

4 *Finnegans Wake*: diacritic internationalisms

Joyce’s continued preoccupation with minute but highly significant typographic signs like diacritics and punctuation marks soon manifested itself in a rather puzzling passage in chapter I.5 of *Finnegans Wake*, which describes the provenance of certain holes in the letter known as the “mamafesta”. The text reads as follows in the 1939 first edition of the *Wake* (and in most editions since):

These paper wounds, four in type, were gradually and correctly understood to mean stop, please stop, do please stop, and O do please stop respectively, and following up their one true clue, the circumflexuous wall of a single-minded men’s asylum, accentuated by bi tso fb rok engl a ssan dspl itch ina, — Yard inquiries pointed out → that they ad bîn “provoked” ay Λ fork, of à grave Brofèsor; àth é’s Brèak — fast — table; ; acutely profèssionally *piqué*d, to=introduce a notion of time [ùpon à plane (?) sù ’ ’ fàc’e’] by pùnc̃t! ingh oles (sic) in iSpace?! (*FW* 123.30-124.12)

This passage clearly shows the Joycean association of diacritics – and punctuation – with prickliness, as well as the active (masculine) gesture of marking an undifferentiated and passive (female) text. However, the diacritics that Joyce uses here (the circumflex, acute and grave accents and the caron) do not suggest any particular language and are difficult to interpret in any systematic way.

This apparent lack of motivation changes radically, however, if we consider the way Joyce originally drafted these diacritics³⁵ in preparing his text for publication in the July 1925 number of *The Criterion*:

— Yard enquiries pointed out → that they *ad* ad bîn “provoked” by Λ fork, of à grave Profèss̃or; àth é’s Brèak – fast – table ; ; acutely profèss̃ionally *piqué*d, to = introduce à nòtiōn of tīme [ùpon à plāne (?) sù ’ ’rfàc’e’] by pùnc̃t! ingh oles (*sic*) in iSpāce ? ! (*JJA* 46: 355–6)

35. This is my reading of Joyce’s manuscript note, MS 47473-48 and 47473-48v.

Whatever the variations of the different readings may be,³⁶ Joyce here clearly used about a dozen different diacritics, including – at long last – “diacritic aspirations” of the classical Greek type (the smooth breathing or *spiritus lenis* (´) and, possibly, the rough breathing or *spiritus asper* (ˊ), as well as the macron (¯), the caron (ˇ), the tilde (~), the umlaut (¨), the ring above (°), possibly the breve (˘), the dot below or underdot (.), the cedilla (¸), the slash through (/), the tie shaped like a double inverted breve (ˆ) and the overbar (¯).³⁷ The richness of Joyce’s original notation was, however, dramatically reduced through the various stages of transmission that this text went through between 1925 and 1939, so that out of the 37 (or 38) original instances of diacritics, only 16 survived, representing a mere 4 kinds.

As happened with the quasi-Slavic carons and (in many editions) the quasi-Sanskrit macrons of *Ulysses*, the loss of diacritics resulted in obscuring a crucial part the original meaning. The ties in **they** and **nòtiòn** suggest, in particular, that what Joyce meant to evoke here were not national alphabets, but, primarily, phonetic notations, which – just like punctuation marks – are meant to assist the pronunciation of the written text, thus introducing “a notion of time upon a plane surface”.

Joyce’s text does in fact seem to rely on several systems of phonetic notation, including the ones he could encounter in the *New English Dictionary* (later *Oxford English Dictionary*) and in some linguistic works that he appears to have known, such as Frank H. Vizetelly’s *Essentials of English Speech and Literature* (1915) and Otto Jespersen’s *Language: Its Nature, Development and Origin* (1922). While most of these phonetic transcriptions drew on the diacritics used for various languages by various nations, many were aimed at an international readership of language learners and scholars, and some (like the IPA alphabet used and promoted by Jespersen) explicitly aspired to facilitate communication and peace between

36. For alternative readings, with a *spiritus asper* wherever I read a breve, see Danis Rose and John O’Hanlon’s 2010 edition of *Finnegans Wake* (London: The Houyhnhnm Press), p. 98, and the 2012 Oxford World’s Classics edition by Robbert-Jan Henkes, Erik Bindervoet and Finn Fordham (Oxford: Oxford University Press), p. 634.

37. In the manuscript note, an overbar covers the whole of the word **time** and an overbar or tie the last two letters of **pùñct**.

nations.³⁸ Called “Brotfresser Prendergast” in line 124.25 – and thus potentially possessing a hybrid identity that includes Anglo-Norman and Irish roots through the ancient Prendergast family name as well as German elements through Brotfresser or “bread-devourer” – Joyce’s professor is here, in effect, adding a distinctly modern scientific element to what was becoming the increasingly multinational language of the Wake: the element of an international notation, whose “diacritic aspirations” include providing pronunciation clues for all existing forms of all existing languages, and thus transcending the limitations of ordinary, nation-specific writing systems.³⁹

The “fact” that the originator of the mysterious note is soon revealed to be “Shem the Penman” (*FW* 125.23) only makes the double – anti-nationalist as well as anti-imperialist – point of the Wakean linguistic project sharper. Having been introduced to the international professor, the reader now has to imagine a specifically Irish Shem. Importantly, Shem has apparently just commanded an impish army of diacritic signs from all over Europe to invade the English text pricking through the notion of the classic purity of the English alphabet.⁴⁰ From this perspective, Shem’s diacritics appear to be an alien imposition of modern impurities on the ideal beauty of classic English letter shapes, made more disturbing by the diacritics’ apparent claims for meaning and by their alternative identities as disarranged and potentially deranged punctuation signs. Insofar as this Shamean diacritic warfare can also be seen as an act of revenge for the customary suppression of Gaelic diacritics in anglicised transcriptions,

38. For a detailed exploration of the potential interpretations and sources of Joyce’s diacritics in this passage, see my “A Notion of Joyce’s Time: Interpreting the Diacritics of *Finnegans Wake* 124.8-12”, *Genetic Joyce Studies: Electronic Journal for the Study of James Joyce’s Works in Progress*, Issue 14 (Spring 2014), www.geneticjoycestudies.org.

39. As similar notations have been also used to record the pronunciation of earlier language variants, a valid case can also be made for Joyce evoking the devices of diachronic linguistics and textual scholarship.

40. The idea of this purity was memorably summed up by artist and typographer Eric Gill in 1931 in his well-known *Essay on Typography*: “Lettering for us is the Roman alphabet and the Roman alphabet is lettering. Whatever the Greeks or the Germans or the Russians or the Czecho-Slovaks or other people may do, the English language is done in Roman letters, and these letters may be said to have reached a permanent type about the first century A.D.” (reissue of 2nd ed., London: Dent, 1941, p. 32). Somewhat ironically, Gill went on to design the first British edition of *Ulysses* for The Bodley Head (1936), characteristically devising a classic Homeric bow as the sole ornament of the binding.

it can also serve as part of Shem's project to conquer the English language and "wipe alley english spooker, multiphoniaksically spuking, off the face of the erse" (*FW* 178.6-7).⁴¹ Finally, the foregrounding of a hybrid mix of diacritics is also parallel to the entire Wakean project of foregrounding the hybridity of languages through the inclusion of blatantly or ostensibly foreign elements (cf. "piquéd" (*FW* 124.10)) into the "English" text as well as through the revealing of the "foreign" roots behind seemingly indigenous words like *punching* (in "pũnct ! ingh oles" (*FW* 124.11))⁴².

The gradual loss of the diacritics of page 124 of *Finnegans Wake* through the successive stages of textual development obscured much of the mock-scientific internationalism of the passage, although not its comic and possibly anti-imperialist un-Englishness. Whatever Joyce's reasons may have been for allowing the gradual reduction of these clearly significant markings to happen,⁴³ his interest does appear to have turned away from diacritics in later years. By the time he prepared the 1939 first book edition of the *Wake*, he had clearly lost the eagerness with which he had explored national diacritics in his late 1921 additions to *Ulysses*, intercepted the gender-sensitive accents in the 1924 French "Penelope", and added international diacritics to the Wakean mamafesta in 1925.

5 "changeably meaning vocable scriptsigns": re-scripting Europe in the 1920s and 1930s

Joyce's apparent loss of artistic appetite for diacritics may also have had to do with a trend in many European countries whereby the letters of the national language were made manifestly "servile" to national(ist) politics. With the map of Europe and the Near East radically redrawn, the German, Austro-Hungarian, Russian, Ottoman Empires replaced by what were meant to be stable and peaceful independent nation-states and federations, the 1920s and 1930s could have meant the end of unfulfilled nationalist desires. This was, of course, not the case. Rather than promoting international communication and cooperation, many countries were busy redefining

41. I am grateful to one of the anonymous reviewers of this article for alerting me to the anti-colonial reading of the diacritics here.

42. According to the *OED* (3rd edition, online), the English words *punch* and *puncheon* derive from the Latin stem *punct-*.

43. For details and possible causes of the loss of many diacritics in this passage, see "A Notion of Joyce's Time".

their own identities, and typography was found to be possibly even more serviceable than before.

Living in Paris, Joyce may not have been aware of the script reforms happening in the 1920s among, for instance, several peoples newly incorporated into the Soviet Union,⁴⁴ but he may well have known about less distant developments. The recently established Czecho-Slovak state, for instance, made typography an important part of its cultural self-representation at the 1925 International Exposition of Modern Industrial and Decorative Arts (*Exposition internationale des arts décoratifs et industriels modernes*) in Paris by sponsoring books printed with typefaces specifically designed by Czech designers to accommodate the distinctive diacritics of the language.⁴⁵ In Germany, the old controversy between the *Fraktur* and the Roman type (*Antiqua*) gained explicit political overtones from the mid-1920s, and the National Socialists' rise into power in 1933 resulted in the blackletter type being declared the only true German script to be officially used and taught – until its sudden denunciation as a devious “Jewish” type in 1941.⁴⁶ In 1928 the new Turkey, under the leadership of the charismatic Mustapha Kemal Atatürk, introduced even more dramatic changes: as part of a number of reforms aimed at modernizing, westernizing and secularizing the country and creating a new national identity, the traditional Arabic script was replaced with a version of the Latin alphabet, made unmistakably national by its unique set of characters with diacritics (*i/I, i/İ, ğ, ç, ş, ö, ü, â, î, û*).⁴⁷ In a slightly more remote part of the former Ottoman Empire, the link between the “diacritic aspirations, epenthetic and servile letters” (*U 17.747-8*) of Hebrew and “the restoration in Chanah David of Zion” (*U 17.759*) was made strikingly obvious as the Hebrew language and script began to be used – along with English and Arabic

44. See, for instance, Lenore A. Grenoble, *Language Policy in the Soviet Union* (Dordrecht, Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2003), pp. 49-50.

45. See Lisa Melander, “Vojtěch Preissig's types for Czech alphabets”, *Face the Nation: How National Identity Shaped Modern Typeface Design* (Exhibition Information), University of St Thomas, 1 July 2012, http://www.stthomas.edu/facethenation/define_vojtechpreissig.html.

46. See Hans Peter Willberg, “Fraktur and Nationalism”, in Bain and Shaw, *Blackletter*, pp. 40-49.

47. I have taken the account of the “Turkish Letters Revolution” from pp. 55-59 of Mathew Staunton and Olivier Decottignies, “Letters from Ankara: Scriptal Change in Turkey and Ireland in 1928”, in *Ireland Looking East*, ed. Cristoph Gillissen (Bruxelles etc: Peter Lang, 2010), pp. 51-74.

– on postage stamps (1920), banknotes (1927) and official street signage (1922) in British-ruled Palestine.⁴⁸

In Joyce's native Ireland, the related Ithacan association of Irish spelling with "Irish political autonomy or devolution" (*U* 17.760) was made similarly visible in the 1920s. The rise of the Irish language to the status of "national language" and the almost immediate introduction of compulsory Irish (or "impulsory irelitz" (*FW* 421.27)) into the school curricula (November 1922)⁴⁹ was accompanied by an increased use of the Gaelic script in education and in some classic areas of official symbolism like postage stamps (1922), coins (1928) and – as Joyce noted – street name signage.⁵⁰ Although the young Irish Free State did not encourage and sponsor, like the similarly young Czecho-Slovak state, the design and production of new "national" typefaces, it did establish a state company called *An Gúm* (1926) to publish books in Irish and to exhibit the most attractive ones at exhibitions like the "Century of Progress" International Exposition in Chicago (1933).⁵¹ After a failed plan to make the Irish language easier to learn and cheaper to print through a shift to the Roman script in 1928 (with the Turkish script reform quoted as an example),⁵² a new Fianna Fáil government reinstated the Gaelic type into its unofficial status as "national" script, using it eventually for the codification of the new 1937 constitution.⁵³

All this could further enrich the meaning of the Wakean phrase that calls attention to "the as time went on as it will variously inflected, differently pronounced, otherwise spelled, changeably

48. See Yair Wallach, "Creating a Country through Currency and Stamps: State Symbols and Nation-Building in British-Ruled Palestine", *Nations and Nationalism* 17 [2011] (1): 129–47.

49. Donal Corcoran, "Public Policy in an emerging state: The Irish Free State 1922–25", *Irish Journal of Public Policy*, vol. 1. No. 1, URL: <http://publish.ucc.ie/ijpp/2009/01/corcoran/05/en>, 9 October 2012.

50. For Joyce's comments on the new Irish postage stamp, see *LI* 213, on street names in Gaelic, *LI* 217.

51. See Brian Ó Conchubhair, "*An Gúm*, The Free State and the Politics of the Irish Language", *Ireland, Design and Visual Culture: Negotiating Modernity, 1922–1992*, ed. Linda King and Elaine Sisson (Cork: Cork University Press, 2011), p. 99.

52. Staunton and Decottignies, "Letters", pp. 59–74.

53. For debates concerning the use of the Gaelic script between the 1922 and 1937 constitutions, see Micheál Ó Cearúil, *Bunreacht na h-Éireann: A Study of the Irish Text* (Dublin: Stationery Office, 1999), pp. 27–30, online: <http://www.constitution.ie/publications/irish-text.pdf>, 23 September 2012.

meaning vocable scriptsigns” (*FW* 118.26-28) of the mamafesta. In the Europe of Joyce’s time it was certainly quite clear that the “scriptsigns” that various communities use to encode sounds and meanings can change not only because orthography changes, but also because the script itself may change or be replaced. Moreover, different communities will also choose different encodings, and the same “scriptsign” will not only be “differently pronounced” in different communities, but will also be “changeable” in its shape as a result of a different script or the use of diacritics – as is the case with the dotted Gaelic *s* in its various guises, the German blackletter versions of *s*, the Czech *s* with caron, or the Turkish *s* with cedilla.

Bernard Benstock once suggested that in the Wakean passage quoted above (*FW* 123.30-124.12) “even the most insignificant bit of type, minuscule accent marks that change the way a letter sounds but have no voices of their own, are given an opportunity to speak”, as if “to justify Leopold Bloom’s assumption that ‘Everything speaks in its own way’” (*U* 7.177).⁵⁴ In contrast, I have been arguing that when given a real opportunity to speak, these diacritics – just like the often similarly minute punctuation marks – turn out to be far from insignificant. In the light of the passages of *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake* that I have discussed in this paper, Joyce’s reference to “diacritic aspirations” and “servile letters” can be meaningfully linked to the insight that diacritics can be used to encode and embody nationalist as well as internationalist aspirations, and that letters of distinctive scripts can serve not only strictly communicative, but also symbolic political purposes – as they most certainly did in Joyce’s Europe.

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54. Bernard Benstock, “Bedevilling the Typographer’s Ass: *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake*”, *Journal of Modern Literature*, vol. 12, no. 1 (March 1985), p. 32.