Sara Keel

Telegrams, Poetry, and Revolution: An Exploration of the Technology and Verse of the Easter Rising

Many consider the 1916 Easter Rising in Dublin as a turning point for Irish history and politics. In "Easter 1916," written after the Rising, Yeats refrains that all is "changed, changed utterly: a terrible beauty is born" (446). If one knows a single fact about the event, it likely pertains to the siege of the General Post Office (GPO). Although locations of conflict and activity in the Easter Rising ranged across the city, the GPO is the focal point of most modern historical narratives concerning the rebellion. Yet, the rebellion leaders' choice of locations continues to be a point of discussion. Why the GPO? It is true that it was a government building, and therefore,a physical representation of British rule, but it was not the main location of that rule. To these ends, Dublin Castle would have been a more obvious choice. Neither was the GPO an apt military choice by being easily fortifiable. The many windows and multiple entrances made it difficult to cover all potential entry points, while the gunmen on the roof where susceptible to fire from neighboring buildings. In *Inventing Ireland* Declan Kiberd writes that "Doubtless, as a volunteer, [Michael Colllins] was unimpressed by the choice of the Post Office as a military centre, since it left solders like himself exposed on all sides" (207). What's more, historical accounts suggest that the leaders of the uprising knew the hazards of their choice but were not ultimately concerned with military success. Desmond Fitzgerald notes this fatalism when recounting his experience inside the GPO. He describes a conversation between himself, Joseph Mary Plunkett and Patrick Pearse in which he recalls, "I was firmly convinced that it was only a matter of hours until we should all three be dead, and I was also sure that they both shared that convic-

tion with me." He goes on to say, "Both [Pearse] and Plunkett spoke of how much bigger an event it would have been had the original plans gone forward unchecked. But they did not suggest that even in that case we might have expected a military victory. The very fact that the conversation returned so steadily to what might have been was an admission that there was no doubt now about what was going to be." What then, was the goal of the Rising if not success? I agree with the historians who believe that the purpose of the Easter Rising of 1916 was symbolic. I argue that the goal, rather than victory, was to "telegraph" meaning, primarily to the populace of Ireland; more specifically, I seek to show that both telecommunication technologies and poetry played important roles in the relaying of this message and the "coding" of the information for the targeted audience.

The first key to this question of purpose, I believe, can be found in the Easter Rising's popular nickname, "The Poets' Rebellion." It is important to remember that many of the leaders of the rebellion and signatories of the Proclamation of the Irish Republic were men of letters: poets, playwrights, and academics. Of the seven members of the Irish Republican Brotherhood (IRB) Military Council, only James Connolly had any formal military training (Bury). This does not mean, however, that their actions were foolhardy or enacted without proper planning. Siding with the many historians that believe military success was not the leadership's ultimate goal, I argue that the leaders of the Easter Rising were committed instead to message, to the communication of an idea. One of the key events of the week was Pearse's reading of the Proclamation of the Irish Republic in front of the GPO. It was this document, this message, that was at the center of the revolution. Additionally, though the GPO was not a promising choice for headquarters from a military standpoint, the decision makes more sense if one believes the focus was on

communication of an idea instead. In her book *Dublin 1916: The Siege of the GPO*, Claire Wills notes that the Irish Rising stormed "a working monument, neither Castle nor Bastille, but a building devoted to communication" (9). In terms of that communication, controlling the GPO had both long and short term effects. In the grand scheme, the significance of the GPO became part of the message. Wills writes, "In the early years of the Irish Free State the events which took place in and around the GPO in 1916 achieved the status of founding myth for the nation... In historical accounts, reconstructions and commemorations, the building has figured as a major character in the story of the rebellion" (9). As authors, the leaders of the Rising created a narrative in which the GPO plays a key role. Moreover, they did it well. In today's Dublin, it is nigh impossible to avoid the mythos of the Easter Rising, and the GPO is at the center of this creation story of the nation. Though Kiberd highlights the impracticality of the selection , he writes that "As an act of dramatic symbolism, however, it was an inspired choice" (207).

There was, however, also an immediacy to the message the rebels sent by besieging the GPO. As a hub of communication, this occupation allowed the rebellion to limit and control what information was being transmitted during the week. As Wills points out, it was a "working monument," one used daily by the people of Dublin. The day to day life of the city's population was more disrupted by the closing of the post office than it would have been by some of the other more military options. According to Wills, the GPO "stood for control but it was also where you bought your stamps. The building managed to function simultaneously as a symbol of empire and of a quotidian aspect of Dublin life" (8). And it was this simultaneity that made the GPO an appropriate choice for the headquarters of the Easter Rising, focusing on one of the physical representations of British rule while also disrupting the mundane. And disrupt it did. The post of-

fice was a much busier place in 1916 than it is today. In 1914, 20 million letters were handled by the General Post Office, not including the additional 3.5 million postcards and 9 million parcels processed (Cassidy). Neither did the post office handle only these types of correspondences. It was a source of banking, and by 1916 telegraph and telephone services were also supplied by the state via the GPO. By 1900, there were 4,562 miles of underground telegraph and telephone cable in Dublin (Cassidy). In 1912, the post office took over the private telephone companies, "creating a state-controlled network across Ireland and Britain" (Cassidy), and by 1914, Ireland was connected telegraphically and/or telephonically to Scotland, Wales, and Britain by submarine cables (Cassidy). One of the first strategic actions taken by the rebels after securing the GPO was to cut the telegraph cables, thereby cutting off communication.

In a joint effort between the Irish Military Archives and the National Archives, thousands of pages of witness statements have been made available to the public through the Bureau of Military History 1913-1921. In one of these statements, a man named Martin King describes his part in the "plans for disruption of communications."

> In the latter part of 1915, James Connolly asked me, if he wanted to cut communications with England, how would he set about it. I told him he could cut them at Talbot Street or Lombard Street... On Good Friday morning, 1916, Andy Fitzpatrick brought me on a tour of the principal trunk line centres, with a view to the disruption of communications on Easter Sunday...The cross-channel telegraph cables came in at Newcastle. We came into Brunswick street and examined the cables in the manhole at the corner of Lombard Street. The cables there carried the underground wires from Newcastle to Westland Row.

> There was, in this cable, a special direct wire between Dublin Castle and London. We decided that the cables should be cut at this point. (1-2)

King continues on in this way, describing both the location of the telegraph and telephone lines and what they connected. Of particular importance to the rebels were the lines connecting Dublin and Ireland to Britain and the outside world. They also seem to be concerned with those lines used by government offices and the police. After identifying which lines should be cut and where, the responsibilities were doled out. King recalls that he was "detailed with some Volunteer engineers to disrupt communications at the Telephone Exchange" (2). It is also of note that the rebels did not want the wires to be easily fixed: "At the meeting, I instructed the men to cut the cables close to the part where they entered the covering pipes. If done in this way, repairs could only be effected by digging up the street" (2-3). As I will show, the rebellion had a plan for communicating their message by other means.

One of the most striking elements of the above statement is the detailed description of the telegraph and telephone wires. Rarely is there such an opportunity to understand the inner-workings and the geography of telecommunications during this time. With King's description, one could map many of the more than 4,000 miles of cable running through the city. One can also observe King's comprehensive understanding of this map and the key points for disruption. Additionally, this testimony highlights the forethought and planning that went into this facet of the uprising. Although the rebels are often criticized for their lack of militaristic maneuvering, one can see here that their actions were certainly not without strategy. As early as 1915 Connolly was beginning to put into motion the events of Easter week 1916. This underscores the idea that communication was a key idea in development of the Easter Rising. However, if one is to argue

that the focus of the Rising was to communicate a message, does not the destruction of these cables undermine that notion? It does not, necessarily. The shutting down of telecommunications in the city did more than cut off government lines. As discussed above, it also disrupted the day to day transmissions of the citizenry, thereby forcing individuals to take notice and creating a space in which the Irish Rising message could be heard.

After shutting down the official means of communication, the rebels created their own means of reaching the public both near and far. Fergus O'Kelly, a member of the Irish Volunteers and participant in the Easter Rising, described his role in the erection of a wireless telegraph in another testimony collected by the Bureau of Military History:

> I was called aside by Joseph Plunkett and instructed to take a few men and take possession of the Wireless School and Reis' shop and do everything possible to get the transmitting plant and receiving apparatus into working order...The wireless room was sealed by the British military. I broke the seals and David Burke and I entered. The apparatus was disconnected and had been out of use since the start of the war. Quite a lot of work had to be done to put it into working order. (2)

The wireless school was only 190 meters from the GPO, and it was only through the seizure of the Post Office that the use of the wireless school was made possible ("Irish Republic declared"). After much work, some of which occurred under the duress of enemy fire, O'Kelly and his men were able to get the transmitter working.

> On reporting to H. Q. that the transmitting apparatus was operating, a message was sent over to James Connolly, commanding the Dublin area, for broadcast transmission. As the receiving apparatus could not be got to operate correctly it was not possible to get in di-

> rect touch with any station or ship but the message was sent out on the normal commercial wavelength in the hope that some ship would receive it and relay it as interesting news. As far as I can remember, the first message announced the proclaiming of the Irish Republic and the taking over of Dublin city by the Republican Army. (4)

Transmitted in Morse code, Connolly's broadcast actually read "Irish Republic declared in Dublin today. Irish troops have captured the city and are in full possession. Enemy cannot move in city. The whole country is rising" (qtd in "Irish Republic declared"). It takes little knowledge of the Easter Rising to know that this statement is not entirely true. The rebels were certainly not in "full possession" of the city. Neither was it true that the "whole country" was rising. Because of the countermanding orders spread by Eoin Mac Neill, the uprising occurred almost exclusively within Dublin, with Ashbourne of Co. Meath the only other town to see significant fighting (Keough). However, because King and his men had already disconnected the telegraph and telephone cables, Connolly felt empowered? to author the narrative of the Rising. Interestingly, this message was also the first *broad*cast in Ireland and one of the first in the world.

One can see with these examples that technological communications played a significant part in the leaders' ideas of message. Telecommunication was part of the practical means by which the designers of the Rising enacted this goal. These men, these *poets*, were focused on communicating information to their people and to those like-minded in the rest of the world. They chose the GPO as headquarters because of its symbolic status and the ways in which it afforded them the means of controlling the narrative communicated. The destroying of the telecomm cables and the setting up of the wireless telegraph were also strategic and pragmatic maneuvers in their fight for message. The violence of the Rising and the practical approaches

described here may not seem to align with the stereotype of "the Poet" or with a Poets' Rebellion. Indeed, poetry is often viewed as impractical, idealistic, and perhaps even pacifistic. The organic and fluid nature of poetry seems the antithesis of the telegram: technological and staccato. However, technology and poetry merge for these rebellious poets in that they are both part of a larger concern with message, with communicating to the (re)public. Additionally, both their poetry and telegraphic messages are encoded. While Connolly's broadcast was in Morse, the poetry of the Rising's leaders, such as Pearse, are coded in modes of Irish identity that will be understood by the Irish people, and not the British. The ways in which the messages are encoded coincide with two other major movements of the time: the Gealic League and the Irish Literary Revival. Through his poetry, Patrick Pearse, among others, telegraphs a meaning through his poetry that only those with the "code" will understand. It is a message of revolution[1].

Although many other colonized areas were inspired by the Easter Rising, the events of the week were first and foremost meant as a message to the Irish people. So too was the poetry of the Rising's poetic leaders, like Pearse. The poetry seems especially concerned with the developing and solidifying of an Irish identity that was in contrast to Britain. Thomas MacDonagh, a poet and playwright in addition to being a signatory of the Proclamation and one of the sixteen executed after the Rising[2], writes in "The Irish Note," "One fears to draw conclusions too general from particular points of difference between Irish and English, in vocabulary and grammar. the one thing worth knowing in the matter, as far as we are concerned here, is that there are wide

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[1] As an outsider, I still strive to decode these messages, but as this is not my "native tongue," there will undoubtedly be facets of the poems that I overlook or still do not understand. This is meant only as a cursory look as some of the ideas conveyed, not a complete analysis.

[2] MacDonagh was also a member of the Gaelic League whose translations of traditional Irish literatures into English were praised for their quality and lyricism. See "The Yellow Bittern" a translation of "An Bonnán Buí" by Cathal Buí Mac Giolla Gunna for a good example.

differences, which prove different mental habits, different social conditions, different literary traditions" (153). MacDonagh brushes aside nuanced differences in the spoken language and gets right to the heart of the matter: the mental, social, and literary chasm between Ireland and Britain. Douglas Hyde, a promoter of the Gaelic League and advocate for the creation of an independent Irish culture takes this a step further. He writes, "In a word, we must strive to cultivate everything that is most racial, most smacking of the soil, most Gaelic, most Irish, because in spite of the little admixture of Saxon blood in the north-east corner, this island *is* and *will* ever remain Celtic at the core" (137). Hyde builds on the notes of difference and encourages the cultivation of a distinct Irish culture, which includes a literary tradition.

One of the earliest movements of the period toward a distinct "Irishness" was the creation of the Gaelic League in 1893. At the time of its inception, there were only six books in print in the Irish language. Yet, within a year, the League sold 50,000 language textbooks (Kiberd 145). The popularity of learning Gaelic spread quickly in Ireland and even some parts of London. Louis Paul-Dubois, a French sociologist, observed and studied this renewed energy for the language and wrote about his findings in *Contemporary Ireland*. He writes,

> Here, as elsewhere, the Gaelic movement has given an object, a goal, an ideal, to lives which from their conditions, are often empty in these respects. Those who are in a position to know say indeed that few people of national feeling have taken up the study of Irish without being quickly aware of its strengthening and stimulating influence, without being fascinated by it as by a revelation. This shows that the language is for the children of Erin neither a dead language nor a strange one, but an integral part of their nature, a second self, an element of themselves that they had forgotten. (114)

It is clear from this passage that Paul-Dubois sympathized with the movement. However, this does not mean that his professional observations can be discounted, even if they are somewhat hyperbolic. Although the Gaelic League was lead by academics, it was designed to be a movement for the people. Paul-Dubois describes his experience attending a class in a "poor quarter in Dublin" where the attendees were "young and old, clerks and artisans for the most part" (114). In this way, the Gaelic movement became a populace movement; it provided to both the high and low an opportunity to embrace their Irish identity, thus unifying a large number of people from different paths. Also, as Paul-Dubois highlights here, for the working class, whose lives often consisted of little inspiration, the exercise of the mind required and the returning to the Irish language became a "strengthening and stimulating influence." The resurgence of Gaelic became a catalyst for revolution. It was a way to join people together and to create a common identity by tapping into a shared heritage and teaching the populace an identity that was in contrast to their "oppressors." Paul-Dubois calls these language students the "children of Erin," thus tapping into the concept of heritage and birth right.

In "Literature and the Irish Language," George Moore writes, "We must return to the language...it is a mysterious inheritance, in which resides the soul of the Irish people. It is through language that a tradition of thought is preserved, and so it may be said that the language is the soul of race. It is through language that the spirit is communicated, and it is through language that a nation becomes aware of itself" (118). Moore's use of the word "inheritance" here echoes Paul-Dubois' statement. Both excerpts discuss the intrinsic connection between the Irish people and their language. Paul-Dubois calls it "an integral part of their nature," while Moore describes it as "the soul of race." These both speak to the idea that the Gaelic movement was not a passing

fad; instead it tapped into a very deep sense of racial identity. And, as Moore points out, this is how a "nation becomes aware of itself," a dangerous event for those working to oppress it.

One man heavily influenced by the Gaelic movement was Patrick Pearse, who ostensibly became *the* leader of the Easter Rising. He joined the Gaelic League in his teens and later became editor of its journal *An Claidheamh Soluis* (Kiberd and Mathews 129). Additionally, although Pearse was a barrister, he hated the profession, and his only appearance in court was to defend a Donegal trader who was prosecuted for displaying his name in Irish on the side of his wagon (Kiberd 145). As a young man, Pearse held very strong beliefs about the Irish language. In a letter to the editor of *An Claidheamh Soluis* (before he himself filled that role), Pearse wrote a scathing rebuke of the "Irish" publications and literature written in English. "Newspapers, politicians, literary societies are all but forms of one gigantic heresy that like a poison has eaten its way into the vitals of Irish nationality, that has paralyzed the nation's energy and intellect. That heresy is the idea that there can be an Ireland, that there can be an Irish literature, an Irish social life, whilst the language of Ireland is English" (144). Although Pearse cooled somewhat from this zealous view, his love of the Irish language never disappeared. He would later go on to write and publish in both Gaelic and English and argue for a balance between the ancient and the modern.

One of Pearse's most famous poems is "Fornocht Do Chonac Thú" commonly known in English as "Naked I Saw Thee." The poem invokes Irish aisling (or vision) poetry in which Ireland is represented as a woman, similar to Yeats and Lady Gregory's play *Kathleen Ni Houlihan*. In a traditional aisling poem, the woman is saved through victory in battle. In contrast to this,

however, Pearse's subject turns away from the woman. The first stanza of Pearse's English translation reads,

Fornacht do chonac thú,	Naked I saw thee,
a áille na háille,	O beauty of beauty,
is do dhallas mo shúil	And I blinded my eyes
ar eagla go stáfainn.	For fear I should fail. (1-4)

The speaker turns his eyes from her beauty in order to make the ultimate sacrifice: his life. While aisling poetry usually includes a victory, it is the speaker's death that liberates the woman/ Ireland. The closing stanza of this 1912 poem clearly foreshadows Pearse's own experience with sacrifice in 1916.

Thugas no ghnúis	I have turned my face
ar an ród seo romhan,	To this road before me,
ar an ngníomh a chím,	To the deed that I see
is ar mbás do ghebhad.	And the death I shall die. (21-14)

The reader can see that here Pearse is already considering what actions he will take in order to free Ireland and is coming to terms with the consequences. The execution of the sixteen "beautiful martyrs" is historically marked as the turning point for the Irish Republican cause. This poem suggests Pearse's early understanding of this need and the victory won not through victory in battle but through loss and martyrdom. Moreover, there is certainly also a significance to the poem being written in Gaelic. As examined above, the study of the Irish language helped to form a national identity. By publishing this poem in Gaelic, Pearse draws on that sense of inheri-

tance and the “soul of race.” This is a poem meant for a specific group of people, and that group is the Irish. Pearse encodes his message in Gaelic not to make it secret or unintelligible to certain readers but to serve as a signifier. Instead of being the medium, the language becomes part of the message.

The significance of the language is similarly true in another of Pearse’s poems “Mise Éire” or “I am Ireland.” Moreover, Pearse speaks directly to the nation of Ireland, drawing on a shared history and cultural identity unique to his people. These points of reference were the types of traditional narratives being resurrected by the Irish Literary Revival. They would have been in the forefront of people’s minds and well know to many readers of the time.

Mise Éire:	I am Ireland:
Sine mé ná an Chailleach Bhéarra.	I am older than the old woman of Beare.
Mór mo ghlóir:	Great my glory:
Mé a rug Cú Chulainn cróga.	I that bore Cuchulainn the valiant.
Mór mo náir:	Great my shame:
Mo chlann féin a dhíol a máthair.	My own children that sold their mother.
Mise Éire:	I am Ireland:
Uaigní mé ná an Chailleach Bhéarra.	I am lonelier that the Old Woman of Beare.

There are a number of references made here to touchstones of Irish culture. In addition to the message sent to readers by publishing this in Gaelic, Pearse telegraphs meaning to his audience using the sociological code of a shared mythic history. Similar to the resurgence of the Gaelic language, there was a strong push in the late 19th and early 20th Centuries to create an Irish literary identity through the resurrection of Irish traditional narratives and heroes. To outsiders, to

those who lack the knowledge of Cuchulainn and the Old Woman of Beare, this poem makes little sense. Even in the translation, it still has the feeling of another language. Instead, each of the points in Pearse's list speaks to the Irish people in a code that is not immediately evident to others but would be to those exposed to the literary movement taking place in Ireland at the time[3]. The "Old Woman of Beare" or "Chailleach Bhéarra" is an ancestral deity. She is credited with creating certain geographic landmarks in Ireland, such as the Hag's Head cliffs ("chailleach" can also be translated as "hag"). Cuchulainn is a Irish mythic hero whose valor inspired many participants in the Rising. Finally, Pearse's line "My own children that sold their mother" speaks to the Flight of the Earls which created the opening by which Ireland was conquered.

Even with the knowledge of these various points, however, this poem still does not resonate in the way it would to the Irish people. These images, especially of Cuchulainn, speaks to a coded national identity not easily grasped by outsiders. It was Standish James O'Grady's *History of Ireland: Heroic Period* that first resurrected the mythic hero Cuchulainn. Then appropriated by the poet George Russell for a more general audience, O'Grady began to understand the significance of what had been set in motion. "We have now a literary movement, it is not very important...it will be followed by a political movement, that will not be very important; then must come a military movement, that will be very important indeed" (qtd in Kiberd 196). One can follow this progression that O'Grady foresees so accurately through Pearse's life beginning with his poetry, moving into the founding of the Irish Volunteers in 1913 and concluding with the Easter Rising. O'Grady realized early on what kind of power an image like Cuchulainne offered

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[3] The idea of a literary movement often connotes an academic shift, one that is exclusive to the "ivory tower" or those of the upper class with enough time to worry about such things. This is not the case here. The resurgence of Irish literary traditions was directed at the middle and working classes and was quickly taken up by such groups.

and how deeply it could affect the people of Ireland. Thomas MacDonagh also speaks to the need for this Irish literary tradition when in "The Irish Note" he writes, "English writing is full of metaphor that cannot be understood without knowledge of historic events that have not affected Ireland: Shakespeare's plays are indeed, as has been said, nothing but strings of popular sayings. Irish has a different set of historic memories and of popular sayings" (153). What is striking here is the contrast MacDonagh provides between England and Ireland. Just as the Irish cannot fully understand the metaphors of English literature, neither can the English understand those of Irish writings, and it is the unique Irish heroes that helped bring to fruition the events of Easter 1916. By using these images, the poets of the Rising were able to reach their specific audience while excluding those who may be troubled by or see the danger in the message.

As shown here, Pearse's poetry participates in the Gaelic language revival and the Irish literary revival. Yet it also played a part in the creation of a new movement, one towards revolution. Unfortunately, Pearse, like the other leaders of the Rising, did not live too see their dreams come to fruition. As Pearse anticipates in "Naked I saw thee," that the movement towards a free Ireland required martyrs. Pearse's final poem, "The Wayfarer," was written while he awaited execution in Kilmainham Gaol. It does not reflect the bitter optimism of the two poems above. It opens with the line "The beauty of the world hath made sad." Following a lyrical and detailed descriptions of the beauty in the mundane, Pearse closes with the following lines:

> And then my heart hath told me:
>
> These will pass,
>
> Will pass and change, will die and be no more,
>
> Things bring and green, things young and happy;

And I have gone upon my way

Sorrowful. (15-20)

In this poem, Pearse reflects on the beauty of Ireland, a beauty that he will not see again, but he ends "sorrowful," and unsure of the changes his life has purchased. And from what he could see, Pearse had a right to be concerned about his legacy. The hundreds of civilian deaths and the mass destruction caused by the violence of the Rising had left the public angry, not with the British but with the rebels. Many also felt that the timing of the insurrection, while many young Irishmen were fighting on the Western Front, was unseemly. Ultimately, it was not the Rising itself but the heavy-handed British response that turned the tides of popularity in the rebels' favor. Kiberd describes the aftermath thus: "It was the over-reaction of the British authorities which gave the insurgents the retrospective status of people's heroes" (193). This was in part due to "the painfully protracted execution of fifteen rebel leaders between May 3 and 12, despite a strong consensus that they should have been treated as prisoners-of-war. Martial law was imposed and 3,500 people were arrested" (193). These actions turned many of the people of Ireland against the British, and "By 1918, the war-weary British, whose military ranks had been depleted, were threatening conscription on a surly and mutinous Ireland. Redmond had badly lost the initiative and misread the public mood about the war" (193). It is so fitting that in this exploration of messages and codes, Kiberd here uses the term "misread" to describe the British understanding of the Irish public. As a body, the people were a message not understood by the British in time to prevent a revolution.

Yeats, in "The Statues," writes, "When Pearse summoned Cuchulain to his side / What stalked through the post office?" (25-26). These lines draw together Pearse's verse with his ac-

tions in the Easter Rising. It speaks to the topics covered here, of the revival of Irish heritage in language and literature and how those directly related to the events of Easter week and specifically the GPO. By looking at the various movements taking place in Ireland at the time, one can begin to understand the interplay between the events and begin to see the central motif of message. Pearse's poetry is in direct relationship with his action in the Easter Rising. His participation in the Gaelic League and his use of the Irish language in his poetry telegraphed a specific meaning to his readers. It aligns with the purpose of drawing his readers in to the collective consciousness of the Irish people. This is underscored by Pearse's use of traditional Irish literary figures like Cuchulainne and the Old Woman of Beare and the use of tropes exemplified by his re-envisioning of the aisling poetic form. Neither was Pearse the only leader in the Rising to follow this poetic path. Similar uses can be found in the work of other poet rebels like Thomas MacDonagh and Joseph Mary Plunkett[4]. The intention to speak to the people through the code of inheritance also informed the strategy conceived for the Easter Rising. Plunkett in particular took a great interest in wireless telegraphy and studied its capabilities. In his testimony, O'Kelly recalls frequently spending time at the home of Joseph and Jack Plunkett and working on the assembly of a wireless apparatus. The interest in telegraphic communications that was exhibited in the events of Easter week 1916 can be seen as the progeny of the poets' desire to telegraph meaning to the public through their verse. This desire for communication then became manifest during the Rising adding to the multiple symbolic choices a literal telegraphing of information. All of these facets bring together the true goal of the Poet's Rebellion: not a military victory but the transmission of a revolutionary and liberating message.

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[4] See the "dark rose" motif used in Plunkett's "The Little Black Rose Shall Be Red at Last" for an example.

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