

CALL FOR PAPERS

# Time in Nineteenth-Century Ireland

28-30 June 2024

Glucksman Ireland House  
New York University  
1 Washington Mews  
New York

As we grapple with an accelerating digital culture defined by just-in-time deliveries, synchronous communication, instantaneous connectivity, and 24/7 availability, the 2024 SSNCI Conference aims to bring together researchers from a wide range of disciplinary backgrounds to consider ‘time’ itself as a neglected dimension of Irish history. A critical approach to temporality in nineteenth-century Ireland and amongst the Irish diaspora might embrace a variety of methodological foci, from visual, dramatic and literary representations of time to its perception, measurement and use in everyday life. From the rise and fall of local ‘time zones’ to the disruptive ‘annihilation of time’ brought about by steam, locomotion and telegraphy, the emergence of modern synchronized ‘clock time’ accompanied seismic shocks in Irish life. Yet the playwright JM Synge’s claim to have introduced the first alarm clock to the Aran Islands in 1901 might best be taken as a prompt to explore the persistence of alternatives to ‘clock time’ rather than simply as evidence of absence. Exploring languages of time in Irish and Ulster Scots as well as English; between rural and urban contexts; and in differing class and gendered settings might also begin to reveal when and how Irish people came to encounter variants of ‘time discipline’, be it at home, on the farm, in domestic service, or at markets, factories, schools, courts, barracks or workhouses.

Thinking critically about time in an Irish context may thus prompt fresh connections within and across disciplinary boundaries, from ‘high politics’ and the literary canon to ‘history from below’ and subaltern studies. For example, David Lloyd’s powerful assertion that temporality was fundamental to Ireland’s colonial ‘modernization’ raises questions about popular resistance to what the Marxist thinker Walter Benjamin famously termed the ‘empty homogeneous time’ of capitalism. Clues to this dynamic might also be found in the clashing temporalities of demotic and orthodox religiosity, from Cardinal Cullen’s complaints of unpunctual mass-goers and Rabelaisian ‘holy days’ to the cosmologies of millenarians and dispensationalists alike. And while Irish emigrants surely struggled with new forms of ‘time discipline’, it is also worth considering their efforts to compress time through a transnational flow of words, objects and remittances. Perhaps nowhere is time more contested than in the construction of memory, yet closer attention might also be paid to the ways in which nationalist and unionist mass politics so effectively collapsed the boundaries between past, present and future through ritual, pageantry and commemoration.

Abstracts of **250 words (or 750-word panel submissions)** are invited on themes that include, but are not limited to:

- Representation of time (art, fiction, poetry, drama, music, and epistolary writing)
- Time and the history of capitalism (stasis, acceleration, crisis, work and ‘time discipline’)

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- Empire and time (orientalism and time, ‘subaltern time’, postcolonial temporalities)
- Technologies of time (bells, calendars, horology, chronometry, steam, electricity)
- Sciences of time (lunar and stellar astronomy, optics, telescoping, evolutionary science)
- Ecologies and time (seasons and climate, landscape, agricultural and maritime history)
- Gendered approaches to the history of time (work, labour, sexuality, the body)
- Time and the history of emotions (boredom, anxiety, longing, affect etc.)
- Narrative time (narratology, lyric time, metre, chronology etc.)
- Political time (‘temporal communities’, sites of memory, ritual, reenactment, forgetting)
- Vernacular time (folklore, mythology, the carnivalesque, ‘dream time’ and supernatural)
- Religious time (eschatology, devotion, ‘holy days’, sabbatarianism, sacramental time)
- Emigrant time (dislocation, travel, ‘time lag’, compression, nostalgia etc.)
- Institutionalized time (schools, hospitals, barracks, prisons, workhouses, asylums etc.)
- Free time (recreation, sport and leisure, ‘family time’, bonding time)
- Architecture and time (construction, style, historicity, dereliction, collapse, decay)
- Economics of time (insurance and risk, ‘market time’, bureaucratic time, development)
- Time and the city (municipal time-keeping, public clocks, urbanization, rhythm analysis)
- Animals and time (timekeepers, work, heterochrony/breeding, ‘species time’, extinction)
- Archaeology and time (antiquarianism, ‘deep time’, revivalism, ‘national heritage’)

Please email abstracts (and 50-word bio) to [ssnciconf2024@gmail.com](mailto:ssnciconf2024@gmail.com). **Deadline for abstracts extended to 31 March 2024.** In keeping with the Society's commitment to interdisciplinarity, the conference aims to bring together a diverse range of scholarly voices including new and established researchers and those working outside of traditional academic settings.

Three Bursaries of €300 will be provided on a competitive basis to postgraduate, early-career researchers, or independent scholars for whom another source of funding is not available for travel expenses. Please mention if you wish to apply for a bursary when submitting your abstract.

For further details, please visit <http://ssnci.org/>. Conference email: [ssnciconf2024@gmail.com](mailto:ssnciconf2024@gmail.com)

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